



Secrets of a Summer Night

Lisa Kleypas

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Four young ladies at the side of the ballroom make a pact to help each other find husbands... no matter what it takes

Proud and beautiful Annabelle Peyton could have her pick of suitors—if only she had a dowry. Her family is on the brink of disaster, and the only way Annabelle can save them is to marry a wealthy man. Unfortunately her most persistent admirer is the brash Simon Hunt, a handsome and ambitious entrepreneur who wants her as his mistress.

Annabelle is determined to resist Simon's wicked propositions, but she can't deny her attraction to the boldly seductive rogue, any more than he can resist the challenge she presents. As they try to outmaneuver each other, they find themselves surrendering to a love more powerful than they could have ever imagined. But fate may have other plans—and it will take all of Annabelle's courage to face a peril that could destroy everything she holds dear.

Secrets of a Summer Night Details

Date : Published October 13th 2009 by HarperCollins e-books (first published 2004)

ISBN :

Author : Lisa Kleypas

Format : Kindle Edition 384 pages

Genre : Romance, Historical Romance, Historical, Historical Fiction, Regency

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From Reader Review Secrets of a Summer Night for online ebook

Ronyell says

Why is it every time that I read a book by Lisa Kleypas, I am always so into the characters and the situations that surrounds them? Well, the answer to that is that Lisa Kleypas is clearly a brilliant romance writer and reading many of her books has been an awesome experience that I have enjoyed doing over and over again! This time, I have read the first book in Lisa Kleypas' "Wallflower" series called "Secrets of a Summer Night" and it is surely full of drama, thrills and hot romance that will surely put any romance fan in a soothing mood!

Annabelle Peyton, well known for being a wallflower in London society, vows to seek a worthy husband to cover her family's debt since she does not have a dowry that would make her worthy in any nobleman's eyes. However, Annabelle has her sights set on Lord Kendall, a lord who is currently unmarried, but suddenly, Annabelle realizes that Simon Hunt, a mysterious man that Annabelle met years ago, is also after her heart and plans to make Annabelle his alone! Will Annabelle allow Simon into her life? Read this book to find out!

Oh my goodness! Words cannot describe how much I loved this book from Lisa Kleypas' popular "Wallflower" series! Lisa Kleypas has done an excellent job at writing this romantic tale of what true love is all about! What I really loved about this book were the characters themselves, especially Annabelle Peyton and Simon Hunt as they are both strong and interesting characters! Let me start with Simon Hunt first since I am really interested in his character. Simon Hunt is easily one of the best romance heroes ever created because not only does he have an awesome muscular body that makes him somewhat of a superhuman, but he has a heart full of gold as he deeply cares for Annabelle during her time of need and he is willing to put his life in the line if anything happens to Annabelle and it was that personality trait of Simon's that made me really love his character. I have briefly mentioned about Simon's muscular body and I just love any romance hero who has muscles of steel, especially in the case of Simon as Lisa Kleypas makes sure that the audience knows how hard Simon's muscles are! Another character I really loved in this book was Annabelle Peyton herself as she is clearly a strong and independent woman who does not let anyone get in the way of her goal of obtaining a husband. I will admit at first that I got a little annoyed with Annabelle always dismissing Simon, even though it is clear from the get go that Simon is a seriously pleasant man, but once she found out what a gentle and loyal man Simon is, she cared as much for Simon as Simon did for her and I was just so amazed at the lengths that Annabelle took to protect Simon! I also loved the brief little relationship between Lord Westcliff and Lillian Bowman as they clearly hate each other, but I guess once I read the rest of the "Wallflower" series, they might change their tune. And let us not forget about the sizzling love making scenes between Annabelle and Simon as they are extremely out of this world hot and they provide the best love making dialogues I have ever read from any romance novel like:

"I want to make you scream and claw and faint in my arms."

For anyone who do not like reading about sex scenes in a book, this book has many sex scenes between Annabelle and Simon and it would be best to skip over these scenes if they are uncomfortable to read through.

Overall, "Secrets of a Summer Night" is a clearly extraordinary book from the great romantic mind of Lisa Kleypas that all romance novel fans will enjoy for many years to come!

Review is also on: Rabbit Ears Book Blog

Heather K (dentist in my spare time) says

Finally, FINALLY, a Lisa Kleypas book that I actually like! I'm not broken after all!

I was beginning to think that perhaps I was the only person on earth to *hate* Lisa Kleypas. I 2-starred both *Suddenly You* and *Somewhere I'll Find You*, and I was really ready to just throw in the towel. However, I already owned *Secrets of a Summer Night* so I figured I would try *one* more time.

#bathtubbook

And I'm soooo happy that I gave this one a try.

This was a great story with a complex H and h, a great set of side characters, and a romance that developed slowly over time. Despite some awkwardness between the two MCs at the 80% mark or so, the romance was simply divine.

I think I found the first Kleypas series I can get behind. Here's to hoping the rest of the books in the series will be winners too.

Jessica's Totally Over The Top Book Obsession says

4.5 I love you Dammit Stars

*****Spoilers*****

“You...you mustn’t stare at me like that.” Soft as the murmur was, he caught it. “With you here, nothing else is worth looking at.” -Annabelle and Simon

I love Lisa Kleypas! Now a little while back I bought the whole Hathaways series for 4.00 and it was my first taste of Lisa Kleypas. I fell madly in love with all the Hathaways and when I finished that series I went to goodreads to find more books by LK to read. That was when I found out that *The Wallflower* series is connected to the Hathaway series and was suppose to be read first. Oops. Of course I went out to every book store I know and found the whole *Wallflowers* series for a 1.00 each. It was such a good buy! I enjoyed *Secrets Of A Summer Night!!!* It was everything I love about LK's books. Annabelle and Simon's story was so very sweet.

“Let me spoil you,” he whispered. “Let me take care of you. You’ve never had anyone to lean on, have you? I’ve got strong shoulders, Annabelle.”-Simon

Annabelle took me a bit to warm up to. At first I wanted to shake Annabelle because she was so snobby and full of self importance. I hated the way she looked down at Simon like he wasn't good enough for her just because he wasn't peer. But slowly she realized that she was a prejudice snob and that Simon was great. And as she grew as a person she grew on me as well. I ended up loving her. She turned out to be a brave, sweet, and loyal. Simon omg Simon!!!! He was amazing and made the book for me. I love a man that knows what he wants and goes for it. I got that in spades with Simon. He seen Annabelle and he set out to have her. Period! He went after her like a lion going for a gazelle. Simon was sexy, sweet, honest to the point of rude at times, possessive, and confident. I loved how he slowly broke down all Annabelle's walls and worked his way into her heart. He could see the wonderful person she was underneath. I also loved that he seen her worth when all the other men seen a broke woman they could take a vantage of. But the thing that melted my heart was that Simon thought she was sleeping with a man for money and didn't care that she wasn't a virgin he still wanted to marry her and take care of her. Of course she was a virgin he was wrong but the point was it didn't matter to him.

“I love you, dammit.” She brushed her lips teasingly against his. “How much?” He made a slight sound, as if the soft kiss had affected him intensely. “Without limit. Beyond forever.” “I love you more.”-Simon and Annabelle

Simon and Annabelle's relationship was a slow burn since at first she would snub him. But they had serious passion. I felt they had a great build up to a sweet love. It felt real. Simon was so sweet to Annabelle after they were married. He really took care of her and her family. And Annabelle fell hard for her husband. They both had a playful side that was cute. One of my favorite things about this book was the friendship between Annabelle and her fellow Wallflowers Lillian, Daisy, and Evie. They were a funny band of misfits hell bent on finding husbands and helping each other in any way they could. My favorite of the group was Lillian. She was so outspoken and foul mouthed. I loved how her and Earl Westcliff (Marcus) butted heads and took a dislike to each other. There was some major passion burning under all that hate and I can't wait to read their book! This was a sweet, romantic read and I loved it! I only took off a 1/2 star for Annabelle's snobby attitude because I wish she would have changed sooner. Other than that it was perfect! These 2 quotes just sums it up so nicely!! They are my favorite quotes of the whole book!

“I realized something,” she said huskily, “when I was standing outside the foundry, watching it burn and knowing you were inside.” She swallowed hard against the thickness in her throat. “I would rather have died in your arms, Simon, than face a lifetime without you. All those endless years... all those winters, summers... a hundred seasons of wanting you and never having you. Growing old, while you stayed eternally young in my memories.” She bit her lip and shook her head, while her eyes flooded. “I was wrong when I told you that I didn’t know where I belonged. I do. With you, Simon. Nothing matters except being with you. You’re stuck with me forever, and I’ll never listen when you tell me to go.” -Annabelle

“My God, I can’t stand this! I can’t let you go out every day, fearing every minute that something might happen to you, knowing that every ounce of sanity I’ve got left is hinged on your well-being. I can’t feel this way...it’s too strong...oh, hell. I’ll turn into a raving lunatic. I’ll never be of use to anyone again. If I could just reduce it somehow...love you only half this much...I might be able to live with it.”-Simon

Christina ~ Brunette Reader says

Finally getting around this vintage Kleypas. I found it much better written and engaging than her latest historical offerings, which I recently read, though I must also admit I enjoyed *Secrets of a Summer Night* more as a fun series set-up than for the romance itself.

Long story short, Annabelle Payton is a genteel but destitute beauty who needs to marry for money, quickly. Simon Hunt wants her, he's handsome and now filthy rich, and well-connected into the Ton, but remains a cleaned-up butcher's son, therefore he won't do. No, no and no! *stomps dainty foot*

Oh, conflicts that shouldn't be conflicts, how many innumerable romance books have they spawned?

She must be a manipulative uppity lightskirt because... she just is and is been giving me the cold-shoulder for the last couple of Seasons!! He must be a selfish, unsuitable boor because... reasons!!

Let's see how long it takes her to become desperate enough to accept a "would you be my mistress" proposition. Let's see if I can be the Self-Victimising Queen of the year (1843, by the way).

A little more pragmatism from the heroine's part and a little less cynicism from the hero's and this book would have ended by what, page 50? I understand the need of a plot, and this type of scenario can be a legitimate one as any, but at the same time I've never been fond of storylines where each lead is ready to uncritically assume the worst about the other almost at first sight, so it was hard for me to warm up to both Annabelle and Simon. They eventually come to their senses pretty soon, it's a romance after all, though despite the unconvincing villain sub-thread kicking in to infuse some action, the gist of things seemed to boil down to the basic fact that the heroine had to reconsider her morals and overcome her snobbery about the hero's origins. Meh.

That said, this is still a quite satisfying read, just not as outstanding as I was hoping for. The writing flowed, there were some nice touches of humour and Kleypas's ability to convey the couple's chemistry and sensuality always top rate, if here somehow disjointed from the emotional progression.

The best parts were the scenes involving the secondary characters and their relationship with the protagonists and reading about how the four Wallflowers meet and become a team was really enjoyable. Same goes for Simon's interactions with two future heroes, which also give deeper background information on the "world" the author has created for this series and which sound like very promising material for the following books.

María Ángeles says

De los que te enganchan desde el principio y que son un placer leer.
Primer libro leído de Kleipas. Ya era hora...

Phrynne says

This is my kind of leisure reading, a good historical romance, well written with charming characters and a lot of witty dialogue.

I very much enjoyed the romance between the two main characters and loved the friendship between the four

Wallflowers. The story was really entertaining and full of drama. Loved it:)
I am looking forward now to the rest of the series!

Ingela says

Written April 5, 2015

4 Stars - Charming, steamy and much chuckling fun. These determined 'Wallflowers' are women to admire

Yet another amusing 'Wallflowers' HR as audiobook (11 hrs) narrated by always excellent Rosalyn Landor. (You get this one for just \$7 incl. the e-book / kindle at Amazon right now.)

Well done, well narrated, very entertaining HR

I liked the of many readers so much beloved Devil in Winter (#3 - 3.9 stars) some weeks ago and this series instalment was just as well written, funny and filled with interesting characters. Looking forward to read about the American sisters and their way to love soon too.

London, 1843

Secrets of a Summer Night is the first 'Wallflowers' part and it is about the beautiful **Annabelle Peyton**. A 25 years old woman in a urgent need of a (rich) suitable husband. She has tried in several seasons to find a match to 'save' her mother and younger brother. But without wealth, assets, other than a pretty face, in her bride coffin it is quite hopeless.

Mr. Simon Hunt is a new player in the ballrooms that has an "good eye" (an lust..) for Annabelle. Once was Simon just the local butcher's son but is by now both very wealthy and powerful. Nevertheless maybe not the "right" kind of admirer for a well born young lady like Annabelle. In her opinion anyway.

‘What was she doing? Continuing this game, maintaining even this fragile communication with him, was pointless. No ...it was dangerous. There was no choice to be made between safety and disaster.’

What I maybe like most about this book is that our heroine here isn't always a good & nice girl. Annabelle is both pretty self-absorbed and indeed selfish. Well not always, sure she cares about her mother, brother and girlfriends (these interesting three other Wallflowers) but she also has some narrow-minded preconceptions, she often look down on others and are incredibly snobby when it comes to social class and the nobility. Though it's fun, I actually like the privilege to avoid having to face another admirable good-hearted young historical heroine occasionally.

Thus said, so fits course this little rougher, harder and cynical "working class" hero, Simon Hunt, her perfectly. They are like two confused magnets that lost each other and yet still not understood it.

..

‘Annabelle could hardly fail to note the differences between them. Hunt looked positively swarthy in the gathering dusk, big and potently masculine, with the eyes of a pirate and the casually ruthless air of a pagan king. He was no less arrogant than he had ever been...no tamer, no more refined...and yet somehow he had become the object of such all-consuming desire that Annabelle was certain she had lost her mind.’

Was it really that bad back in 1840s?

Another common beliefs in this particular historical, that really surprises me, is that the men here seem to think it is completely cool to wait out attractive women as 'poor' Annabelle until they were irremediable spinsters. Then they could be bought cheaply as dependent mistresses (sex-slaves) at a more convenient way than as spouses. The strong *women's rights* part in me wanted to scream and yell. ~ Ugh, for cold-hearted self-righteous men.

Thankgod Mr Hunt was a true gentleman, surprisingly but he did the 'right' thing, in the end.

Ms Kleypas is maybe not my absolute number #1 favorite in this HR genre but her books are nevertheless amusing and very steamy stories. There will be many more.

“Having regrets is the only sign that you’ve done anything interesting with your life.”

I LIKE - good historical romances in my headphones

Danielle The Book Huntress (Back to the Books) says

Gosh, what a standout start to the Wallflowers series. Simon is a definite hero in pursuit, one of my favorite types. He saw Annabelle and he had to have her. He wasn't always upstanding in the things he said or did, or his motivations. But it didn't help that Annabelle's inbred snobbery caused her to look down at him. Simon is a self-made man. He is very wealthy and his wealth has opened doors for him socially (just barely). The fact that he is a business associate (and friend of Lord Westcliff) does help him to get into this society that he really doesn't care about, except that it allows him to be close to the object of his desire, Annabelle Peyton. But Annabelle has been raised from the cradle to seek a marriage with a gentleman at the least, and a titled one, if entirely possible. Plus I think she is a little intimidated at how intensely Simon seems to want her, and how he is such a strong, vital man (not what she would consider an English gentleman at all). The first half of this book is a bit of a cat and mouse chase, as Simon spends his time hunting down the wary Annabelle.

Can I just say I adored Simon? He is just delicious to me. I love a strong, independent, self-made hero, who doesn't spend his time worrying about what others think. Annabelle came off as kind of mercenary. Yet I found I could not dislike her. She was in desperate straits. I could see why she was so fixated on making a good match. Yet at the same time, I wanted to yell at her, "Hey, Simon is loaded. He's hot. He wants you. Marry him." Let's be honest. I would have been throwing myself at Simon. He's one of my all time favorite LK heroes (top three). Yes I know he's got some ungentlemanly intentions towards Annabelle, but I felt that

he would take her any way he could get her.

He shows his love and devotion in many ways. I love the scene when he cares for Annabelle when she gets snakebitten. He totally could have taken advantage of her, but he didn't. And things are getting where she doesn't have the luxury to wait for an honorable offer. Yet he ended up offering marriage, after all. Because he loved her to the depths of his soul. Sigh! And what a good husband he is.

Now after their marriage, I felt some frustration towards Annabelle for her snobbery against Simon's family. I can understand culture shock, but she was married to Simon, and her life had changed permanently. I didn't really see her setting her mind on the fact that she was now a middle class businessman's wife to the degree that I hoped for. She liked the trappings of being a rich man's wife, but didn't like to think about how he made his money or his origins. It took that potentially tragic event for her to snap out of her 'old' thinking mode and see what a wonderful love and life she could have with Simon.

I didn't care for Westcliff that much at first. But when Westcliff tells her off, I started to warm to him. Before that, he was rather cold. But you could see he disliked Annabelle because he didn't really think she deserved Simon. To be frank, I was somewhat agreeing with him. I felt I could like this cold, aristocratic man when he risked his life to save Simon who was socially beneath him and was protective about him against a 'fortune-hunting adventuress,' which was how he saw Annabelle. I felt that Westcliff knew Annabelle pretty well, because in some ways they were of the same mindset and were having to open their minds to the fact that the Old England was changing as the century wound to a close. I liked that they became a united front in their mutual caring for Simon.

It may sound as if I am being harsh about Annabelle. I really like her despite her snobby tendencies. She is a very sweet, kind person, and was good to the other Wallflowers. She has a good sense of humor and was a good daughter. I just tend to be very protective about my favorite heroes. I want their heroine to be completely in love with them, because my favorite heroes are the type who are 110% in love with their heroine. They should be loved to the same intensity. I hate when the feeling is unequal in a romance. I was glad that Annabelle finally came around, although I wished it was a little bit sooner.

This is my second favorite Wallflower (after Devil in Winter) because I loved the fact that Simon was a man who set himself on a course, and never gave up. That course was winning his heroine, Annabelle. I loved the friendship between the four wallflowers, Annabelle, Lillian, Daisy, and my favorite, sweet Evie. You get the impression that the friendship they form will stand the test of time. And you hope they will all meet and marry men worthy of them. Also I loved the late Victorian setting, and how rich the descriptions of this time and the people are in this story. Secrets of a Summer Night is definitely one of my all time favorite Lisa Kleypas novels.

Actors I would cast as Simon and Annabelle: Christian Bale and Kate Beckinsale.

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Suzanne (Under the Covers Book blog) says

Miss Annabelle Payton, Miss Lillian Bowman, Miss Evangeline Jenner and Miss Daisy Bowman are regular

sights at the peripheral of a ballroom. With each young lady having oddities and foibles that make them untenable to the bachelors of the ton. However, they strike up an unlikely friendship each vowing to help the others out to find a husband by means fair and foul. With the beautiful and spirited Annabelle being the first...

Miss Annabelle Payton's family are on the knife edge of poverty, to stop these dire straits Annabelle must marry and marry well. However, with no dowry to speak and it approaching her fourth season it is becoming nigh on impossible to catch a husband, let alone a peer of the realm. Instead she is starting to receive more dishonourable offers of becoming a mistress, offers that it seems she may have to consider if things don't change soon. One of these men is a Mr Simon Hunt, who has been longing for Annabelle for two long years, despite her repeated rebuffs, but he soon sees his opportunity when they are both invited to the country for a house party. However the Wallflowers also see the same opportunity for Annabelle to find a suitable husband. Let the games begin...

This is one of my favourite series, and Mr Simon Hunt is one of my favourite heroes. He is a self made man, a son of a butcher who has made his fortune in financial speculation and then on the blossoming trade of the railway. However, no matter how rich he is, he still will never fit in with the upper echelons of society, something that bothers him not at all. He is blunt, honest and very sure of himself (aka arrogant), how could you not love him? He also has some very dishonourable intentions toward Annabelle...to begin with, I love that as the book goes on his feelings towards Annabelle deepen; in this book it is more a case of lust at first sight rather than love. That is why I loved that Annabelle was such a strong heroine, I think if she was a weaker person and gave in to Simon at the beginning then this story would have been vastly different, and not so happily resolved. The love story between these two was very passionate and there were some hot sex scenes in the book (one in a linen closet, which is most definitely my favourite!) which added nicely to the couples growing affection for each other.

I also liked the introduction to the other Wallflowers, each having their own very distinct personalities and I look forward to reading Lillian's book next. One of my favourite parts of the book was when the girls were playing rounders-in-knickers, it was a very funny scene that never fails to have me in fits of giggles.

This book is very polished and well written, especially the dialogue, the interactions between the characters are really good, sometimes funny, sometimes intense and other times romantic. The conversations and banter between the wallflowers especially Lillian and Daisy Bowman shows their relationship of teasing and close sisters perfectly, and the conversations between Annabelle and Simon are equally sharp and witty. As well as this the language is elegant and seems very much in keeping with the language of the day, this isn't a contemporary book dressed in a historical setting. LK gets her setting very well with enough detail to keep it interesting but not bogging you down in details about that historical period.

I have read this book many times and it is one of my favourite series a must read for those who love romance, especially Historical Romance. ?

Rachel Reads Ravenously says

4 stars!

“Having regrets is the only sign that you’ve done anything interesting with your life.”

The first book in the Wallflower series, *Secrets of a Summer Night* is about Annabelle, a beautiful woman searching for a husband, but her family's financial troubles prevent this. No man wants to marry a woman with no dowry, but Annabelle must marry soon to prevent her family from being put out on the streets.

Annabelle's only luck seems to be with Simon Hunt, a man not of the nobility, but one who made a great deal of money in business. He's unrefined, blunt and even worse, he does not want Annabelle for his wife but as his mistress.

Befriending three other wallflowers at a ball, they make a pact to help get every single one of them married, and first up is Annabelle as this is her last season to find a husband. They concoct a plan, and hopefully their mischievous ways will work!

"I spent most of my youth hauling sides of beef and pork to my father's shop. Carrying you is far more enjoyable."

"How sweet," Annabelle mumbled sickly, her eyes closed. "Every woman dreams of being told that she's preferable to a dead cow."

Historical romance is not my go-to genre, but it's so fun to dabble in from time to time. Lisa Kleypas is an author I really click with because I don't end up rolling my eyes at the language or actions of the characters. She does her research really well, and is able to make a smooth transition into whatever time period she places her books in.

I also normally don't like Cinderella stories, and the rags to riches trope. But I loved Annabelle as a character, she was strong but had morals and pride. Her relationship with Hunt was a hate-to-love kind of story where over time the two get to know each other and fall in love, rather than love at first sight and it worked for me.

Beautifully written, I cannot wait to read the rest of the Wallflower books (disclaimer I've read *Devil in Winter* and *Again the Magic*, but I still really want to read the other two books). This book was exactly what I needed to read at exactly the right time.

"I'm coming to believe that there are two kinds of people... those who choose to be masters of their own fate and those who wait in chairs while others dance. I would rather be one of the former than the latter."

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Alp says

What a wonderful story!

This was another gem from one of my favorite authors. As always, Lisa Kleypas never ever fails me. *Secrets of a Summer Night* had me hooked from the very start, enraptured me in a way that I never imagined, and I found myself having a hard time putting it down.

I loved Simon Hunt! He's strong, smart, swoon-worthy, and sweet. Yet he could be a bad boy at times. No matter how rich he is, the peers have never accepted him as one of themselves. For the fact that he was born

a commoner, a butcher's son, he knows exactly who he is and never pretends to be someone he's not. He was attracted to Annabelle since the first time he laid eyes on her and he couldn't get her out of his mind. Two years later, Annabelle had remained unwed and Simon was more than ready to claim her as his own.

"I've wanted you since the first moment I saw you standing outside that panorama, digging for coins in your purse. I couldn't take my eyes from you. I could hardly believe you were real."

Annabelle Peyton and her family were in desperate straits. Marrying a wealthy nobleman was the only way for her to save her mother and her brother. I was surprised at how much I enjoyed her character. She's strong-willed, independent, and smart. Despite her lack of dowry, the way she ignored Simon's offer was a reflection of the value she placed on herself.

It was so sweet seeing Simon taking care of Annabelle in a time of need. And it was so lovely that their feelings grew stronger and deeper for each other with each moment they shared together. I loved the sizzling chemistry between them and how they couldn't keep their hands off each other and certainly, the way they kissed. ****Melt**** Not to mention their steamy hot and passionate sexy times.

"I have no self-control where you're concerned. Every minute that I'm not with you, all I can think about is being inside you. I hate everything that keeps you separate from me."

This was a very well-written and heartwarming story with an engaging plot, adorable characters, and breathtakingly beautiful romance. It was hilarious, refreshing, and touching all at the same time. Simon and Annabelle's love story made my heart swell and the ending brought tears to my eyes. The banter between the 4 wallflowers was witty and true to life.

I don't want to say much more because this is a book you should read it for yourself.

By the way, this was a very good historical romance story. I was overjoyed that I decided to pick up this one. Loved it!

****Thanks for the buddy read, lovely Ally.**

Penny Reid says

The first time I read this book (in 2012) I didn't appreciate it. I'd just plowed through a bunch of historical romances and this one blended in with the crowd.

OMG I WAS SO WRONG!!!!!!!!!!!!!! This book is magic. I loved it. A LOT. The push/pull between the two main characters was masterfully done. The tension of Annabelle's circumstances (and Simon's ignorance of her circumstances) was so perfect. I loved both of these characters so much. The perfect blend of tragedy, suspense, humor, romance. This book is (and has) everything. It's basically flawless.

Shawna says

5+ stars – Historical Romance

This is a great start to a fun, dazzlingly romantic series about four young ladies with very different personalities and backgrounds entering society who form a deep bond of friendship that grounds them as they traverse the rocky course of relationships and husband hunting in stuffy Victorian era England.

Beautiful Annabelle Peyton is determined to find a wealthy suitor with a high position in society to wed in order to save her family from financial ruin. Simon Hunt is a commoner with a self-made empire of vast wealth and power who infuriates and tempts her at every turn. He makes it clear that although he wants to be the one to introduce Annabelle to the wonders of passion, he won't offer her marriage. Of course, it doesn't take long before he falls hard for Annabelle, but can Simon and her friends, the wallflowers, convince her to take a chance on a love match?

Simon is such a butter-melting, swoon-worthy, amazing, romantic, and devoted hero...just yum! It's a wonderful start to a truly amazing series! Big 5 stars!

Auntee says

First of all, a big fat boot in the rear (to me) for letting this gem languish in the TBR for so long! Why am I so stubborn? So I have drifted away from historicals, but c'mon, this is Kleypas--I should've known better! I've loved so many of her books, and her heroes are some of my all time favorite romance heroes (Zachary Bronson, Jack Devlin, Derek Craven)--now I can add one more to the list--the deliciously sexy Simon Hunt (be still my heart)! I *loved* this guy! Talk about swoon-worthy! I'm telling you, there was a time or two that I was wondering if Annabelle Peyton had rocks for brains, rebuffing Mr. Hunt--who wants to marry a 'peer' when you can have Simon (even if he was not the 'marrying type')?

I know Annabelle had her mind set on marrying a peer to get out of a horrible financial predicament, and Simon (son of a working class butcher) was anything but. But there was this sizzling attraction, even though she didn't want there to be. This book was just *filled* with sexual tension, and had me on the edge, just wondering when (and how) Annabelle was going to give in to the temptation that was Simon. So he wasn't a peer, he wasn't the marrying kind, he wasn't in her social class (even though he was filthy rich due to hard work), he wasn't the physical ideal (he was big and brawny and rough looking), and she thought of him as ill-bred...but she couldn't deny the connection that they had. I loved the verbal sparring that they did, loved the whole Scarlett/Rhett vibe, loved how she tried to put him in his place and loved how he came back for more, and wouldn't be denied. He wanted Annabelle and he was going to have her!

What else did I love? Her relationship with the other "Wallflowers". The scenes with the bold Americans Lillian and Daisy Bowman, and the shy, stuttering Evie Jenner were some of my favorite (non-Simon) scenes in the book. It was so funny how they plotted to snag an appropriate husband for Annabelle (not that I approved of their methods--but their conversations were often hilarious)! And their game of 'Rounders' (which sounds like baseball) where they played in their drawers, only to be seen by Lord Westcliff and Simon? So well written--loved the defiance shown by Annabelle and Lillian!

*****spoilers*****

But my favorite scenes were the ones involving Annabelle and Simon. The extended chess game (*sigh*), the tending to Annabelle after the snake bite (*sigh*), the purchase of the boots (*sigh*), and the *honeymoon* (Yowza!)...and the bit of suspense at the end, and the declaration(s) of love? P-e-r-f-e-c-t-i-o-n.

Oh, I could go on and on, but I'm *dying* to start "It Happened One Autumn"--I want to see the stuffy Lord Westcliff redeem himself in my eyes. For this first book of **The Wallflowers** series--5 big stars!

My idea for Simon

Jen says

I've put off reading this series for so long and I have no idea why! I read the Hathaway books and thought nothing in the HR world could compare. Was I being a tad too judgmental? Maybe. Am I questioning my fierce love of the Hathaway clan? Hell no! Cam's a delicious bit of man and remains to this day one of my favorite book boyfriends.

That being said, I'm adding Simon Hunt to that list. Tall, dark, brooding and "commanding" in certain areas of his life **ahem**. Oh hell yes! Annabelle was a fantastic match for him and I loved the give and take of their relationship until they finally both (thank you, baby Jesus!) gave in and experienced the wonderful.

Well done again, Ms. Kleypas. I look forward to reading the rest of this series.
