



# Tangled Webs

*Lee Bross*

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## **Tangled Webs** Lee Bross

London, 1725. Everybody has a secret. Lady A will keep yours—for a price. This sumptuous, scandalous YA novel is wickedly addictive.

Lady A is the most notorious blackmailer in the city. With just a mask and a gown to disguise her, she sweeps into lavish balls and exclusive events collecting the most valuable currency in 1725 London—secrets.

But leading a double life isn't easy. By day Lady A is just a sixteen-year-old girl named Arista who lives in fear of her abusive master, Bones, and passes herself off as a boy to move safely through the squalor of London's slums. When Bones attempts to dispose of his pawn forever, Arista is rescued by the last person she expects: Jonathan Wild, the infamous Thief Taker General who moves seamlessly between the city's criminal underworld and its most elite upper circles. Arista partners with Wild on her own terms in the hopes of saving enough money to buy passage out of London.

Everything changes when she meets Graeden Sinclair, the son of a wealthy merchant. Grae has traveled the world, has seen the exotic lands Arista has longed to escape to her whole life, and he loves Arista for who she is—not for what she can do for him. Being with Grae gives something Arista something precious that she swore off long ago: hope. He has promised to help Arista escape the life of crime that has claimed her since she was a child. But can you ever truly escape the past?

## **Tangled Webs Details**

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Author : Lee Bross

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## From Reader Review Tangled Webs for online ebook

### Adelynne says

... I sense a love triangle coming.

But a female protagonist as a blackmailer??

Holy. Crap. I'm pretty excited.

Edit: 12/29:

Well, I hate to say it, but I was seriously dissatisfied. I didn't like the romance at all. I wish the plot had been more focused on the actual blackmailing. (I wanted a lot more of that.)

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### Lili Marcus says

First, I must say that whoever wants to read this should not rely on the synopsis too much!!!

**\*I picked this one because of the cover . it's like a scrapbook and I love scrap booking\***

*spoiler alerts but minimised*

The story sets in London, 1725, and I find it intriguing when I read the synopsis because I always find London interesting especially if it sets way back.

The protagonist's name, **Arista** didn't turn me on at all. I didn't like the name but she turned out to be lovable and admirable. She is a notorious blackmailer known as '*Lady A*' who works for an abusive master, **Bones**. At some nights, she attends masquerade parties/balls to trade money over *secrets* dressed in black gown and feathery mask, along with her bodyguard/childhood friend **Nic**. *Nic wasn't even mentioned in the synopsis*. But in daylight, she dresses up as a boy to safely pass through the streets of the city. I must say, she is more comfortable dressing as a boy because no one seems to notice her, unlike as Lady A, who was known and despised by many.

At one of the parties she attended, she met **Graeden 'Grae' Sinclair**, who I must say was bewitched by her in the first sight. though it wasn't intentional and Arista was wearing a mask that night. I love how they met and their **FEW BUT ENOUGH** interactions. All in all, I love their love story though I don't think I get connected with Grae as much as I was with Arista. Though Arista is the main protagonist, it would've been better to know and get more intimate with Grae's character but it's enough.

*(Grae told this to Arista)*

**"But there is more. There's a look you get in your eyes—as if you're on a great journey, but have gotten lost along the way. All I want is for you to let me guide you back."**

The synopsis, like I mentioned above didn't say anything about Nic. For me, it should've have. Nic, after all, can be considered as another love interest of Arista since at first she thought she's in love with him (not until she met Grae and made her feel what attraction really means.).

However the synopsis mentioned Wild and anyone might think she's some kind of a Knight in a shining Armor who rescued Arista when something went wrong one fated night. And I, too, thought that way and that he is some kind of Arista's love interest. That he'll be a part of Arista's love triangle along with Grae. **HE IS NOT**. he's just like Bones, who wants to use LADY A's reputation and abilities for his own gain.

Did I mention that Arista is just a child, a mere sixteen-year-old young lass who was an orphan, caught in a fucked-up life and didn't have much of a choice but to do bad things in order to survive but want to be out so badly. We all know how that kind of stories goes but this one isn't boring at all. I love how Grae accepted Lady A's secrets though he was bothered at first since she ended up living in his house with his family.

Their love story was fast-paced but I can only say this because the author used fast-paced tactic. The development of the story weren't all shown to the readers but it is admirable that somehow the author made the readers believe they're already in love without showing too much scenes of their interactions. SO you're forgiven **Lee Bros**.

It hurt me that Nic died, I shoud've been happier if he found his own girl. He was too nice to Arista though he made some terrible decisions too.

I would recommend this one to everyone since this is an awesome read. Not a five star-rated but this will do to spend hours of reading. Worth the time.

Goodreads listed this as a part of a series but this can be read as a standalone. I was almost hesitant to read it because I don't want to be left hanging with the story. I wasn't, and I'm actually wondering why there's a need for a sequel since for me this has a nice ending already. Maybe their lives in India(that's where Arista wanted to go and they're going). Or Arista will be more of bad-ass character. She already is but there's still room for her to grow as character and I'm sure i'll love her more. I shelved this as **piteous character only because her situation is almost pitiful but Arista is a great protagonist. She handled everything well.**

#### **NOTE TO THE AUTHOR OR THE PUBLISHERS**

**--change the synopsis a bit...It's misleading the readers.**

:)

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**Lala\_Loopsie [fire breathing B!tch Queen] says**

This book was nothing like i expected. I don't really know what i expected, it just wasn't this.

This was one of those books that i read just to continue doing something, to satisfy my curiosity. **And it wasn't enough for me.** it didn't really drag me in, like other books have done. I *almost* had to force myself to continue reading. I didn't really care what happened to Lady A/Arista/Ana. And that's not how i should feel.

All in all, the book wasn't bad by any means. It didn't have any "bad elements", per se. It was just lacking. Lacking some depth, and a storyline, more than anything.

*It wasn't for me*, that's all. Therefore, no rating.

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### **Aur lie (Exploring Pages) says**

More reviews on my blog, Exploring Pages.

"Lady A." His voice sounded hoarse, like he'd only just started using it. She inclined her head slightly. He took a long swallow from the glass of brandy clutched in his fat fingers. Just like that, she had the power again.

**Thank you Disney Hyperion for providing me with an advanced reading copy for review.**

### **Actual rating: 3.5 stars**

Going into a book with little knowledge about it, nor having many expectations, payed off this time. Tangled Webs is, despite the issues, a surprisingly good novel with some surprising qualities.

It is, for example, one of those books I could get easily lost in. The world is always accompanied by rich and vivid descriptions of the touch class system of the 18th century, but also lots of smaller aspects I will get into later on. It's clear the author has done her homework and therefore it feels like a bonus when she also succeeds in letting the atmosphere of the old city shine through in her own book. Ranging from the docks, the slums, the coffee houses etc. to the middle-class families, everything seemed to be done so well. I loved we got to see so many different aspects of the city. It might have been hard, no doubt about that, yet it was worth it in the end.

I applaud the author for not involving any magical elements and staying focused on the blackmailing and the secrets, even though it wasn't enough to fill the entire book and in order to have a tight and solid plot. It often wandered to places, not particularly finding anything, to then head back to the direction it was supposed to go all along. The more we got to the end, the more predictable it became, although still being a pleasant read. It did start off wonderfully, where we as readers are thrown into the cruel lifestyle of a young girl, and her evolution towards becoming a well-known blackmailer. The flashback did a wonderful job here at creating some depth to Arista's situation, although I would have preferred more I found the plot often to lack in background and depth, especially when I look at Arista's training and how she became Bones' trusted puppet. A companion novel or short story would be interesting to see how it all played out, since I am curious for more.

The vivid descriptions did not only have an influence on the view of the world, but also on smaller aspects such as Arista's background, which was depicted beautifully. She had to endure such cruelties in the beginning of the book. It was nearly impossible for me to not sympathize with her every now and then, even though I could never a grip on her personality and her character in general. Because of her double life, Arista showed many different sides, which made it a bit difficult for me to figure out who she really was. To be

honest, I don't think she knew either. On the other hand, that was also something made the book interesting.

We are introduced to the era of the Enlightenment, a setting which isn't favorable for a lot of books. Because of that, it had already sparked my interest from the very first page. Yet when the double life of Arista was introduced, I couldn't help but express my enthusiasm. It was rather original and entertaining at times, but I would have liked to see a little bit more of her occupation. Everyone was so contemptuous towards her and even afraid. The author had no trouble in showing it. After all, secrets hold the power to destroy a man. I still do not get what she actually does, and how she holds the power to make men bow. I feel like I have so many thoughts left to write down, even though that might take little while.

Arista's character was surprisingly enjoyable. It has been a while since I encountered a character who uses words and strategy. Someone is not afraid to show her flaws, a certain lack in physical strength or not knowing how to swim. Because she was more focused on inner strength, it brought out some interesting and fun Lady A scenes. Other characters like Sophie, Becky, Wild, Bones and Nic were a pleasant addition to the book because I felt like they all had their story to tell and their role to play. Grae seems to be a more special case. He just seemed like he was destined to be the perfect love interest for Arista. A courageous and loving young man with a desire to see the word. In other words, a character to swoon for. Who wouldn't fall for that? Exactly, I would too. It's not that his perfect personality bothered me, because he still was a likable character. What did, was how one-dimensional he actually was. He was introduced in the book somewhere halfway through, and ever since we meet him, the romance also jumps in. From then on, it seems like the relationship between the two moves on at a very quick pace. It's definitely not insta-love because there really is a certain development, only that it was left out because of the time jump the book made. Therefore I feel like a little more depth into their relationship and a visible development would have made the love between the two much more believable.

In a nutshell, I would recommend *Tangled Webs* for those interested in a light novel set in a very interesting time period. When I do not look at its flaws such as some flat characters and a lack of background and depth, it does have the premise of becoming something great. The characters still are lovely, and the plot is intriguing and fast-paced. Unfortunately, I have run out of things to say about this book, but let's keep that a secret. Won't we, Lady A?

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## **Kaitlin says**

\*Source: Thank you to Nori for lending an ARC of this book to me!

Ehhh. That sums up how I feel about *Tangled Webs*. I don't have much to say about it because not much stood out to me. My biggest issue with the book was Lady A. She didn't seem developed enough. She was supposedly the "most notorious blackmailer" (according to the description)--which sounds *awesome*--but she . . . didn't do much. There was not much to her. I also don't quite grasp her role in the dealings. I guess I was just expecting it to be more interesting. Arista, on the other hand, felt more fleshed out as herself. I still didn't love her character, but that side of her was better than the Lady A one. The romance was a bit of an issue for me, too. It was definitely there and I liked the hints of it in the beginning. There was an insta-love-y feel to it later on, which is where I started disliking it. It did go with the book, though. The book had that sweeping romance vibe. I tend to dislike books when they feel like that, so looking back, I'm not surprised the romance turned south for me.

Overall, *Tangled Webs* wasn't *bad*. It was just not impressive to me. It was also not for me. Historical fiction can be a hit or miss for me. Since this one didn't have much that stood out to me, it was a miss.

## Rachel (APCB Reviews) says

Nothing beats the crushing disappointment you feel when one of your most anticipated books falls flat. Tangled Webs had lots of promise yet failed to deliver all that it promised to give. The synopsis has everything I'd love to see in a book! The story hardly matches all that the synopsis claims.

To start, the setting of this novel is London in 1725. London is a fascinating city in my opinion. Send me to London in any book in any year, and I'll be pleased. The one stipulation is that you develop the story around the setting a bit or at least describe the setting! This book gives some references to London sights and places and talks a little about London society and fashion, but there's nothing to match this story with what's going on in London at the time. I feel like this book lacked any possible research to make the setting and story blossom. This book literally could have taken place anywhere at any time and still have the same exact story.

I couldn't connect to Lady A/Arista at all. The poor girl has an identity crisis throughout this book. She doesn't know who she wants to be. She struggles to cut ties from the evil people who shackle her to a life of crime. Her flat character continued to beguile and charm others in the novel, and I just didn't understand it, neither do I understand how she managed to stay alive so long. Her naiveté and poor decision-making would lead to an untimely demise. She's hypocritical at every turn, and it was grating on my patience,

I love romance that has wonderful development and sparks. This book contained neither. We're told repeatedly about the sparks between Arista and Grae and how they're drawn to each other. I didn't feel nor see any of this though. The romance was more of the author convincing us of the romance's genuineness than actually showing it. This book contains insta-love as well. I couldn't get on board with this romance. It was lackluster and dull. The romance was cringe-worthy and shoved down our throats.

Not much happened in this book. I didn't need action particularly, I just wanted something to hold my attention. I had to force myself to continue reading after each chapter. Overall this one was not my cup of tea. Perhaps you'll have better luck!

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## ReadWriteLove28 says

### REVIEW

I just finished Tangled Webs and...wow. I am trying to put my thoughts together, but all that comes to mind is AEUHRGSR.EIGHR;EGHSOG. As of the time that I'm writing this (March 16th), Tangled Webs is by far, the best book that I have read in 2015. Yes, it was that amazing. I am amazed by Lee Bross' writing prowess. If this review seems to be a bit all over the place, that's because I'm trying to put my gushing thoughts into words.

Imagine living your life as an orphan, growing up with no friendly faces, and then being adopted by a frightening man named Bones. Yes, his name was Bones. Imagine having to learn how to steal in order to be given even a scrap of bread. That was Arista's childhood. But one day, Bones decided to turn Arista into a pawn for his blackmailing schemes. She became known as Lady A, the mysterious woman clad in a gown and a mask, who didn't take no for an answer. She traded secrets for money, but nothing she did was ever for her- it was all for Bones. Luckily for her, she had two extremely close friends, Nic and Becky, who had grown up with her under Bones' thumb. Nic served as backup, a bodyguard if you will, whenever Lady A

was needed. Becky was a seamstress, and was in charge of making Lady A's outfits.

While Arista was forced into a deceptive, scheming life, it didn't mean that she had to enjoy it. She constantly thought about freedom, and what if's. What would her life be like if she was able to escape from Bones? Who would she be if she wasn't Lady A? These thoughts constantly ran throughout her mind. And one day, something major happened which caused her life to take a turn that she never saw coming. What was it? You'll have to read to find out!

Okay, now that you know what the story was about, \*commence the book flailing and gushing!\*

Tangled Webs taught me what it meant for writing to be gorgeous. I honestly don't know how to describe it other than being gorgeous! It was smooth, elegant, charming, sophisticated, and just all around beautiful! It was funny- I read the first page, and my eyes immediately opened wide, because I could tell that this book was going to be something special. Yes, I could tell that Tangled Webs was going to be incredible from the first page. That was something special and it very rarely happens.

Also, the characters, ooh la la, I loved them all! I felt my heart jump and skip a beat whenever something nerve-wracking happened, and my heart felt warm and fuzzy whenever something good happened. Not only did I feel like I was inside the book, I actually felt like I was Arista! While I was reading, I had no clue what was going on around me in the real world. All that I knew was what was happening to Arista in 1725 London. Yes, this book did take place in the past, which generally tends to make me a bit iffy, but the setting worked perfectly this time.

I will give a warning- there is a small love triangle. But, with that being said, I had my eyes on one ship the entire time, and I never looked back! Also, I have added a new book boyfriend to my list. Ahhh, my love. It holds no bounds for one of the love interests. <3

Overall, Tangled Webs was simply phenomenal, and I cannot recommend it enough! I am obviously giving it 5 stars. :) This review was originally posted on ReadWriteLove28

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## Rhea Dsouza says

### Things to look out for in Tangled Webs by Lee Bross

**A VERY confused MC.** Meet Arista aka Lady A aka Ana aka someone help me because so many "aka's" aren't even legal. Arista is a thief...or rather, the aid of a thief. Her boss, Bones (Villain #1), collects secrets of the aristocrats in London's society and he'll keep them safe, for a price, of course. He is cruel, abusive, and basically owns Arista. He keeps her starved and filthy, only allowing her to dress up family for the sake of masquerade parties, when Arista becomes Lady A and collects the payment from London's richest. But Arista doesn't know who she is, or what she wants to be. When she's Lady A, she cherishes the control she, a girl, has over the rich bastards of the city. But when everything is said and done, Arista only wants to run away, and lead a normal life. All of this struggle and angst is fine, but not until it wears the reader down. Duuuude. You don't know what you want to do. Newsflash: None of us teens do. What you're experiencing is normal teenage behaviour. Jeez. Don't show me your inner struggle for 302 pages out of your 304 page book.

**A host of characters with the depth of the finest potholes in your city.** When I read a book, I expect to

see characters who are thicker than a cardboard and deeper than potholes. I don't want to see these characters come and go when the story line requires them to, and I don't want them to be used to drag the story along. Examples of these characters? Nic (Love Interest #1), Becky (Arista's "friend"), Grae (Reigning Love Interest) and most importantly Wild (Villian #2). These people came when they had to utter a few dialogues, and then left, leaving Arista to ponder upon—what else?—her identity crisis. Sigh.

**Instalove? Instalove!** I could go on and on and on about Arista and Grae and their love-at-first-sight situation. How she fell in love with his voice and the fact that he had been to India. How she thought about him all the time, forgetting how best friend and companion Nic had always protected her from Bones. How she thought that she wouldn't even give him her name for fear that he would...what go to the cops? How she decided (without him, might I add) that she would help his family (who found their way into the book, somehow) and make sure that they lived happily—no matter the fact that she'd essentially dug her own grave. And then there was Grae. I loved him the first time he met Arista. He was all soft voice and strong arms and swoons, but as I kept seeing more and more of him, I realised that while he was likeable, he wasn't some special character that I'd remember. Not bad, but nothing new either. Bummer, because I really like his name. MY NAME IS GRAE SINCLAIR AND I'M MYSTERIOUS AND SEXY \*insert sexy pelvic gyrations\*

**Villains who are as cliché as they come.** Two villains in this story, ladies and gents, and both do basically the same thing. One is a brute about it, the other uses sweet words to get what he wants. And if you don't do as they say, they will take from you, whether you like it or not. Let me tell you, in the history of YA has never been one villain who made me fear for the character's life. And Tangled Webs is no different. The two bad guys could have been worse had they shown something that other stereotypical villains don't but they stuck to the old classics and that just weekend the plot even further.

**London, 1725...or was it?** One of my main reasons for picking up this book was the time period. London in books is my happy place, whether in current times or two hundred years ago. And in Tangled Webs, apart from the repeated mentions of the London slums and squalors and the filth in the alleyways, nothing else made me feel like the book was based in London. In fact, it could be the current time in a city that hosted a little too many masquerades and my feelings about the book would remain unchanged. What is the use of such an elaborate setting if it brings nothing of consequence to the plot line?

Overall, I'm not too sure if I'm going to pick up the sequel to this one, but it's a confirmed two book series, so why the fuck not, right?

\*I was provided a free ecopy of this book in exchange of an honest review. This did not in any way, however, influence the content of this review.\*

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## **Khanh, first of her name, mother of bunnies says**

*What was she doing?*

*She had one job tonight. She had not come to the masquerade to lose herself in wistful dreams. Or in the eyes of the most intriguing young man she'd ever met. She should not wonder which exotic lands he had seen, nor wish to hear more about them. No, she should be meeting Lord*

*Huntington and finishing up Bones's business. Yet there she stood.*

This book is fantastic if you're into **insta-love, love triangles, and an allegedly cunning spy whose mind is constantly preoccupied with romance**. The main character is supposed to be an accomplished, hardened spy who has spent her entire life as a thief, street urchin, and blackmailer. Theoretically, she should be tough. In actuality, she is **filled with emotions, and spends much of the book feeling overwhelmed, in tears, and in blushes**.

*So many emotions crowded in her throat that it became impossible to take a full breath. Tears filled her eyes and she blinked rapidly to keep them from spilling over. This was so much more than she'd ever allowed herself to dream of that it completely overwhelmed her.*

The main character has **no common sense**. I could see gigantic gaping holes in her plot the entire book. The key to being successful as a spy, a blackmailer, is to not reveal your secrets. Don't get close to people. Don't reveal your weaknesses. **She did all of the above**. She has no instincts, she does not see repeated coincidences for the traps they are, and remains consistently stupid for the entire book.

**Arista** is a 17-year old orphan with the hardest-knock life of all. Orphaned since a child, she has been sold to a slavemaster who collects orphans to train them to be thieves. It's survival of the fittest, and somehow Arista has managed to survive this long using her wits, I'm not sure how, considering how incredibly fucking dumb she has been for the entire book, but that's her alleged history.

Currently, she is her master **Bones'** prize. She uses her wits to act as a blackmailer, collecting information from the wealthy, and using them to garner riches for her boss. She attends masquerades disguised as **Lady A** to conduct her business...she's mysterious, deadly, efficient. All of the following were proved completely wrong the moment **Arista falls into insta-love in the first mission** we witness with **Grae**.

*"Have you ever been on a ship before?" he asked, drawing her eyes back to him. All his attention was focused on her, despite the array of beautiful women eyeing him as they walked by. A thrill of pleasure washed over her.*

A ship! Bitches love ships! And immediately she is distracted from her mission.

*Have you been to India? The phantom voice filled her head. How could she explain that she was not herself because she'd been so close to her dreams of escape?*

But the mysterious, disguised gentleman isn't the only one making her heart flutter that night, for **Arista has also been holding a secret tendre for her childhood friend Nic**. Nic is a fellow orphan, throughout her childhood with Bones, he has protected her, shielded her from so many beatings. And **so quickly does Arista's attention span flees the instant she falls into insta-love with Grae**.

*Yes, she could feel something—had, in fact, earlier in the evening. Only it wasn't her longtime friend, the boy she thought herself in love with, who made her body tingle with awareness. It wasn't Nic's promise that made her heart pound erratically as she sat in the darkness.*

*It was the memory of a dark-eyed stranger in a highwayman's disguise that made her yearn for so much more than this life.*

Repeatedly, Arista finds herself distracted from her true job.

*He had filled her thoughts constantly over the past several nights, despite her best efforts to push him away. She stared up at him, waiting, fighting the breathlessness that had made it difficult to inhale normally.*

*You're here to do a job, she reminded herself.*

Repeatedly, she finds herself fighting off attraction for a guy when she should be focused on fighting for her life. Arista keeps thinking about him in the most inappropriate moments, like when **she is nearly discovered for the blackmailer she is.**

*Her pulse quickened, despite the precarious position she was in. There was a tone of vulnerability under the steely rage in his voice. It made her stomach twist in unexpected ways. It made her remember their brief time together. She, too, had wished they might meet again under the safety of a disguise. Heat surged to her cheeks. She had to be glowing like a lantern. Did he remember the kiss as well as she did?*

She had a chance for escape, and she blew it. I could not believe how incredibly dumb she is. She reveals to her enemies that she cares for certain people, **that's fucking dumb.** If you reveal your weaknesses, if you reveal that you love someone, those people can be held hostage to make you comply. It's fucking common sense and I cannot believe such an allegedly witty, cunning, clever girl can be such a dumb bitch.

Arista constantly flushes, blushes, heat constantly floods her face. She cries, she is overwhelmed, she sobs, she falls into tears. I'm sick of it and I'm sick of this book. She's such a fucking martyr. I wanted a strong, brave character. I don't want a weeping mess.

*The words were punctuated by huge sobs ripping from her chest. He couldn't really want her or love her. She was nothing. An orphan girl with no past.*

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## Maja (The Nocturnal Library) says

Beautiful exteriors often hide the nastiest things, in life and literature alike. We learn that lesson very early in life, and we readers quickly learn to be wary of gorgeous covers. But the wariness can make us miss out, and *Tangled Webs* has a lot more to offer than just the pretty swirls and colors on its dust jacket.

Not many YA books take place in the 18th century, so when I first read 'London 1725' in the summary, I was immediately drawn to it. It must be said that *Tangled Webs* doesn't offer many historical details, but it also avoids any inaccuracies. Because of the fast pacing, going into descriptions of historical settings and society could have been disastrous for this book. Bross gave us just enough to ground his story, but not enough to burden it.

We meet Arista as Lady A, a lady with a feathered mask who trades secrets and blackmails the rich, but not for her own gain. Underneath the ladylike behavior and glamour is a street urchin, a hungry orphan with nothing left to lose. Arista was bought from the orphanage when she was five or six, and taken to be a crime lord's many child beggars and pickpockets. But as she grew, she learned to talk and act like a lady, all to prove herself useful and save her own life.

Arista has only two friends, the slightly older Nic, her protector, and the former maid, Becky, who is responsible for her clothes and manners. They may be the only people she trusts, but they are constantly used to threaten her into obedience. Through it all, through pain and impossible circumstances, Arista has a backbone of steel. She is sometimes a bit naïve, having missed out on any and all normal experiences, but she is fierce, dependable and kind-hearted.

The romance may just be the weakest part of this book, not only because it's instalove, but because I never saw any actual trust develop between Arista and Grae. Pretty words and infatuation are what it all came down to. Arista kept working around Grae instead of with him which, while understandable, was also incredibly frustrating.

If I were a nitpicky sort of person in a nitpicky sort of mood, I could find at least twenty seven things wrong with this book. But I'm not, and I won't. At the end of the day, *Tangled Webs* is a flawed but entertaining story that kept me awake for most of the night and even made me cry at times.

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## Sarah says

(Source: I received a digital copy of this book for free on a read-to-review basis. Thanks to Disney Book Group and NetGalley.)

***"What if she could turn Arista into a proper lady who could attend the parties where jewels and money were ripe for the picking? Bones's greed had become their savior."***

There wasn't anything awful about this book, I just didn't really enjoy it.

Arista was a girl who did her job well, and looked out for those she cared about. She wasn't treated well, but at least she wasn't forced into a brothel.

***"She would never forget the night Nic had told her that Bones planned to sell her and Becky to the brothels. Arista would have died first."***

The storyline in this was about Arista leading a double life, posing as a Lady whilst selling people's secrets, but I just got bored, pretty quick, and I didn't really care what was going on.

***"You of all people should know, sir, that there is no such thing as trust among thieves."***

There was some romance, but even that didn't interest me, and I was just really, really pleased to get to the end of this. I'm thankful that this was wrapped up rather than ending as a cliff-hanger, because I don't really want to read another book in this series.

6 out of 10

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## Kristen says

This and other reviews on my blog [My Friends Are Fiction](#)

I tend to love historical YA so when I read the summary to Tangled Webs I was captivated and knew I'd want to read it. I had hopes that this book would be romantic, atmospheric and addictive. Sadly, I didn't end up enjoying it nearly as well as I hoped.

Though this book took place in 1725 London the setting never felt all that historical to me. I didn't feel swept back in time nor did I get a clear visual of this world that Lady A/Arista lived in. There were some pretty descriptions and I did enjoy a scene taking place at a masquerade ball. Really though, masquerade balls are always a hit with me.

I enjoy a story where the main character is leading a double life so I did like seeing the way Arista handled that aspect of the story. I felt like it gave the reader a good picture of the character and added much needed dimension. Though I felt a slight connection to Arista I didn't much care for her character. I didn't necessarily need to like her to enjoy the story but for this book I found myself annoyed with her more often than not. For being the most notorious black-mailer she seemed a bit lost when it came to anything sneaky-yes she is only 16 but if she's touted as the best I want to see evidence.

Sadly, I never was able to really connect to any of the other characters. I thought I was going to like Nic, Arista's childhood friend and crush, but he really only came around when it was convenient to move the story along. Grae was easy to like but not easy to really care about. I wasn't overly concerned about what happened to him or any of the characters throughout the story.

Because of my constant disconnect I wasn't able to really get behind the romance which really impaired my enjoyment since it was a pretty prominent factor in the book. I never felt chemistry between the romantic leads and honestly everything between them felt rushed. It all seemed pretty insta-love. I really wouldn't have minded the instant attraction if I'd have been able to feel it while reading.

Final Thoughts:

The summary for Tangled Webs sold me on romance, a historical setting, a girl dressing as a boy—all things I love in YA fiction. Sadly, none of these really felt executed all that well. I do think readers who can connect to the characters and the romance will enjoy this far more than I did. And I must say, this arc was absolutely beautiful as I'm sure the hardcover will be as well.

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## Alyssa says

\*\*\*Review posted on [The Eater of Books! blog](#)\*\*\*

Tangled Webs by Lee Bross  
Book One of the Tangled Webs series  
Publisher: Disney-Hyperion  
Publication Date: June 23, 2015  
Rating: 4 stars  
Source: ARC sent by the publisher

Summary (from Goodreads):

London, 1725. Everybody has a secret. Lady A will keep yours—for a price. This sumptuous, scandalous YA novel is wickedly addictive.

Lady A is the most notorious blackmailer in the city. With just a mask and a gown to disguise her, she sweeps into lavish balls and exclusive events collecting the most valuable currency in 1725 London—secrets.

But leading a double life isn't easy. By day Lady A is just a sixteen-year-old girl named Arista who lives in fear of her abusive master, Bones, and passes herself off as a boy to move safely through the squalor of London's slums. When Bones attempts to dispose of his pawn forever, Arista is rescued by the last person she expects: Jonathan Wild, the infamous Thief Taker General who moves seamlessly between the city's criminal underworld and its most elite upper circles. Arista partners with Wild on her own terms in the hopes of saving enough money to buy passage out of London.

Everything changes when she meets Graeden Sinclair, the son of a wealthy merchant. Grae has traveled the world, has seen the exotic lands Arista has longed to escape to her whole life, and he loves Arista for who she is—not for what she can do for him. Being with Grae gives something Arista something precious that she swore off long ago: hope. He has promised to help Arista escape the life of crime that has claimed her since she was a child. But can you ever truly escape the past?

What I Liked:

When I first saw the name "Arista", I was just the slightest bit turned off. I don't like the name (though it's not TOO bad), but also, I didn't like Lady Arista from Kerstin Gier's Ruby Red trilogy very much (she's a snobby grandmother, so I don't think we're supposed to like her). But Arista from Tangled Webs turned out to be quite a fun and likable character. I enjoyed reading her story, and I sympathized and felt bad for her often. This story was a breath of fresh air, after all those three-star reads I've gone through recently!

The setting is London, 1725. Arista is secretly Lady A, a young woman who everyone knows works for Bones, a dangerous man known for his blackmailing. The highest payer will have their secrets kept by Bones. But fail to pay, and your secrets are out. Lady A ensures that secrets are found out and payments are made. This is not a comfortable life, and Arista wants to leave forever and go to India. When a night on the job goes wrong, Arista finds herself in the clutches of a new thief and blackmailer, deceptively no better than Bones. Arista has things to lose - her friend Becky, her budding relationship with Graeden Sinclair and his family... Arista is caught in a web of deceit, and there is no easy way out.

I love historical fiction! This book is heavily historical, and I enjoyed it. There were some anachronisms in terms of the speech, I believe, but I tried not to let it bother me too much (they weren't common and they were \*almost\* passable as common across all time periods). I didn't spot too many other anachronisms, which was nice. The historical aspect of this book was lovely! Of course, Arista's existence as Lady A is odd, but this is where we use our imagination.

I like Arista very much. She is hardened and brave, sly and clever. She isn't as devious and malicious as her Lady A reputation might imply. She wants to be free of it all, to go to India and never come back. Arista never wanted to work for Bones, or Wild. She had no choice in either matter, and it was losing her freedom all over again when she "joined" Wild. It's hard not to feel sorry for Arista, given her difficult past, present, and future. But I like how strong she is, how cool and collected yet sad and emotional-filled she is. She isn't a conscience-less thief!

By chance and terrible timing, Arista and her lady's maid/friend Becky are abandoned by Bones, and are snatched up by Wild (sort of). Arista makes a deal with Wild, to keep doing what she's doing, but for him. Arista agrees so that she and Becky will have shelter and food. Arista met Grae at a ball while doing a job,

and she can't get him out of her head. Fate throws them together, and now Arista sees Grae often.

I liked Grae, though you'll see a few complaints below. I found him to be a tad one-dimensional (like I said, more below). He's a strong and kind male protagonist with a very important role to play in the story. He's the son of a merchant owning a fleet of ships, and Grae is the captain of one. Grae is several years older than Arista, and he is a lovely young man. He's definitely a swoon-worthy love interest - and the one and only love interest.

The synopsis will have you thinking that there might be some sort of love triangle, possibly with Grae and Wild being the love interests. UNTRUE. Throughout the entire book, the only love interest is Grae. Wild is another employer, another man putting Arista in a gilded cage. There is no romance there whatsoever. There is no romance anywhere except between Arista and Grae.

And I really, really liked the romance in this book. Grae and Arista meet before he meets "Arista" - he met her at a masquerade ball while she was disguised, so he didn't know she was Arista or Lady A. Things heat up between them immediately upon seeing each other - lust at first sight. I LOVED this. And then he meets her as Arista, and he's shocked and angry, but the chemistry is still very much alive. And sizzling. Seriously, for a historical fiction novel, the romance was pretty alive! I liked this a lot.

The story is exciting, thrilling, sad, and engaging. I thought it got a little predictable towards the end, but that might have just been me. Nevertheless, I liked the ending. I kind of hoped this book would be a standalone, but I see on Goodreads that it is listed as a series. Companion series? I kind of hope it's not a continuation series! This book ended perfectly, and I'd almost hate to see a sequel "ruin" it!

What I Did Not Like:

I mentioned above - I found Grae to be a smidgen one-dimensional. He just didn't seem real to me. I'm not sure why, but he seemed a bit flat. Almost too perfect? I liked him a lot, don't get me wrong. But I feel like I didn't get enough time to get to know him - maybe that's it?

That's another thing - time moves quickly in this book. You know that whole "one months later" or "she did this for the next three weeks" kind of thing? The author employs this tactic, which is fine, but it messes with the progression of Grae and Arista's relationship. I feel like Grae and Arista didn't get enough up-close-and-personal time (and I'm not even talking about in a romantic way - though that would have been nice too). Their relationship is well-developed (we know this because of the time lapse), but we as readers don't SEE this development, really. So it wasn't insta-love at all! More like omission of development. If that makes sense.

I liked Grae a lot and I really liked the romance. So don't get me wrong. But both could have been stretched out for readers! This book was short, so another thirty to forty pages of exposition between Grae and Arista would have not only shown the development of their relationship, but also taught us more about Grae!

Would I Recommend It:

Despite a few misgivings, I really enjoyed this book! It's definitely worth the read, so I would recommend it. Kickbutt heroine, sweet and steamy romance, hot male protagonist, swift action - what's not to love? And it acts well as a standalone (though I see Goodreads says it's part of a series), so theoretically, you could stop after this book and love it!

Rating:

4 stars. I'm glad I liked this book! It was great, I've already reread some parts. I'm torn on how I feel about it

being part of a series, but I will definitely read the sequel, no matter my feelings on this book and the series. This one ended so wonderfully, there shouldn't be a sequel! But I'll read it anyway.

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## Larissa says

See this mini review at: [YA Midnight Reads](#)

This novel had quite the premise, it appealed to me on every level. I mean come on, historical fiction coupled up with a complex blackmail scenario? Sign me up. Unfortunately with *Tangled Webs* I found myself simply unable to finish it. I ended up marking it as DNF at 30 percent just because I was so, so, so detached and bored out of my mind. The biggest issue for me was definitely the writing in this one. It just read as so bland and typical, and because of that the characters ended up in the same boat for me. You see I didn't end up finishing this one not because it was overwhelmingly rage inducing, but rather because it was so utterly mediocre for me. I had no interest or investment on what happened in terms of plot, characters, romance...anything. I think it says something that a story about blackmailing in the 1700s was so boring.

Perhaps that has something to do with the fact the story didn't really feel like it took place in the 1700s. I felt as though the lack of worldbuilding made it feel like the novel could have taken place in Canada in the 1940s, or really any time period at all. Given this is a historical fiction novel, I do find the historical elements to be quite crucial and it would be an understatement to say *Tangled Webs* was lacking in that department. The setting and time period added nothing to the novel at all.

There was definitely romance in *Tangled Webs*...unfortunately. I didn't read the story long enough to see if the love triangle presented was in fact a love triangle, but from what I've gathered this seems to be the case. The love triangle is between the main character's sole confidant (who has been with her over the course of her whole life and has saved it on a few occasions) and this random gentleman she met one night at a ball and is completely head over heels in love with. I can already make a guess who the main character ended up with (and I looked some reviews to confirm) and it's truly just sad to me despite how many times we've raged about insta-love it continues to prevail in YA fiction. It honestly makes zero sense to me and never will. Of course, since I felt so detached from the characters, their romance(s) among each other definitely didn't result in swooning, but rather rolling my eyes on an extremely frequent basis.

Overall, I found myself extremely disappointed by *Tangled Webs*. I couldn't get through more than 30 percent of the novel due to my extreme ennui, the lackluster romance, how the historical elements were lacking and how I frankly didn't have a single care towards any of the characters.

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## Rashika (is tired) says

### Actual Rating 2.5

*\*\*\*This review has also been posted on [The Social Potato](#)*

I haz mixed feelings about this book and that makes me very sad. I really wanted to love it and love it I did not.

Before getting into the nitty gritty, I just wanted to give a shout out to whoever was in charge of all the artwork on the pages and whoever was in charge of the cover because holy guacamole, can I get a GORGEOUSSSSSS?

On to more serious stuff though. **Lady A was not exactly what I expected. She is not nearly as badass as I had imagined her to be.** I wanted to be blown away by her badassery. I wanted to cheer her on as she dealt with the nobility and watched them shrink in fear but sadly that's not what happened because Arista, aka Lady A, does not enjoy blackmailing the nobility. **Alas her soul is not as dark as mine and she hates the life she lives.** She would do anything to get out of it (and rightfully so because her 'master' is a complete waste of oxygen.)

I just really have a thing for books involving crime okay? I love seeing people be manipulated and not even know it's happening. I LOVE all the cleverness usually involved in books where the main character is part of the crime life but that's not what I got in this book which would explain my reaction. **Now please understand that a lot of this is just personal taste and not really reflective of the book because in spite of my expectations, I actually found myself warming up to Lady A.** Sometimes she was a little too loyal in my opinion (given the way she had grown up I kind of expected her to be hardened instead of being soft in terms of the people she has emotional connections with) but in the long run, she was just a young girl trying to make the best of her resources to figure the best way out of a life she wants nothing to do with. I even enjoyed seeing her come across barriers she should have been able to account for but couldn't because no one can think of everything.

I loved that she was faced with challenges that might have seemed obvious to the reader (and weren't even major twists or anything) but the actual truth is that no one can be all knowing and more likely than not, things aren't going to turn out the way you want them to.

**My biggest issue with this book was the romance. I didn't like it.** At the beginning of the novel Arista clearly has a crush on Nic but then suddenly she meets Grae and her feelings just disappear. **I am appreciative of the fact that there was no love triangle but seriously.** Feelings don't just vazzoom (aka disappear)! I also just didn't like Grae. It's not that he was bad by any means. He was a sweetheart and treated Arista with the respect she deserved and blah blah blah. My problem was that **I didn't understand his fascination with Arista and I didn't like how he was casted as Arista's savior.** That girl has brains and is clever, she can save herself. She is a young independent woman who don't need no man! (although romantic interests can be fun) I think Grae contrasted her character so much it almost made Arista seem helpless when she isn't.

My favorite character was obviously Nic. **Nic is great. He is such a complex character and I LOVED IT. I only wish we could have seen more of him.**

The book was very well paced and even though there were some cheesy bits, it was a fun read. I actually really did enjoy all the complicated tangledness (trying to make a pun here guys, just roll with it.) I just wish we actually got more into the secret bartering bit and got to learn what exactly was happening and what kind of secrets the nobility traded to get things accomplished. I did enjoy the set up though and I also liked the world that Bross had created.

**I would suggest not to get lured in by the promise of crime because this book doesn't focus so much on the fascinating crime life than it does on Arista. It's her story to a better life, not about how she engages in crime.** The bits involving crime were great but also, like I said, it's Arista's story to a better life.

This was a fun book to read and while I didn't love it, I'd still say it's something to read if you're in the mood for a light and entertaining book.

Post Script: I also just found out there will be a sequel and I am DEFINITELY curious to see where things will go! This could get verreh interesting.

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