



# **To Steal a Heart**

*K.C. Bateman*

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## **To Steal a Heart** K.C. Bateman

Forced to do the bidding of a corrupt government minister, Marianne de Bonnard agrees to plant incriminating evidence in the offices of France's most notorious spymaster. Under cover of night, the tightrope-walking thief puts her skills to good use—until her aerial stunt is foiled when her target appears in the window and, with consummate poise, helps Marianne off the wire and into his lair. The tremors that run through her body are not just from fear; there's an unwanted frisson of desire there, too. But is it because of her elegant, wickedly handsome host . . . or his proposition?

Nicolas Valette has had plans for his graceful trespasser since he witnessed her unique skills at the Cirque Olympique. Sinuous as a cat, Marianne is perfect for his next mission, but she refuses his generous offer for fear of disobeying her family's tormenter. When their mutual enemy auctions off her virginity to the highest bidder, Nicolas leaps at the chance to purchase her cooperation. Keeping her will be like trying to tame a wild animal, but what's life without a little risk? Besides, Nicolas and Marianne both want the same thing: revenge—and, perhaps, something else that's equally delicious.

Includes a special message from the editor, as well as an excerpt from another Loveswept title.

## **To Steal a Heart Details**

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# From Reader Review To Steal a Heart for online ebook

## Rachel says

7/16/18 Currently 99c via Amazon US: <https://smile.amazon.com/dp/B00Y6QF12...>

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## Ursula says

I waited a couple of days before writing this review to allow the book to percolate in my mind for a while. Why did I need to do that? Well, the book had some good things (and good reviews) going for it.

Here are some of them.

Good characterisation- lots of description and interaction between hero Nicolas and heroine Marianne.

Terrific imagery of that tumultuous time in France when Boney was having a second shot at running the show in Europe, before he got his at Waterloo.

Fluid, well-written story with detailed and interesting plot.

But I still didn't like the book very much.

The problem for me was the nature of the main protagonists. Nicolas Valette had spent lots of time planning and working towards the downfall of Bonaparte, whom he held responsible for his brother's death. The causal link was tenuous at best, but to let it rule his every thought and action was obsessive and borderline unbalanced. He did not care who he used or what he did, as long as it contributed to his goal of vengeance. He was hard, cruel and just plain mean.

Marianne, on the other hand, had managed to escape death with her little sister when her home was set on fire, a fire in which her parents perished. She survived by working at a circus balancing on a tightrope. (Yep, bit of a stretch!) She protected her sister and avoided becoming a prostitute through sheer courage and strength of will. But her life was pretty bloody hard.

Along comes handsome Nicolas and decides he will use her to help spring an important prisoner from gaol and help mysterious prisoner escape to Holland. And use her he does. He sets about "training" her, that is, puts her through friggng bootcamp, where she is constantly battered and bruised by falls and knocks that he deliberately arranges so that she will toughen up and master the skills she will need for her task. It was abusive treatment, as far as I was concerned. Oh, and I forgot to mention that he was blackmailing her: he got her to acquiesce by "buying" her from an evil dude who has threatened her sister. Said sister is now in Nicolas' clutches, apparently safe IF Marianne does what she is told.

Now, please don't tell me he is training her for her own good (so that she will be able to get away after springing the prisoner). The bastard PUT HER IN THIS POSITION IN THE FIRST PLACE!

I won't go on- it just pissed me off so much. If you start to fall in love with someone, you do not treat them like that. Worse, Marianne puts up with it. She has to, of course, because he is blackmailing her, but she also can't help falling in love with Nicolas. Well, I could bloody-well help it!

Even when he seems to care for her, he chooses to continue his anti-Napoleon campaign in Belgium, leaving her to go back to Paris alone and continue her crappy life with more attendant disasters. Yet she still yearns for him. I cannot understand why you would feel like that about someone who lied to you constantly, treated you like dirt and then abandoned you to go haring off on some ill-judged and self-indulgent revenge scheme. Well, I am sorry to say it but F\*\*\* YOU, Nicolas. Nothing could justify his treatment of Marianne. She was worth twenty of him and his misplaced, pathetic revenge-trip.

So despite waiting a few days, I am still angry about this story. There was so much potential here and instead we have a cardboard cut-out alpha hero with a submissive, hero-worshipping sweetheart. I have this author's other two books on my Kindle, the second one has already started to piss me off and I have only read 25 pages. I have the feeling they will languish on my unread shelf indefinitely!

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## **Esther says**

4.25 Netgalley for honest review.

Very impressed with this debut author and her writing.

Marianne de Bonnard works for the circus as well as her very revolting and terrible Uncle. Working for her uncle as a thief, she uses her talent for tight rope walking to steal for him. He has used her sister, who is several years younger as leverage to manipulate Marianne to do as bidding. Marianne's parents died in a fire when she was younger and her Uncle became their guardian to an extent.

Nicolas Valette is a spy who is very good at his job. He's filled with revenge against Napoleon, who was in essence responsible for his brother's death.

Marianne is asked to plant some evidence at Nicolas's home by her Uncle and this is where the two characters meet. They both find the other attractive immediately on meeting, as Nicolas is there waiting for Marianne, somehow aware she is coming. Marianne does not fulfill her objective and makes for her escape. But before she escapes, Nicolas offers her a job that involves the use of her talent and Marianne immediately refuses knowing she could never leave her sister vulnerable and alone with her Uncle. As the story unfolds we find Marianne's virginity being auctioned off at a brothel that her Uncle works at, as well as her sisters. Nicolas comes to the rescue and takes Marianne and her sister away. What progresses from here is Nicolas proceeds to train Marianne.. He takes her to a run down and neglected castle that Marianne falls in love with. A good portion of the story takes place during this time of training and preparation that Marianne endures. I use the word endure because Nicolas puts her through some rough and difficult training, to the point of almost being cruel. It's an intense, emotional portion of the story with some real sexual tension and chemistry between the two. Marianne finds out at this point what her mission/job is and finds it to be very daunting. Marianne is insecure and unsure if she is capable to achieve what Nicolas is asking of her, which is to help a man escape from prison. But there is more, in that she will have to impersonate this man (she will switch places with him) and then she will have to escape on her own. Well things go horribly wrong and both Nicolas and Marianne are caught and endure some very intense scenes of torture and heartache.

Marianne and Nicolas do escape and return to his home in England. And during this time is when there is an emotional shift in their relationship. They begin to share more of what they are feeling for each other and the romance from here takes on a more emotional depth. Marianne decides that she has to return to her sister (she was being watched over by one of Nicolas's men). From this point each character evaluates their feelings and what the other truly means to them. Marianne watches her sister fall in love and marry the man who was protecting and watching over her. She's happy for her sister but lonely and missing Nicolas. Nicolas goes on to seek his revenge but realizes that what he truly wants is Marianne. Oh and the Uncle he gets what's due him.

This was well written (with some minor issues I will touch on) and engaging story. The pacing was excellent from the beginning, with a lot of action and spy theme's. I had a few issues with the characters. One is there

is a very large age difference between the hero and heroine, 15 years. At times I felt Nicolas was little too cold and Marianne somewhat immature (even for her young age). The other issue I had with the book was at the beginning of the story. The first chapter and some of the second, felt way too wordy and descriptive. The overkill of what a room looked like or a certain scene that was unfolding was way too detailed. I almost felt lost at times. But all in all a well written book for a debut author. I will be looking for her future books.

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## **Janet says**

Marianne de Bonnard high wire artiste at the Cirque Olympique in Paris has been blackmailed for years by Duval a corrupt government minister, she agrees to plant incriminating evidence in the offices of France's most notorious spymaster, in fact she'd agree to almost anything to keep her sister Sophie safe. Under cover of night, the tightrope-walking thief puts her skills to good use, that is until her aerial stunt is foiled when her target appears in the window and, with consummate poise, helps Marianne off the wire and into his lair. & he has been watching her for over a year

Nicolas Valette has had plans for his graceful trespasser. Marianne is perfect for his next mission, but she refuses his generous offer for fear of disobeying her family's tormenter. When their mutual enemy auctions off her virginity to the highest bidder, Nicolas leaps at the chance to purchase her cooperation. He bids a ridiculously high price for her & has to do the same for her sister when she is also auctioned. Marianne agrees to help Nic on his mission to rescue a prisoner.

Everything doesn't go smoothly, there's a flight across France & encounters with smugglers. Nic & Marianne are so attracted to each other but fight it. The verbal interaction is lively & very entertaining. I thoroughly enjoyed the book, the plot was very well paced & certainly kept me turning the pages. The characters were well drawn & certainly weren't two dimensional. The chemistry between Nic & Marianne was scorching. Marianne was strong willed but Nic pushed her to her limit in training for the assignment. Nic absolutely gorgeous. A very good first novel & I look forward to the other two books in the series

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## **Tracy Emro says**

**\*\*I received a copy of this book from NetGalley and the publisher in exchange for an honest review\*\***

I really enjoyed this book - it was a well written, fast paced and very entertaining. I would rate this book 3.5 rounded up for excellent writing. This book vaguely reminded me of the movie Entrapment with Sean Connery & Catherine Zeta-Jones. Not the actual story - but the training and the older man/younger woman scenario.

Nicolas Valette is a spy, but his sole purpose in life is to destroy Napoleon, who he blames for the death of his younger brother. For his latest mission he needs Marianne Bonnard, a thief and a circus performer.

Marianne is living a lie - she hides her true identity from the world and does her vile cousin's bidding to save her sister from being exploited by him. She refuses to help Nic for fear of upsetting her cousin.

But Nic will not take no for an answer. He outsmarts the evil cousin and manages to spirit both Marianne and

her sister Sophie away. He then takes Marianne to a remote, abandoned chateaux and begins her "training" He is attracted to Marianne, but he has no place in his life for attachments. He is all about the mission and stows his desire for her away. He is almost brutal in his training and Marianne alternates between hating him and thinking of ways to kill him. She too is attracted to him - but events in her past keep her desire in check.

When they set out for the mission - things between them shift and become a bit more physical. The mission goes terribly wrong and they are captured and tortured. They manage to escape and Nic takes them to England (much to Marianne's dismay).

In England, they stay with Nic's family and take their relationship to the next level. After one night of passion - Marianne slips away and returns to France. She doesn't leave empty handed - she pilfers Nic's diamond stickpin on her way out. When Nic discovers she is gone, he is upset, he realizes he loves her, but he still has to defeat Napoleon and can't go after her.

Marianne returns home and when she goes to get her sister is confronted by the evil cousin. She and her sister barely escape this final encounter with him - but in the end they are finally free of him. Sophie admits to Marianne that she has fallen in love with her guard Andrew and wants to marry him. While Marianne is happy for her, she is also sad and lonely - her entire purpose the last few years has been to protect Sophie and now she feels adrift. She misses Nic, weeks have gone by since they were together, Napoleon has been defeated but she has had no word from Nic and has no idea how to find him or if he would even want her. After the wedding of her sister and Andrew, she returns to the chateaux to try and find some peace.

Nic shows up at the chateaux and they get their HEA.

There are a couple of reasons this book was only 3.5 stars - the major reason being the hero chose vengeance over love - he could have sent her a message or gone to her, before going to Belgium - but he didn't. Then at the end he tells her that he would chose her before anything - hmmm - but he didn't!?! There is also the fact that they never actually say I love you - I need that in a romance. I know they loved each other - he told his brother and she thought it - but they didn't say it to each other.

I liked this book and I would recommend it and I will be looking for more by this author.

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## Jennifer says

### 4.5 Stars

I found about K.C. Bateman and *To Steal a Heart* through a review on *Caz's Reading Room*. I was intrigued by the setting and the description of the heroine. And my expectations were definitely met thanks to the beautiful writing, action-packed plot, and steamy love story.

Marianne is a tightrope walker who is under the thumb of a corrupt official. Often she is forced to perform various illegal tasks in order to achieve Duval's goals. Her latest assignment forces her to sneak into the office of the mysterious Nicolas Vallette and place damaging evidence. But, she is caught and, through a

series of events, Nicolas convinces her to use her unique skills to complete a task of his own choosing. Nicolas and Marianne are forced to spend time together to make their mission a success and, in the process, begin to discover that there is something growing between them.

I thought Marianne was a fascinating and admirable heroine. Her life changed forever when the Revolution started and she has done everything she can to keep her younger sister safe. I liked seeing how she used her physical and mental prowess to achieve her goals. Nicolas was also an interesting character with his mysterious background and his devotion to avenging his brother's death. He was a strong, composed hero who isn't used to relying on other people for assistance, but acknowledges Marianne's skills.

The plot of *To Steal a Heart* is nicely balanced between the romance and the action. Nicolas and Marianne's relationship builds while he is training her for the mission. Neither of them is looking for love, but forced proximity causes their physical attraction to turn into a more emotional connection. I loved the back and forth between them and that they tested one another when they needed it the most. Nicolas needs to live for something other than revenge and Marianne needs to deal with issues in her past to finally look towards the future.

Spies aren't normally my thing, mostly because I feel like they have become an easy plot device for authors. But, K.C. Bateman does an impeccable job of providing readers with an action-packed spy story line that feels realistic. There were definitely some times where I was wondering how Nicolas or Marianne would get out of the various situations they kept finding themselves in. I appreciated the sense of danger that was brought to the subplot and how that helped the romance become even stronger.

I had a great time reading *To Steal a Heart* and recommend it for readers who like spy romances. I also have to give a shout-out to the setting. I love 19th century England as much as the next historical romance fangirl, but it was nice to see a different country take centerstage. It is obvious that a lot of research went into creating France during this time period and I thought those details added to my enjoyment. I definitely plan on reading the next in the series especially since it focuses on Nicolas's younger sister and a smuggler who is much more than he appears.

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### **Fabiola Chenet says**

Une très bonne surprise, avec une histoire dont une grande partie se déroule en France. L'auteur a fait de bonnes recherches et a réussi à inclure la partie historique à la romance sans aucun problème. Je suis très intriguée par les personnages du deuxième tome (ils apparaissent dans celui-ci) et j'ai hâte de découvrir leur histoire.

J'ai beaucoup aimé l'héroïne, le héros avait un objectif bien précis et même s'il est antipathique par moments, je ne suis pas arrivée à vraiment le détester, sauf une fois.

J'ai eu une petite larme pour les cheveux de l'héroïne.

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### **Caz says**

**It's not often I make a first book a DIK, but I gave this an A- at AAR, so that's 4.5 stars rounded-up.**

I was lucky enough to read a number of very strong début novels last year, and that trend is continuing into

2016 with K.C Bateman's **To Steal a Heart**, ( *Secrets and Spies* book 1), an action-packed, sexy romantic adventure story set in Napoleonic France. The story grabbed me from the first page and wouldn't let me go until I'd finished it – which I did in about two sittings.

Marianne Bonnard has worked at the Cirque Olympique as a tightrope walker and circus performer for the last five or six years, ever since the death of her parents in a fire. This left her and her younger sister, Sophie, with nobody but each other, and everything Marianne does is focused on keeping Sophie safe and well. After the fire, they were brought to Paris by their slimy cousin Duval, a corrupt official with responsibility for overseeing the city's many brothels, who threatened to put the girls – then aged ten and fourteen – to work in one of them. But Marianne struck a deal with him. If she could find a way to earn enough money to more than pay for their keep, she would do that instead, on condition that he left Sophie alone. Duval agreed, although not without conditions, which are that Sophie remains in Paris under his control and that Marianne steals and spies for him.

Her latest assignment is to plant some incriminating evidence in the apartment of Nicolas Valette, spymaster, protégé of two of France's most powerful men, and, according to some, one of the most dangerous men in France. But Valette's reputation for being one step ahead the game is not undeserved; on the night Marianne is due to break into his study, he is there waiting for her, aware of what she's there to do. But instead of killing her or turning her in, he makes her an offer. He will protect her sister and destroy Duval if she will undertake to work on one mission for – and with - him.

I'm not going to give the game away, save to say that the mission is an audacious one and Ms Bateman does a terrific job in balancing the romance with the action-based elements of the plot. Marianne and Valette are instantly attracted to each other, but the author rightly focuses on the task at hand, keeping their attraction at a simmer and allowing it to develop through thoughts and feelings as they circle warily around each other. Nicolas is controlled and frighteningly competent, yet we're shown Marianne gradually getting under his skin, especially during the time they spend together as he puts her through a gruelling training regime. He pushes her to her limits time and again and she tries to hate him for it – but he knows what she's going to be up against and what she's going to have to be able to do if she's going to survive. The sexual chemistry between them is smoking hot and some of the best I've read; and their acerbic, sharp-tongued verbal sparring is perfectly done.

*"Do you speak Italian?"*

*"A little. Laurent taught me. Especially swearwords. 'Vaffunculo,'" she offered sweetly, "means go f—"*

*"I know what it means," he said with a dark chuckle. "Good. We're Italian. You're my wife, Fatima."*

*Nerves made her snippy. "My father would be so proud. He always hoped I'd marry a lying turncoat spy."*

There's never the sense that these characters are flirting just for the sake of it; rather, the things Valette and Marianne say and do arise naturally out of the situations in which they find themselves. Unlike so many historical romantic spy stories where the espionage plot is nebulous and clearly little more than a way of throwing the hero and heroine together, in **To Steal a Heart**, there's a real sense of danger and of something important being at stake.

I won't deny that there's a modernity of tone to some aspects of the storyline and dialogue, but it's not obtrusive and this is one of those books where the story is so entertaining and the characters so engaging as to make it easy to overlook the odd slip. The plot is well-thought out and the characterisation of the leads is



excellent. Marianne reminds me somewhat of Annique from Joanna Bourne's *The Spymaster's Lady*. She's determined, courageous, skilled and quick-witted, and won't take any crap from the men around her; and like Grey, Valette knows she can handle herself and doesn't try to cosset her or wrap her up in cotton wool. Nicolas Valette is, quite simply, sex on legs. Handsome, dangerously charming, highly intelligent, devious and completely ruthless, he is the sort of man from whom one would probably run a mile in real life, but as the hero of a romance novel? Oh, yes please! \*swoon\*

Valette's life for the past six years has been ruled by his overwhelming desire for revenge against Napoleon for the murder of his younger brother, while Marianne has to overcome the events of her past in order to move forward. These aspects of their characters are dealt with reasonably well, although in the end, Nicolas' desire for revenge almost costs them both dear. Because of that, I am a little torn over the events which lead up to the ending of the book. Nicolas makes a choice which is so perfectly in character that it's difficult to see how he could have made a different one, but it means he and Marianne are not together at a crucial point in the story. It's true she's not a heroine who needs saving and does pretty well on her own, thank-you-very-much – but I still felt just the tiniest bit cheated that they weren't together at that point. That said, I have to applaud Ms Bateman for the direction she takes because to have done things differently would have been out of character for both of them.

I dithered over the final grade for **To Steal a Heart**, wondering whether to give it a B+ or an A- and thus make it a DIK. I've gone with my gut instinct – the DIK – mainly because the high level of engagement I experienced and sheer entertainment value mean it's a book I'm likely to re-read. And on top of that, the writing and characterisation are superb, the romance is hot, snarky and tender and the hero is delicious. I couldn't ask for much more in an historical romance and I'm eagerly awaiting whatever Ms Bateman comes up with next.

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## **Carol \*Young at Heart Oldie\* says**

**I loved this impressive 2016 debut novel from K. C. Bateman. Set in France just before the final defeat of Napoleon at the Battle of Waterloo in 1815, it combines a well-written, action-packed story, intriguing characters and a sensual romance.**

Following the death of his younger brother, Nicolas carries a deep sense of guilt for having survived when his brother didn't, and his life no longer has any real meaning. The danger, intrigue and excitement inherent in the world of spying and his desire for revenge against Napoleon, whom he holds responsible for his brother's death, are what keep him going, earning him a reputation for being bold, arrogant and uncompromising. Handsome, virile and seductive, there are any number of beautiful women only too eager to share his bed, but he has long ago built an impenetrable wall around his heart and his emotions are never engaged.

*He always enjoyed their company, but he'd never wanted more from them than a few nights' entertainment. He had absolutely no difficulty keeping his emotions separate from his physical needs.*

Ever since her parents' death in a fire, Marianne has worked at the Cirque Olympique as a tight-rope walker and knife thrower and as a spy for her corrupt and loathsome cousin and guardian, Jean-Jacques Duval. She is resourceful, intelligent and stubborn but has an Achilles heel – her younger sister, Sophie. Having suffered Duval's perverted attentions, she is willing to do anything to protect Sophie from him.

*She felt him (Nicolas) smile against her skin. "Whore for her?"*

*A wave of shame rolled over her as she forced herself to admit the unpalatable truth. To save Sophie? Yes. She'd suffer any indignity. She closed her eyes in despair. "Yes."*

Ms. Bateman blends the romance and suspense perfectly and I love the back-and-forth verbal sparring between Nicolas and Marianne and one of the most memorable early scenes is where Nicolas buys Marianne and Sophie in a brothel auction arranged by Duval and then has to pretend to relieve Marianne of her virginity.

*He sat up slowly so as not to startle her and held his hands up in surrender. "I'm at your mercy, mademoiselle. Please say you're going to have your wicked way with me."*

*She scowled, unimpressed with his attempt at humor.*

*He sighed. "I suppose we'll have to go with the backup plan then."*

The backup plan turns out to be hilariously reminiscent of the famous Meg Ryan scene in "When Harry Met Sally"!

I enjoyed the interplay of danger and sexual tension and seeing how their relationship changes and how they grow and evolve both as individuals and as a couple.

At first, Nicolas sees Marianne as merely an integral part of the mission and would willingly sacrifice her in his search for revenge. However, during the gruelling course of training for the mission, she is a constant distraction with her rebellious nature and sheer determination and gradually the dynamic between the two of them changes.

*Something had changed between them, some indefinable twist to the dynamic that was both unnerving and exciting. He liked her. Respected her. Wanted her. They were no longer master and apprentice; instead of opponents, they were suddenly a team.*

After his brother's death, Nicolas didn't really care whether he lived or died but now he finds himself beginning to care about life again all because of Marianne who has slowly broken down his defences and stolen his heart.

Marianne is an intriguing combination of strength and vulnerability. I love how she isn't afraid to stand up to Nicolas and refuses to give in when the going gets tough. She has to rely on her own skills, resourcefulness and inner strength. Emotionally, Duval's abuse left her feeling tainted and believing that she would never be able to respond to any man again, so her response to Nicolas is unexpected.

*She'd thought herself immune, irrevocably tainted by Duval's abuse. It was highly disconcerting to discover she might have been wrong. One look from Valette, and her blood heated to a slow boil.*

I was frustrated by the decision Nicolas makes towards the end of the book, but I admired the way Ms. Bateman kept him true to character. I think it was the only way he could put the past behind him. Besides, Marianne is a woman quite able to take care of herself.

Duval is a suitably odious and slimy toad while I was definitely intrigued by Raven, the mysterious smuggler. I shall look forward with interest to **A RAVEN'S HEART**, in which he is paired with Nicolas' younger sister, Heloise.

Ms. Bateman has obviously undertaken a lot of research to create a real sense of the period and I particularly like how she uses a little artistic license to incorporate Louis-Charles (the “Lost Dauphin”) into the plot.

I was disappointed there was no Epilogue, which made the ending seem rather abrupt. I’m therefore hoping that I may see more of Nicolas and Marianne in the next book.

**MY VERDICT: An very impressive debut novel which I can definitely recommend.**

*Secrets and Spies* (click on the link below for more details):

<https://www.goodreads.com/series/1547...>

This review was first posted on my Rakes and Rascals Blog:

<https://rakesandrascals.wordpress.com...>

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### **Patrice says**

I'd like to thank Net Galley and Love Swept of the Random House publishing group for providing me with a free uncorrected proof copy, in e-book format, in exchange for an honest review of *To Steal a Heart*.

Historical romance is one of my favorite genres of books. This is the first of K.C. Bateman's books that I have read.

This story takes place mainly in France toward the end of the Napoleonic wars. The main female character, Marianne de Bonnard, and her sister Sophie are orphaned due to a tragic fire that spread through their home. This was during the revolution when aristocrats were literally losing their heads. They find themselves living in Paris and Marianne is performing in the circus as a tight-rope walker. The main male character, Nicolas Vallette, has been watching Marianne perform at the circus for some time. He is a notorious spy. He feels that she possesses the qualities he requires for his next assignment. His main goal is to see Napoleon Bonaparte removed from power, permanently.

The writing style and flow of the story are very good. I felt myself drawn into the story immediately. I liked the fact that Marianne is a strong, intelligent, brave, person. Everything she does is to ensure the safety, and hopefully ultimate happiness, of her younger sister Sophie. I enjoyed the verbal sparring of Marianne and Nicolas too. I was very invested in the lives of these two characters. Their story came alive for me.

This was such a good story that I will definitely be looking for other books by K.C. Bateman.

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### **Jan130 says**

3.5 stars. I enjoyed this read, my first book by K.C. Bateman. The spy HR theme isn't my usual read, but it was quite well written on the whole, and the story moved along fairly quickly. It is reminiscent of Joanna

Bourne, some of whose books I have also enjoyed.

Nic, the spy H, is gorgeous. Marianne, the h, is a circus performer and a thief, which is an interesting premise. The opening of the book is novel and fresh, and draws you into the book. I will now add the other books in the series to my t-b-r pile.

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## **Vellum Voyages says**

4 helms

Please follow me on my blog :) Review originally posted on Vellum Voyages

A Loveswept title! I'm so glad they are publishing again & have branched out into historicals. I didn't realise they were publishing historicals until I came across "To Steal a Heart". It's all very exciting as I devoured these from my local library when I was in high school and they really cemented my love for romance novels :) It felt like a happy reunion reading a Loveswept & what a great debut for K.C Bateman! As well as writing romance and co-owning an auction house, she also appears in Bargain Hunt which I love watching! Double yay! Romance & historical information, what an arsenal she has under her belt!

This book is well written and fast paced with interesting characters and an intriguing historical period of the French Revolution. It was an absolute delight to read! Marianne Bonnard works for a circus in Paris as a tightrope walker. She is also the best thief in Paris! Nicolas Vallard, a spy for Joseph Fouché of The Secret Police, needs her skills for an important mission. He catches her trying to plant incriminating papers in his home, plotted by her evil cousin Duval who controls Marianne & her sister Sophie's lives. Forced into servitude to Duval, Marianne is always looking out for her sister & looking for ways to escape his clutches. This presents itself in the way of Nicolas Vallard who rescues them both but also steals Marianne's heart in the process!

I loved both Marianne & Nicolas! Marianne is a feisty heroine & I admired her strength, courage & attitude. She's a hard woman to break even though life had been unkind to her. Nicolas is a strong hero who is strong, driven and sensual. Just the perfect match for Marianne! The characters & language were very modern with a historical backdrop. I didn't feel thoroughly immersed into historical France but had France as the setting. It didn't bother me too much, but it was definitely noticeable. I loved the last scene of the book which was the proposal! I found it utterly romantic & he proposed with a necklace! My husband proposed to me the same way with a necklace instead of a ring, so I might be biased ;)

A thoroughly enjoyable read & I'm really looking forward to reading about Raven & Heloise in the next installment :)

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## **XxTainaxX says**

Marianne is a woman in a tough spot like many women during those times. She is doing her best to protect

her sister and that includes doing things she doesn't want to do. Nicolas needs Marianne and when he catches her sneaking into his home, he seizes the opportunity. I enjoyed the development of their relationship through a plot that ropes in a rich history. It was entertaining to read Nicolas' attempts to treat Marianne as the others he's dealt with in the past when she clearly made him feel differently. Marianne is tested beyond what she thought were her limits and the romance between the MCs blossoms beautifully. There is no drama of OW/OM. There is mention of unsolicited sexual acts though there is no penetration. The implied threat is there as well. I enjoyed this read.

ARC received in exchange for an honest review.

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### **Shannon Dyer says**

Pretty close to perfect! I will definitely read more of Ms. Bateman's work in the very near future.

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### **(Nat) Reading Romances says**

I was enthralled!

I wanted to get to know Sophie at the beginning of the book, and see more dialogue between them as well. She's the reason Marianne goes through so much! I wish the next story would be Sophie and Andrew's, or that we'd at least have a novella. They sound like a sweet couple. Nicolas and Marianne were on fire together!

It's an unique story, fast paced and a page turner! I'm not usually a fan of thief heroes/heroines, but this one worked out splendidly. I just feel *TO STEAL A HEART* deserved a better book cover and blurb, to do justice to the author's writing. Loved this story was delivered and I was happy with how the plot was resolved. I look forward to reading more books by K.C. Bateman!

I received this book via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

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