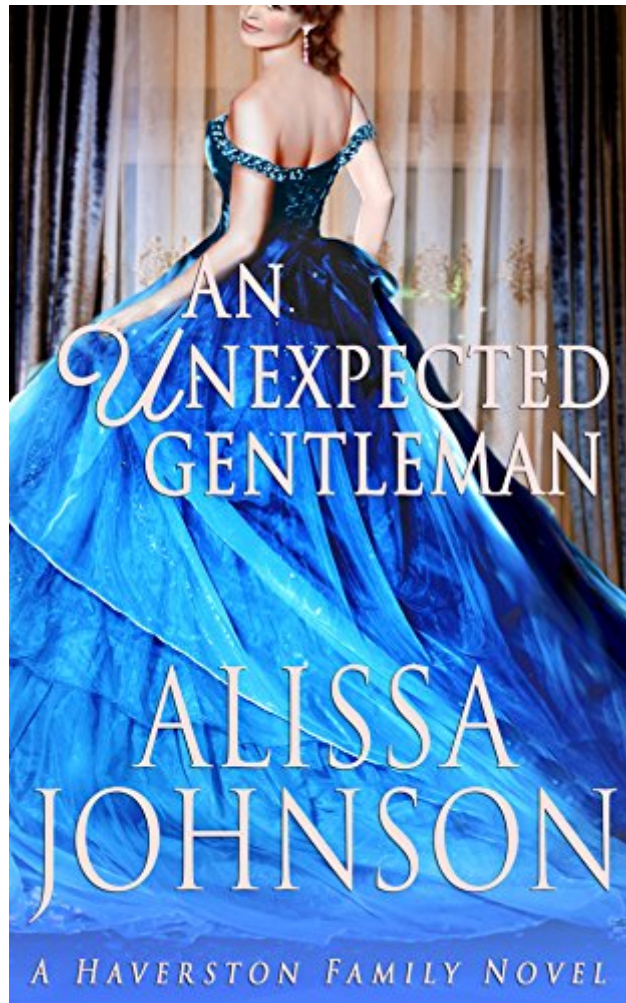


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An Unexpected Gentleman (The Haverston Family Trilogy Book 2)



Synopsis

Adelaide Ward has but one goal-to obtain an offer of marriage from the respectable, if unappealing, Baron Maxwell. But it's the devilishly handsome Connor Brice who captures her imagination-and a kiss in broad daylight-in front of a dozen members of the ton. Now Adelaide must decide if the charming scoundrel who stole away her reputation might still be trusted with her heart. Because Brice is after more than Adelaide's affection: he wants revenge on the baron.

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Customer Reviews

(4.5 stars) This may well be a 5-star book for me but I've read some real HR duds in the past couple of weeks so I was hesitant to be too generous on the off chance I'm just comparing something good with some really awful stuff. Johnson's writing is top notch. She's up there for me with Meredith Duran, Eloisa James, Kate Noble, Julie Anne Long (included in my group only sometimes), Mary Balogh, Mary Jo Putney (of the 1980s and 90s) in her writing abilities. Topic choices and humor vs. angst or poignancy differ from author to author but these writers always deliver a good read just because of the writing. This Johnson book follows Nearly a Lady (Berkley Sensation) and you have a few references to things that happened in that book and a few appearances of characters also but

this one can totally stand on its own without having read the previous one. (I do recommend its reading, however, because it's also a beautifully written story.) This one is the story of 2 half brothers, one legitimately the heir and one the acknowledged but illegitimate son of their father and his beloved mistress. The legitimate son, Robert, had always felt neglected and less loved and resented his half brother Connor so much that after the death of their father he has done everything in his power to make Connor's life miserable, even to the point of having him thrown in prison unjustly. Connor is now released from prison and set on revenge. He's obsessed with the need to avenge Robert's cruelty to the point that that is his only mission in life.

A delight. What can I say? I just think of things in this story and I think "delightful!" Really really enjoyed this one. REEEEEEEEEEEEEALLY enjoyed this one. Outside of some cosmetic flaws (detailed a bit first to get them out of the way), the storytelling, pace, characters, and development were pretty much spot on. ****COSMETIC FLAWS**** Some things irked me right off the bat. Shouldn't "Sir Robert" be a baronet, not a baron? Maybe I'm wrong in my peerage here or maybe they do things differently in Scotland, but I thought barons were "Lord"s and not "Sir"s. Also, there were some typos that were distracting, e.g., "around the weeks" when they meant to say "around the weeds" or, e.g., using the same word twice such as "at that that same time, that same moment." Those sorts of things just made an otherwise very proper and detailed book seem a bit sloppy. Also note that the cover dude is dark-haired while Connor is a blond-haired, green-eyed giant. **MOVING ON...** ****STORY**** Very generally, the H, Connor Brice, seeks a highly-justified and well-deserved revenge on Sir Robert, the suitor of the h, Adelaide Ward, whose impoverished family circumstances have left her in dire straits. Part of Connor's revenge involves compromising Miss Ward and, ultimately, convincing her that she should choose him over Sir Robert. A brief but insightful and sweet courtship follows, concluding in their marriage about halfway through the book. The remainder of the book explores their married life as they navigate their feelings for each other and as Connor and Adelaide work to resolve their differences over the all-consuming need for revenge that still burns within Connor.

I enjoyed this book and recommend it. This is part of a series so I always like to tell people whether or not they need to read the previous book(s) to understand it. In this case, you do not. Connor is a minor character in the first book and the main characters in the first book play minor and brief roles in this one. This is a rather emotionally complicated story in some ways. Connor wants Adelaide both because he is attracted to her and because she is an instrument of revenge against someone else.

Adelaide is buried under the burdens of caring for her impoverished family and trying to find a way to secure their well being in an age with few options available for women. She is desperate and makes some poor choices. Ultimately she is reduced to choosing between two men who are both lying to her. Of course she chooses our hero but she is not really happy about it. The banter between Connor and Adelaide is crisp and humorous. It is rather modern in its flavor but does not descend into slang what I refer to as the "shrug and a whatever" dialect. Even what sounds like a put down or condescending is delivered lightly with humor and affection and they can laugh at themselves as well as each other as they tease and bicker. Adelaide has a temper but she is not one of those feisty twits who reacts to every little thing by stamping her foot, throwing a tantrum and doing dumb things just to spite the men in their lives. She perseveres and makes her decisions as best she can despite her fears and self doubts. Connor is obsessed with his plans for revenge and Adelaide becomes an instrument toward that end, though in actuality not as he thought she would.

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