



Beauty and the Spy

Julie Anne Long

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SHOCKING!

London's belle of the ball, Susannah Makepeace, is the *last* person who should suddenly be stuck in the sleepy village of Barnstable. In town, she would never have seen a man swimming *naked* in a pond. And she certainly would have resisted the urge to draw every single bit of him in astonishing detail!

SIZZLING!

Very few people know that Viscount Kit Whitelaw is the best spy in His Majesty's secret service. But his high-flying life has finally banished him from London. Not to worry --- if Susannah's erotic sketches are any indication of her nature, she'll be a delicious stand-in for the thrill of espionage.

SCANDALOUS!

When odd accidents follow in Susannah's wake, Kit's spy senses start tingling. For what better mystery is there for England's greatest spy than the secrets of the delectable puzzle that is Susannah?

Beauty and the Spy Details

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From Reader Review Beauty and the Spy for online ebook

Elaine says

Love all Julie Anne Long's books. So cool - I like a good spy novel and this was excellent. Storyline was fab and the characters wonderful.

Debby "Piene Raven" says

My first read by Julie Ann Long and I enjoyed the story very much. Susannah Makepeace loses everything to go live with in the country with her aunt. She meets a viscount who has to some extent been cast away to the country too by his own father. The murder, mystery and entanglement of romance makes for a nice novel by this author.

The pacing of the story kept me enthralled and turning the pages. The sexual tension between the H/H did not hurt either. I like this one and believe that there are two others in the Holt Sisters series. Welcome reading those and this novel made for a nice comfy read.

4.0 Stars

Djaz says

He's kind of a jerkface.

Mark Moore says

beauty loses her father and her wealth; the spy is exiled to the country house by his father

Elis Madison says

Premise: Anna Holt was the much-loved and deeply loving mistress of Richard Lockwood. Together they had three daughters, Susannah, 3, Sylvie, 4, and Sabrina (not much older). One awful night Richard's good friend James Makepeace gave Anna the dreaded news: Richard was dead—and there's a witness who claims Anna was the killer. James advises Anna to flee—without her three tiny girls, since the authorities will be looking for a woman with three young girls. James promises to see Anna's daughters are cared for, and he'll let Anna know when it's safe to return.

Fast forward 20 years. Susannah Makepeace is the belle of the *ton* until the murder of her father James

Makepeace. That's when she learns that her high-flying lifestyle was supported by a mountain of debt. James' creditors are quick to move in, and Susannah has to resort to violence just to keep the clothing on her back.

In desperation, she turns to her best friend and her fiance, only to learn that,

Susannah's last refuge is the home of an aunt she never knew she had. An aunt who does not exactly live in the manner to which Susannah was accustomed. Su finds herself making fires and cooking—without servants!—and wandering about unchaperoned to sketch the local flora and fauna.

Viscount Kit Whitelaw spied for the government during the War (because all the big wars start with a cap as if they're the biggest and last), and lately he's been seeing nefarious plots everywhere. His friend James Makepeace was murdered, and he thinks an old enemy, Thaddeus Morley, has something to do with it. Kit's father ain't happy--Morley is politically connected and Kit's been a bit too free with his opinions. Unless Kit wants to be banished to Egypt, he needs to rusticate awhile at the family estate, maybe write up a study of the local flora and fauna.

The premise alone all but guarantees this book four stars. Historical—check. Thriller/adventure/mystery—check. Well-drawn characters who are genuine and fresh—check.

One tiny thing missing is the historical detail that always gets me purring. All Long would have to do is study her period and find some really curious factual character or moment to weave into her story and she'd have hit the trifecta.

Even so this is still one of my favorite reads this year--Monica McCarty, Jo Beverley and Jane Feather lead the pack, but Long is not far behind. Four stars--this is definitely a recommended read.

Shabby Girl ~ aka Lady Victoria says

You know what? Nearly every time I pick up a Julie Anne Long book I am amazed at what an effortlessly fantastic writer she is. Steadily she has climbed in my heart to become one of my most favourite writers. I am quite amazed this book only rates in the 3s. Stupidly I put off reading this because of the rating, thinking it wouldn't be the best. I was wrong. Even if the story doesn't enthrall (can't see why it wouldn't) the writing alone is worth a much higher rating. The story held me riveted right from the start – and I couldn't help noticing after only a very few chapters, before the hero and heroine had actually met, how much information she'd conveyed in such a short time. She really is a skilled writer. And the meeting between the hero and heroine certainly put a smile on my face ... yes, one of the best first meetings!

I was thinking as I was reading and towards the end of the book when the heroine said something that totally made me fall in love with her, that I can't remember the last time I've loved a heroine as much as this one ... then it came to me that, actually, the last time was when I reread *To Love A Thief* a few months ago, and,

mmm, Julie Ann Long wrote that too. I realised that this author really knows how to write women that you just love. I kind of feel that it's easier to write an amazing hero, but that it's so harder to write an amazing heroine. Even though in this book I loved the hero, he's a wonderful man, I really loved the heroine. Smart and plucky and rolls with the punches in the best way, with calmness and humour. I'm sure that's why the hero loved her, and it made me love her too.

I really enjoyed this book for both the story and the hero and heroine and the beautiful writing. I'm really looking forward now to the next two in the series. I'm kind of wondering at this point why I'm taking so long to pick up these older books by Long, but then again savouring them as I get to them over time is just lovely. I'm just wishing at this point that she would finish the Penny Royal series (hello, just do Olivia and Lyon's book, for God's sake, and be done with it) and move onto something else!

Metaspinster says

I wasn't sure how to rate this, or rather what standard to hold it to - in comparison to the majority of other books in this genre (it's better)? Or in comparison to Long's later books (it's not as solid)? And then there's the complication of the fact that I suspect that Long has even better books she's yet to write.

So I'll ambiguously say 3.5 stars here, but click four stars.

Long's greatest strength lies in the depth, intimacy and detail of her characterization. She writes slow, nuanced stories of two people becoming truly *known* to one another, while coming to know and love themselves. Generally, her characters have aspects of their personalities that have previously gone overlooked by both the world at large and themselves. This is consistent in all her work that I've read, (though some of it is stronger than others) - this tone and care that she takes with her people - and yet the actual *characters* themselves are gratifyingly varied from book to book.

And this is all here in this book, just perhaps not as dazzlingly so as in others. And I could also say that the spy/mystery/intrigue plot here is neither as clever in its narrative unfurling or in its totality as say the one in *The Perils of Pleasure*. But in this book it is also true that this is not so much the point - meaning, it's not really a "mystery" in the generic sense, so it is the emotional and psychological effects of the plotty past that matters here rather than the narrative construction of that plot itself. If that makes sense?

I also really enjoyed the lovely relationship between the heroine and her "Aunt Frances," who was shown to be truly kind, funny, and *human*. I enjoyed it so much that I even googled to see if there was a feminine form of the word "avuncular:" of or relating to an uncle; kind and friendly toward a younger or less experienced person. And there is! *Materteral*. Not as aesthetically pleasing as avuncular, but I'm glad it exists.

[Note: I both enjoyed the mildly meta bits where Aunt Frances and Susannah read and discuss *Pride and Prejudice* together and saw them as further evidence of this book as a more fledgling effort from Long, like she couldn't help herself from showing us her delight with and intellectual prodding at this genre.]

Melanie says

It was so cute! Not as good as Celeste Bradley, but very sweet..

I would give it 3.5 stars if I could: I enjoyed it because of the relationship between Kit and Susannah, but I would have liked more of a threatening element. I just didn't feel that gut clench I got in Celeste Bradley's *The Pretender*, for example (when Agatha finds out the truth about Simon).. Kit was a sweet and strong Beta hero (for me):-)

AerinLuvs says

Loved this trilogy!!! If you get the chance, read it in order as it will make more sense. I read the trilogy in reverse order and was annoyed with #3 because I didn't understand a lot of the stuff that it built upon.

I liked this one the best in the trilogy because I loved KIT!!! Swoon!

I wrote a review for this on Amazon already, I read this before I got on GR.

Rosina Lippi says

Here's the good news: I just read the four novels Julie Anne Long has out. Historical romance, mostly regency. And she's good. She can write a sentence, she can tell a story. The first two novels are light(er) reads. With her third one -- *Beauty and the Spy* -- she really finds her footing.

There's an interesting plot here, one that actually had me wondering how things would resolve themselves -- and that is unusual. This is not bragging. This is somebody who reads and writes for a living just stating a fact: it's not unusual for me to get to page three in a book and know pretty much everything that's going to happen, and how. Within the romance genre, there are some givens. You know who will end up together, but you don't know how they'll get there or what the roadblocks will be.

JAL manages to tweak some expectations. That's an excellent thing. I think that she has a good chance of evolving into a major name in historical romance if she continues along this trajectory.

So it's with a heavy heart that I have to report this flaw.

Has nobody ever talked to this woman about how she portrays dialect? Because there's only one word: sloppy. Or maybe two words: sloppy and uninformed. There seems to be a formula:

1. Is this character of a lower or working social class? If your answer is yes, pepper his or her direct dialog liberally with any and all of the following:

dropped h

replace every instance of 'you' with 'ye'

don't stint on the tortured spellings

lots of apostrophes (and don't forget the exclamation points!!!)

sprinkle with an occasional *dinna* or *couldna*

2. Is the character Irish or Scots? If so, double up on all the features mentioned. No need to distinguish between them.

For example:

"'Tis I, in the flesh, Biggs."

"Well, Tommy, as I live and breathe!" Big Biggs shifted his pistol into his other hand and seized Tom's hand to pump it with genuine enthusiasm "'avena seen you since those days at Bloody Joe's! Still a pretty bugger, ain't ye? Biggsy laughed a richly phlegmy laugh and gave Tom a frisky punch on the shoulder. "Ye've gone respectable, 'ave ye, Tommy? Looka tha' fine coat!"

This poor Biggs guy is linguistically schizophrenic. He is possessed by speakers from all over the British Isles. His symptoms:

He's dropping initial h sounds as though he just escaped from a *My Fair Lady* Cockney casting call.

'avena seen you since' -- What is this compulsion to hang Scots verb morphology like a caboose on the back of working class London phonology?

Poor Biggs, he's possessed by a torment of second person pronouns, Yorkshire and Middle English and ... what, exactly? Some terrible mixture. *Tha* and *ye* and *your*... put the man out of his misery. Please.

I will admit this was a particularly bad bit of dialog, but all JAL's novels have this sad problem. Looking at this example, I'm wondering how I managed to get through at all. And so here's the compliment: the stories were compelling enough to keep me going. Though I winced. Winced, I tell you, every time I saw an apostrophe coming.

You might think this is nitpicking. Unimportant to the story. But when you've got a duke's eldest son posing as an Irish groom, it would really help this rather standard plot device if the duke could actually sound Irish. Because it's likely that the upper class English household that employs him would notice right away if he claimed to be Irish but instead sounded.... confused. The way to do that is not with *ye*, and absolutely not with *dinna*, but with lexical choice and syntax. If you really want to pursue writing dialog so it evokes English as it is spoken in Ireland, there are places to go for that information. There's a great list of features on Wikipedia, which includes lots of examples of regional phonology (you'll note -- the Irish do not drop initial h), as well as word choice and syntax. for example, you might hear:

"Why did you hit him?" "He was after insulting me."

Wikipedia has a nice, concise article of the origin of that usage.

Ms. Long will likely never see this review, but if she does I hope she will take this in the spirit it is meant. Such promising work deserves more attention to detail.

PS A word of caution: Don't confuse Irish with Scots -- it will make them cranky

Ilze says

Really disappointed with this one, because Julie Anne Long is one of my favourite authors and so far she hasn't had a single miss. But this one - made it to page 64 and had to set it away. A few of my reasons:

1. Huge age difference between the hero and heroine (17 years).
2. The hero is supposed to be 37 years old but his personality is portrayed as if he were at most about 24 years old and in the scenes with his father he acts about 18 years old. But because of the plot, the hero has to have some sort of second- or third-hand connection, in his adult life, to the event in the book's prologue (the murder of the heroine's father 17 years previously). It would have made some sense if the hero had been portrayed as a 37-year-old, but without that, it made no sense.
3. The hero's father is immensely powerful and wealthy, and the hero is his heir. It is just not credible that the 37-year old heir of a powerful and wealthy English nobleman in that period would be playing at cloak-and-dagger things, and still a happy bachelor, instead of being deeply involved with the family concerns, as well as married (or at least widowed) and busily raising a family to carry on the dynasty. Age 37 back in 1820 was already well past middle age, because the average life expectancy was about 40 back then - the hero's teenagerhood should have been long in the past!
4. The heroine is simply told that their engagement is over by her fiance when her adopted father is killed and turns out to be deeply in debt. This is illegal - men could not legally jilt their fiancees at that time, although women could jilt theirs. The fiance could have set things up so the heroine has almost no choice but to jilt him (e.g. offer her a payout), but the author chose not to do this for whatever reason.
5. The situation with the adopted father being deeply in debt is also very sketchy - the debts are not gambling debts, just lifestyle debts - but there is no explanation for why he needs to maintain such a lifestyle and not tell the heroine about the situation, or how he had planned to get out of it.

There were lots more errors, inconsistencies, just plain hard-to-believe things going on in the story, and that was just the first 65 pages! One or two things wouldn't bother me, but this was too much.

Gail says

Though this earlier book wasn't as flawlessly crafted as some of the Pennyroyal Green series that Long later penned, I loved it. She managed to work murder and mystery into a satisfying, briskly paced romance novel

with intriguing, appealing characters. Can't wait to dive into the sequel.

Nailah says

After a sudden murder a widow Anna Holt, suspected off killing her husband must leave and break away from her 3 very young daughters in order to protect them and stay alive. Hoping one day to be able to see them again. Susannah Makepeace, who was the eldest daughter taken in by one of the widow's and her husbands close friend, James, is doing very well off and she is engaged. Suddenly, James who was investigating the murder of his best friend realizes the killer, who is a consultant who got to where he was by selling information to the French, dies before being able to expose him. Susannah moves in with her 'aunt' and then at the same time meets a spy who keeps saving her from quick death scenes and then realizes that someone has been trying to kill her. Him being a spy can not fight the urge to help her out and save her life. While on a journey to figure out who Susannah is she discovers she has two other sisters and that she is not alone. She also discovers that her 'real father',Richard Holt, was murdered and her mother may still be alive in hiding somewhere in London, Paris. Along the way they fall in love and get married.

WhiskeyintheJar/Kyraryker says

Holy guacamole, straight up awesome beginning. The prologue has the Holt sister's dad being murdered, their mom going on the run, and them being given over to their parents friend James Makepeace. I hope Long can keep this pace and amount of intrigue throughout the book!

Wonderfully written characters, can not wait for Kit and Susannah to meet. They both seem very immature and I am interested in how Long will get them to grow up.

Great. First. Meeting. Between Kit and Susannah ;)

Ooh the character Caroline is really intriguing to me. I was completely prepared to loathe her and then when she finally appears I find myself fascinated by her instead.

I enjoyed how Long wrote these two characters falling love. Strangely I felt like it was a slow gradual process and at others I felt like they fell in love instantly.

All the characters are extremely multifaceted, even the villain Thaddeus Morley. As with the other villain Caroline you may not agree with what they are doing but it's hard not to understand the choices they made. I liked how Long wrote the clues to the mystery in the story so that the reader figured it out before the characters. It was fun seeing Kit connect the dots and cheering him on.

Long definitely kept up the pace in the story and I never wanted to put the book down. The ending has a little shocker, hopefully in the next book Long updates the reader on John Carr and Caroline! Beauty and the Spy was a great book; intriguing characters and an actually storyline which was enthralling.

Usually in order for books to receive As from me they have to be "keepers". However, in order to be deemed a "keeper" by me they have to be books I know I will want to read again. This was a great book but for some reason I don't think I would read it again and I'm not sure why I feel that way. So anyway this book is definitely worth your time reading but I don't consider it a keeper for me.

P.S. I chose this book because of the cover, yes I am that shallow but it turned out to be an excellent choice. So my advice for the day: Is be shallow! You never know where it could take you ;)

A

ARomanceLover says

When Susannah Makepeace loses everything she has to go live with her aunt in the country. There she meets Kit, a viscount exiled to the country by his father. Throw in mystery and murder and you have an engaging romantic novel.

I have read Julie Anne's Pennyroyal Green series and going back to her earlier books has been a treat. She writes so beautifully and eloquently, I'm jealous. I adored the interplay between the hero and heroine and can't wait to meet Susannah's sisters in the next two books. Julie Anne has woven a beautiful world with her words.
