



I Spy a Duke

Erica Monroe

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In the first in an adventurous new series, USA Today Bestselling Author Erica Monroe introduces the Covert Heiresses: four women who by day are the talk of the ton, and by night England's top spies.

She wants revenge...

When bluestocking Vivian Loren becomes the governess for the wealthy Spencer family, she's searching for clues about the murder of her brother, not a husband. But Vivian didn't count on James Spencer, the infuriatingly handsome Duke of Abermont.

He needs a wife...

As head of Britain's elite intelligence agency, James has no time to woo a wife. When he discovers Vivian's quest for answers has made her a pawn in a treacherous plot, James realizes they can help each other. She'll become his duchess, and he'll keep her safe from one of Napoleon's deadliest spies.

What begins as a marriage of convenience quickly becomes anything but, as they find out love is the most dangerous mission of all.

I Spy a Duke Details

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Author : Erica Monroe

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Genre : Romance, Historical Romance, Historical, Regency

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Download and Read Free Online I Spy a Duke Erica Monroe

From Reader Review I Spy a Duke for online ebook

Soany says

Un libro con una trama interesante centrándose sobre espías y no en bailes, matronas buscando cazar un pobre diablo o sobre la flor y nata de la sociedad. Nada previsible, y con personajes maduros inteligentes y muy bien desarrollados.

Una de las cosas que me gustó es que los protagonistas no se sienten atraídos de inmediato en su primer encuentro, primero empiezan a conocerse y poco a poco se van dando los sentimientos.

Tracy T. says

Wow I really liked this book a lot! Love a good historical romance spy book.

I loved the hero James. He was so sexy, handsome, smart and just,... YES! (This would be a fantastic audible book with the right female narrator like Carolyn Morris, Marian Hussey, Morag Sims) I liked Vivian too. She was a strong character, not a whiny simpering heroine. They had some good chemistry together, not forced at all. They got to know each other and really like each other. There was a very nicely written sex scene.

The story line and plot was great. It all flowed very well and was easy to follow along. There was lots of dialogue throughout the book. I love lots of dialogue so that was a bonus!

Another bonus: This book was not full of angst, misunderstandings, or the dreaded "that look meant something it really didn't". Such a treat to not have all that mess going on. This book really was a fantastic read! I highly recommend it if you like historical romance and spies, you will enjoy this read for sure!

All the secondary characters were great too. I am looking forward to their books.

I know I will be waiting a while, sigh... :/

In order:

I Spy a Duke - October 2015

A Spy Never Surrenders - Spring 2016

For Your Spy Only - Fall 2016

Spies Are Forever - Spring 2017

Sonya Heaney says

It's almost impossible for me to review this book. Why? Because it's a combination of an author whose books I REALLY enjoy and a trope that makes me want to scream with frustration.

There is nothing wrong with Erica Monroe's writing. In fact, I prefer it to most historical romance writers at the moment, and I appreciate the little details of day-to-day life she works into her books.

I would highly recommend her other series I've read.

It's just I've reached my limit with Bond, Duke Bond.

I can't do James Bond aristocrats, and I especially can't do Jane Bond aristocrats, which this book also has. This current fad is not for me, and so many historical romance authors have jumped on board. Why don't these powerful dukes go off and do powerful work in parliament and take care of their powerful estates? Where do they find the time for a whole lot of espionage?

The duke-who-is-a-spy is the historical romance equivalent of the contemporary romance hero who is not only a billionaire (never just a millionaire!), but also a prize-winning athlete, a Special Forces soldier, and gorgeous. It's overkill. It's mixing too many idealistic men up and making one.

You can have an alpha historical hero without a title. The historical spy books that have really worked for me are those where the hero isn't highly-ranked enough to have a title.

In fact, the reason I became a fan of this author was because she wrote historical romantic suspense about people lower down the social ladder.

I will say again: the author writes well. Her characterisation and research are excellent.

My problem with this series is that not only is our duke risking his noble neck doing his spy thing, but his siblings are too – the women included (about the same time Jane Austen was a young lady!). So much for protecting the family bloodlines by not getting the heirs killed...

So, look. This is not for me. I wanted to try it because I really wanted to like the series, but I couldn't do it. I've read one Duke Bond too many, I suppose.

However, if you like this trope, definitely give it a go.

Review copy provided by NetGalley.

Flor says

2.5

Whitney says

3.5 stars

I went back and forth between a 3 and 4 throughout this book. Don't get me wrong, I liked the book. I just felt it could be spruced up a bit. It was very slow moving the first 50%. I know that historical's typically move to a slower pace but this one was slower than usual. The actual romance was a tease. Maybe that makes me a bad person but I like some action throughout the whole book. Now, the premise of the story was intriguing. A ducal family made up of spies and we get to see them move through the ton for covert operations. I would say that this book is a nice baseline for an interesting series. Overall, I liked the characters and can see myself continuing the series.

*** A copy of this book was provided by NetGalley in exchange for an honest review***

Chris says

Right up there with Boris and Natasha! I love when a pair of spies fall in love, particularly when they've overcome a marriage of convenience during the Napoleonic Wars.

Does it get any better?

Eileen says

This book was a delight to read. It has all the dark, angsty moments that Ms Monroe is well known for, but with more light hearted moments. I love James. I think he's my new book boyfriend. Vivian is the perfect counterpart. I really enjoyed this book.

Lori D says

Erica Monroe does it again with her unique blend of intrigue, danger and romance! Bringing two people together on different missions, yet in the end on the same. Vivian Loren is grieving from the loss of her brother and is determined to revenge his death. Obtaining information that she needs to ingrain herself in the Spencer family's home to find out who killed her brother, she lands a job as a governess. James Spenser is who she is to spy on and as the days go by, she realizes he is not the brigand he is suppose to be. James, the Duke of Abermont is grieving the loss of his sister who died as the result as one of his missions. You see James is a spy and is working to find out information of his own. In the end the two begin working together and as Vivian comes into danger, James will do what he has to to protect her from harm. A definite page turner to find out what will happen and you become enthralled as the characters are masterfully developed. What a great story and cannot wait until more of this series comes out!! This book was gifted to me.

April says

#1 in the "Covert Heiresses" series and what a beginning. Simply WOW! Intriguing, passionate, and simply mesmerizing! Well written with engaging, and wickedly delightful characters. True, some was devious and evil, but nonetheless entertaining. Filled with intrigue, danger, spies, loss,grief, secrets, passion, engaging characters, to say the least and of course romance, passion and finally finding love amongst grief and angst. I was not disappointed in any any way in Ms. Monroe's story,once again, she has written a story with such passion as to keep the reader mesmerized. I truly look forward to the next dangerous installment. Feisty, dangerous and courageous females makes this a not to miss series. Fans of Historical Romance, spies, feisty females, heroic males,dangerous situations and a wickedly seductive tale will enjoy "I Spy a Duke". A most dangerous tale. Highly recommended!!

Received for an honest review from the publisher via Net Gallery and a personal buy

Rating: 4.5

Heat rating: Hot

Reviewed by: AprilR, courtesy of My Book Addiction and More

WhiskeyintheJar/Kyraryker says

3.3 stars

I received this book for free in exchange for an honest review. This does not affect my opinion of the book or the content of my review.

Vivian's brother was brutally murdered in Seven Dials and while the Bow Street Runners have given up, she refuses. When she receives a mysterious letter from "Sauveterre" claiming to know the killer of her brother, she desperately and blindly agrees to spy on the Duke of Abermont for him. After a few months of turning up no evidence of the Duke financing a revolution in France like Sauveterre wanted her to, his letters become more erratic and Vivian begins to fear for her life. James, the Duke of Abermont, has noticed the new governess to his brother in his peripheral but when they share a tete-a-tete, she becomes front and center. He's attracted to her but as the head of Clocktower, England's premier intelligence agency, his senses tell him she may not be all she seems. Attraction, half-truths, and danger will bring our couple together but also work to tear them apart.

This was my first book by Ms. Monroe and I was a big fan of the first half, it had a darker feel to it with Sauveterre evilly lurking on the fringes and Vivian and James having a forbidden pull to one another. There was a bit of insta-attraction with James very quickly willing to do anything for Vivian but since there was a well written underlining connection between the two, I was able to roll with it. The second half is where things slowed down quite a bit for me. James dragging out telling Vivian about his spy work and his constant self-loathing about feeling responsible for one of his sister's death was rehashed far too many times.

"How quickly the tides of her life had changed. From a viscount's ward to a governess to a criminal in a few small jumps."

Having Vivian spying on James the spy was a great way to get our couple together but the leap to him marrying her was a bit rushed, a more flushed out version may have made it feel less forced. There was a feeling of kerfuffle over Vivian's handling of the Sauveterre situation but she was overall a good strong character. There were a couple times where she was a bit too modern, her speech and then attitude in the bedroom, which threw me out of the time period of the story. I loved how James started off alluring and darkly dangerous but his character didn't have a lot of growth, he felt kind of stagnant. Feeling responsible for your sister's death would be a heavy burden but his hairshirt started to make me feel itchy after the hundredth time it was mentioned. Our couple had a compelling connection; I just wish it had been the focus of the story more.

"Because you see me." His steely gaze sent a shiver of awareness up her back in that look, she saw the emotions he held at bay, shimmering beneath the surface. "And I desperately need someone who will see the man behind the title."

The Clocktower agency is named but really only discussed through James as the front leader of the spies (he answers to a head in the government) and how all of his family members are a part of it (well, expect little brother Thomas who after Vivian stops being his governess disappears forever into the nursery). James' three sisters are all spies and we are introduced to all of them here and I assume they will be the heroines of future

books in the series. One scene features James, his friend Richard, and his sister Elinor, who due to her illness can only contribute her mind and is not able to go out into the field, has me dying for Elinor's story and because of some interesting tension has me anticipating Richard as the hero. As secondary characters, they were all featured beautifully, not intrusive, added to the flavor of the story, and left me curious for their own stories. Sauveterre started off deliciously villainous but fell too much into the background for a while, essentially becoming the boogeyman until he was thrust into the story. He seemed for his brief moments in the ending scenes to be crude for the sake of being crude as a way to make him seem even darker; I ended up being a little disappointed with how his storyline eventually connected with everything.

"The most important things are true. You and me. Our marriage."

I Spy a Duke may feature the ever popular tropes of spies and Dukes but the overall feel of the story is different enough to keep it from feeling tired. There were not actually a lot of spy antics besides James training Vivian and talking about how he is responsible for everyone and besides a few "Your Graces" our couple never visits London, so James' rank isn't a central feeling either. James' self-loathing, his drawn out hemming and hawing over telling Vivian his was a spy, and the rushed feel of their attraction and why they married, were the most problematic for me. The alluring and dark feel of the story, however, hit a high note and will have me looking to this author's backlist and watching for future books in this series.

Grace Cieleen says

I received this book at NetGalley because I wanted to try and do a review. I guess, I am a little late in talking about this but nevertheless -- I enjoyed reading and putting myself into the perspective as a reviewer.

I'm going to make this short and simple. This is my first time to read from the author and my first time to read from the genre. This book is a Historical Romance plotted in a unique setting of spies and protecting the crown. It was a little unconventional for me at first but I slowly fell into the book and its provocative setting. There's something about spies that make a little love story make more exciting.

Both H/h and are easy to love and reading on through the book felt like embarking on a dangerous mission with them and at the same time watch how their love unfold in every chance they get to prove and admit their feelings. It was an easy to read love story that gives you the right amount of tingles every now and then.

This book is a first in a series and the problem with the first's - more often than not- is that it gets all the pressure of building up a good solid foundation. Props to this one for solidly making me anticipate the next few in the series which are being built up with its interesting secondary characters.

(Tori-Smexybooks) smexys_sidekick says

Originally posted at SmexyBooks-<http://smexybooks.com/2015/10/review-...>

I Spy A Duke is the first book in Monroe's Covert Heiress series. A series that revolves around a ducal family of spies whose goal is to defeat the agents loyal to Napoleon Bonaparte. Monroe creates an entertaining abet slightly dark world filled with spies, humor, wit, intrigue, suspense, and an emotionally rich romance. Though heavily character drive, Monroe does a wonderful job of balancing the dynamic characterization of her characters with a story rich in details and plotlines.

Vivienne Loren lost her home when her father passed away, then her brother when he was murdered. Unable to discover what happened to her brother, she is stunned when she receives a missive that tell her they will give her the truth about her brother's death if she spies on the Duke of Abermont for them. Willing to do almost anything to discover the truth about her brother, she applies for as a governess to the Spencer family and soon begins to gather information for her anonymous benefactor. Her guilt over her deception is compounded when she discovers her benefactor is not whom she thought. Now she awaits her punishment after confessing all to the Duke.

"How quickly the tides of her life had changed. From viscount's ward to a governess to a criminal in a few small jumps."

James Spencer, the Duke of Abermont, knows grief intimately. His family has served the crown as spies for centuries. He and his sisters were all trained in the art of deception, weapons, and combat. When he loses his sister Louisa during a mission, James is unable to shake off his grief or guilt over her death. Now his other sister Eleanor is harassing him to marry now that his year of mourning has passed. But he has no interest in the prospects his sister has listed for him. When he learns of Vivienne's deception and the reasons behind it, he sees a way for him to avenge his sister and save another woman from almost certain death. He will marry Vivienne and help her exact her revenge

"He had not saved Louisa, but by God, he would save Miss Loren."

James and Vivienne are delightful characters whose chemistry is felt from the beginning. There is a communion between them-a meeting of souls. I was instantly rooting for them from their first scene together. Both are intelligent, responsible, witty, passionate, and in possession a strong sense of family loyalty. I loved the fact that while James is an alpha, he isn't of the mindset that females are better left at home tending to the home fires. He knows how strong and dangerous they can be-his sisters are a prime example. While his protective instincts rage to the forefront with Vivienne, he doesn't do anything to break her spirit or make her feel as if she is inferior to him in any way. As was done with his sisters and other female agents, James makes sure Vivienne learns everything she needs in order to survive what and who is coming for her.

Vivienne's willfulness and strength in the face of adversity only served to make her character more likeable. A wonderful mixture of fragility and steel, her tenacity in trying to find justice for her brother makes her a worthy addition to the Spencer family. Her guilt over deceiving James and his family is well documented but her love for family outweighs all.

"Faced with the choice between revenge for her brother and guarding Abermont's feelings, she'd choose Evan. Everytime."

The growth of their relationship is slow and steady; each having to make compromises to the marriage. Their attraction to one another is a wonderful foil to the danger they are in, affording them respite. Not as sexually explicit as some of Monroe's previous works,, the emotional aspects is what garners the most attention. Reverent touches, lush caresses, and steamy decadent thoughts only serves to heighten the passionate response between this couple. I enjoyed the fact that Vivienne doesn't experience any shame in her thoughts or deeds with James. She is not a shy retiring miss. She stands equal with him whether in his office or in their bed.

An engaging cast of secondary characters decorate the story, giving us more insight into the protagonists and hints towards future installments. The mystery of the story blends well with the romance though I do wish we had seen more actual spy scenes from the agencies involved. The danger weans gradually as the character's relationship over takes the storyline. Steady action speeds the story along at a respectable pace as the conflict weaves its way in and out of the story. Clear and concise writing leaves little confusion to the direction Monroe is leading readers. With each scene we watch James and Vivienne face their fears and overcome

obstacles meant to defeat them. The ending comes quickly, confirming resolution of the conflict though leaving the arc open for more to come.

RATING: B

eyes.2c says

...assassins, retribution and romance!

Heart wrenching from the opening scenes. My sympathies went out to James Spencer as he contemplated his failures with regard to his sister's safety. His pain, his feelings of awful responsibility for her death are palpable. Louise's last words 'protect them' have burnt themselves into his heart. But will they become a hindrance if his memories lead him to hesitate?

A covert agent with Clocktower, a highly secret organization within the Alien Office, James Spencer, the Duke of Abermont has to marry in order to maintain his cover. Not just a covert agent but the Spymaster, the Mastermind behind the organization--The Falcon. This is the true family business and has been for generations.

Vivian Loren is searching for answers to her brother's death. Her placement in the Dukes household as governess is not by accident. Unwittingly she has become a pawn in the hands of Sauveterre, Louise's torturer and a deadly agent provocateur and assassin for Napoleon.

As James unravels Vivian's conundrum he decides to marry her, thus keeping her safe and fulfilling the requirements of marriage for himself. A marriage of convenience! Hmm!

There is of course the matter of attraction that flares between James and Louise, but is that enough to overcome the odds or will it be more of a hindrance?

I was kept enthralled from beginning to end! A series with a difference! This has all the ingredients it takes! Intrigue, romance, drama and danger! Definitely a winner for Monroe, and I can hardly wait for the stories to pour forth centred around the rest of the Clocktower coterie.

A NetGalley ARC

The Book Adventures says

Review copy provided by the publisher via NetGalley

At long last, another joint review! Jaclyn and I compete for your attention in this post.

We had high hopes for this one, but this was a bit of a dud for both of us. Do you agree with us? Disagree? What did you think of I Spy a Duke?

If you were hoping for a duel, or a joint review in which we at least both liked the book, don't despair! We'll have another joint post coming up in which we review Juliet Marillier's Tower of Thorns.

The Book...

In the first in an adventurous new series, USA Today Bestselling Author Erica Monroe introduces the Covert Heiresses: four women who by day are the talk of the ton, and by night England's top spies.

She wants revenge...

When bluestocking Vivian Loren becomes the governess for the wealthy Spencer family, she's searching for clues about the murder of her brother, not a husband. But Vivian didn't count on James Spencer, the infuriatingly handsome Duke of Abermont.

He needs a wife...

As head of Britain's elite intelligence agency, James has no time to woo a wife. When he discovers Vivian's quest for answers has made her a pawn in a treacherous plot, James realizes they can help each other. She'll become his duchess, and he'll keep her safe from one of Napoleon's deadliest spies.

What begins as a marriage of convenience quickly becomes anything but, as they find out love is the most dangerous mission of all.

Stacey's Adventure

False start (could not finish)

No suitcases

If you've been paying attention, you've noticed that Jaclyn and I have slightly different tastes in genre fiction: she favors romance, while I prefer science fiction and fantasy. But in the end, it's all genre fiction, and we both read across genres. In this joint post, I review the first historical romance I've reviewed in quite some time. My last was probably Susanna Kearsley's *The Rose Garden*.

Anyway, generally I enjoy modern twists in historical romances. Such as female spies. Not this time – I could not get into this book. The most prominent issues for me were the melodrama and the internal monologues.

The story opens with the two protagonists bonding over lost loved ones, which just did not seem authentic to me. Everyone has their own ways of grieving, and the experiences of these two characters did not ring true for me. I could not relate.

I found myself bored by the narrators' lengthy internal monologues. The world-building and descriptions of the environment suffer for it, and the action seems not as urgent or immediate. I would rather read about actions, and be able to infer emotions from described body language, than listen to a character gnawing over their own thoughts. If you like that sort of thing, you might enjoy this tale.

I also found the 18th-century-women-spies to be unbelievable in this case. It has been done well in several novels, but with its other issues, this book did not win me over. See the Similar Reads at the end of this post for a few examples of historical female spies I have enjoyed. The other unbelievable aspect? The romance. They have one conversation at the beginning of the novel, and suddenly they're in love. Even the hero remarks on it in one of his long internal monologues. There's no mention of any historical attraction, or none that I believed or remembered, anyway.

Read to page 60 (Once a time I promised 100 pages, but sometimes, even that is too much).

Jaclyn's Adventure

The view was nice, but the food was bad.
suitcasesuitcase

Like Stacey, I didn't have a great experience with I Spy a Duke. As she mentions, I read a lot more historical romance, so I was prepared to enjoy reading it more than she did. This was not to be.

I Spy a Duke is grounded in one of my favourite historical romance tropes: the marriage of convenience. Couple this with spies? This was a recipe for success! Unfortunately, I Spy a Duke missed the mark for me and I ended up skimming the last third of the book. The premise was great, the execution left something to be desired.

From the start, I Spy a Duke was melodramatic and underwhelming in the romance and spying departments. The book begins with a frank conversation between James (the Duke Who's a Spy) and Vivian (the governess who's spying on the Duke). This conversation revolves around their shared grief of those that they have lost, thus creating a connection between the two. However, the connection came across as contrived and forced. Vivian comes across James after he's cut his hand after manfully squeezing a drinking glass too hard. James is immediately charmed by Vivian's lack of hysterics over the injury and overcome by her ability to "field dress" his wound. Dude, you've cut your hand. Methinks you're reading way too much into the situation.

The opening scene is just one of many instances when the hero (and later the heroine) ascribe deeply felt emotions to rather innocuous events. For me, the disconnect between the event and the emotions that the event caused in the character (i.e. love, respect etc.) contributed to the overall lack of depth to I Spy a Duke. Quite frankly, I never bought that James loved Vivian or vice versa. James continually set Vivian's average, everyday actions on a pedestal and it just didn't work as a means to give their romance a solid foundation.

The spying element, like the romance, also seemed lackluster. The spy training that Vivian undergoes was a little, well, boring. Fencing and a few self-defense tips do not make a spy. So, if you were hoping for a stronger suspense theme here, I think you might be disappointed. I'm all for the lighthearted side of spying (Pink Carnation, anyone?) but I don't think I Spy a Duke really carried this off. Personally, I found the spy details and the suspense plot to be ambiguous and suffering from the same incongruity that was evident in the romance between James and Vivian.

Ultimately, I Spy a Duke started out with a strong premise but its high level of melodrama (both romantic and suspense-related) with little emotional connection to support its characters left me feeling underwhelmed.

The Verdict

While Jaclyn found I Spy a Duke worth some merit, we both agree that I Spy a Duke could have been a better read. There are a lot of spy books out there and this one just doesn't live up to the numerous predecessors. Read on for recommendations for better reads featuring spies.

Carla says

I received a free eARC of this book from the publisher via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review

Vivian and James have both went through a very similar situation. **The two of them have each lost a sibling in a very gruesome way**, and her brother's killer's schemes is what actually brings them together.

James is the head of Clocktower, Britain's elite intelligence agency, **his whole family consists of spies** (something that has been going on for generations). After one mission goes wrong, his sister Louisa is

tortured and murdered by the French, and James has never been able to forgive himself for that. Until Vivian appears.

Evan and Vivian lost their parents at a young age, so their uncle, a Viscount, takes them in. Once he dies, his son throws them out of his house and they have to start taking care of themselves. Not long after that, Evan is brutally murdered, and **Vivian is set on finding the killer and get her revenge.**

This is very different from every other historical fiction I've read.

It was really beautiful to see James and Vivian talking about their past with each other, there's this very strong bond between them because of their grief. And I really appreciated that the misunderstandings in this story never lasted too long, he just saw that she was telling him the truth about everything (and at the perfect time, thank goodness) and took her under his wing.

And, although he tries to make it seem like he proposed because he wants to protect her and keep the husband-seeking parents from the *ton* at bay, he obviously wants to marry her because he's got a big fat crush on her. Don't lie to yourself, James.

Another thing I really loved was that **there's gender equality**. I, like any sane woman who likes to be respected by men and be seen as an equal (whaaat?), can't stand sexism in books, the only exception being historical fiction, because, let's be honest, we can't change the past, even if I wanted these people to have smartphones or something like that, it's not possible. So yeah, sexism is usually present there, but that's just part of history :/ *sigh*

I'm actually very interested in reading the rest of this series, which, apparently, consists of four companion novels:

In the first in an adventurous new series, USA Today Bestselling Author Erica Monroe introduces the Covert Heiresses: four women who by day are the talk of the ton, and by night England's top spies.

If you're interested in historical fiction, or even a little bit of suspense or action (these people know how to kick butt), then I definitely recommend this! :)

More reviews on my blog: *Lipstick and Mocha*
