



## Season for Surrender

*Theresa Romain*

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**Honor Among Rogues**

Alexander Edgeware, Lord Xavier, has quite a reputation—for daring, wagering, and wickedness in all its delightful forms. But the wager before him is hardly his preferred sport: Xavier must persuade a proper young lady to attend his famously naughty Christmas house party—and stay the full, ruinous two weeks. Worse, the lady is Louisa Oliver, a doe-eyed bookworm Xavier finds quite charming. Yet to refuse the challenge is impossible—he will simply have to appoint himself Miss Oliver's protector...

## **Mischief Among Misses**

Louisa knows her chance for a husband has passed. But she has no desire to retire into spinsterhood without enjoying a few grand adventures first. When Lord Xavier's invitation arrives, Louisa is more intrigued than insulted. And once inside the rogues' gallery, she just may have a thing or two to teach her gentlemen friends about daring...

## **Season for Surrender Details**

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Author : Theresa Romain

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## From Reader Review Season for Surrender for online ebook

### **Lisa says**

Alexander, Lord Xavier, makes yet another bet with his cousin Lord Longwood. Its pretty basic--get the proper Lady Louisa to attend his holiday house party and stay the entire two weeks. No seduction is necessary and is strictly off limits (can't ruin the young lady's reputation and get leg shackled!). As Xavier always wins his bets, in fact, he is quite known about the ton for his wagering and his wickedness, he sees this as an easy win. Yet when a simple game of cards needs to be paid out in the format of time, he finds himself spending more time with Louisa than he thought he would....and also opening up to her in a whole new way. Louisa sees right through his facade he has built up. She sees past all his 'Numbered Expressions' (Expression Number One: Veiled Disdain, etc). As Louisa has a keen sense of observation, she notices all sort of little things that no one else ever has and it starts to affect him. Their meetings in the library that Louisa adores, leads to heartfelt confessions and daring kisses. However, when Lord Longwood uncovers a secret in a coded book, he threatens to harm Louisa if Xavier does not finally lose a bet to him. As Xavier wants to do everything he can to protect Louisa, he hurts her in a way that cuts deep with her without giving her a proper explanation. Will Louisa find a way to set Xavier free or will the betrayal be too much to overcome?

This book is a delight, plain and simple. It was like eating a delicious cupcake, one you savor, then being a bit disappointed once its gone but yet it leaves you happy and fulfilled. I enjoyed watching the proper, quiet bluestocking Louisa develop into a confident, lovely woman who will stand up for whats right while surrendering her body and heart. I loved the fun wit between Louisa and Xavier and how the library becomes their 'spot' (and yes, it gets a bit heated). I loved watching Louisa slowly uncover Xavier and discover the man he thought he never could be...Alex. She opens his eyes to so much of what he was missing beneath his rakish facade, with his need to have the regard of the world. Having been orphaned as a baby, Xavier has always craved the seemingly unattainable affection of others. Xavier turns out to be quite a delicious hero, even when he hurts Louisa while trying to protect her. I will admit, I am not a fan of books that feature a bet prominently but Ms Romain tackled it well with a nice twist from Louisa that made the book flow much easier for me. The holiday elements are nicely done without overwhelming the story while the secondary characters for the house party add a dose of humor, excitement and tension (and are ones I hope to see again in the future!). Overall, a perfectly delightful holiday romance filled with cheer, strong characters with real flaws, love and laughter. I am truly sad I read it so quickly and I am anxiously awaiting Theresa Romain's next book! 4 cheery stars

*eARC provided by Kensington Books via netgalley.com*

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### **Fangirl Musings says**

So, guess what? Happy Book Noise (copyright pending) is, without a freakin' doubt, some of the best noise on the planet. And, know what else? That noise gets all the more kick-ass when it follows from previously thinking, "Uh-oh, this book might fail all painful-like!" Yep. That entire scenario plays to Season for Surrender just so, because this book is a damned good story, but holy-crap-on-Satan's-ass, I was worried

otherwise for a wee bit, I'm not gonna lie.

In so many ways, the first fifty pages of this novel kind of left my ass shivering on the sidewalk. While my initial, "Hey, hiya Louisa and Xavier!" introduction to our two lead characters wasn't painful or of the Oh Dear God Why! variety (\*cough\*Twilight\*cough), the opening pages were problem laden. As in, oh'boy'howdy we-got-a-problem laden. Some authors can hit characters out of the ballpark from page one, while others...? They need some time for the book to build momentum. The biggest issue I faced at the onset of Season for Surrender was getting a realistic hold on the hero and heroine; put simply, they just didn't feel like real people cemented with reality. At least, at first anyway.

Yeah, yeah, I know; that's vague as hell. Frankly, though, I know of no other way of conveying the, "Who ARE these people?!" sentiment I had throughout the first fifty pages of this book. BUT, WAIT! There is indeed hope, because Romain totally kicked my assumptions and misgivings into the "Girl, why you worryin'?!" arena. I read a ton (forgive the pun) of historical romance novels, and in order to make my brain go all spastic-happy for your lead characters, well, it takes some work. Like, lots of work.

I admit it; I like smart heroines. Hell, I like smart heroes for that matter (and thankfully, I scored on both accounts herein), but my favorite are smart heroines! Intelligence is smexy as hell, and when a writer can create a character where their personality and identity is rooted in their ability to appreciate higher-thought concepts, I'm all a'quiver. Louisa is, yes, just that; she is smart, but confined to her role of bluestocking. This reality of intelligent wallflower is a part of our heroine's character makeup, but only a small facet. Her circumstances are not a matter of contentment for her part, and thus she's even more fascinating as a female lead. Incidentally, we're best friends, this fictional words-on-a-page woman, she just doesn't know it yet.

\*Proudly brandishes Nerd Flag.\*

And then, we got Xavier! Yeah, I be lovin' this male lead character, like with all my particle existence. What fascinates me so intently about Alex's character is that he, incidentally, shares many commonalities with Louisa in that the two are more than their label, more than their societal roles. They are bound by their own identities, and yet unable for the longest time to break from their respective molds. While Xavier/Alex plays the role of rake, and does so willingly, embraces that label even, his motives for doing so are the very chains that keep him from experiencing true happiness. His desire to be loved is what keeps him from being loved...and holy crap, you talk about one hell of a fascinating dynamic and character!

(We'll leave out the clarification as to whether that GIF applies to just Louisa, or not. \*Cue the smirk!\*)

Though, in all seriousness, while Louisa and Alex morph from being lukewarm words on a page to busting onto the scene with all aspects of fascination and relatability, their existence as people would not have been nearly so amazing had it not been for the beautiful technical structure of their story. The writing style, the

voice of Theresa Romain was so powerfully present through 99.9% of this novel that I literally am still shell-shocked by the power of the story. Plot wise, it's a good mix-meshing of external conflict being driven by internal conflict, though on its own not too terribly impressive. However, the sexual, emotional, and character tension between whom Louisa and Alex are to their own selves and who they are to one another drives this story along insanely well. Ostensibly, the story just does...well...this...

Frankly, if your heart doesn't try to go all Alien-like, bursting out of your body-cavity, after reading this novel, then welcome to earth, Mr. Tin Man. The pacing of the book makes the characters, the writing, and the plot so much **MORE** in so many respects. No character interaction feels rushed, no romantic or emotional plot points seem forced or faulty, and the book is pretty much just freakin' phenomenal. My one criticism (because CRITIC!) is that the characters do take a few pages to "get going," which can be a bit struggle-worthy when the dynamic and tension hasn't been built as of yet. **BUT!** That one nit-pick aside, just, yeah. This book, read it. Listen to the outcry of your soul, awesome reader- it needs this story! Well done, Ms. Romain, so very well done!

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### **Rebecca says**

I would probably give this book 2 1/2 stars, but I am rounding down because it ended up being a disappointing and somewhat tedious read for me. To be fair, though, I was disappointed because I wanted the book to be something other than what it was, rather than because of flaws in the writing.

If you are in the mood for a light-hearted romance, *A SEASON FOR SURRENDER* fits the bill. Theresa Romain has an entertaining style, the dialogue sparkles, and the central characters are engaging and likeable. Their personalities kept me reading even after I lost interest in the story.

The secondary characters, unfortunately, are less well-developed. The villain of the story is nasty through and through, with no redeeming qualities. I prefer my antagonists to have more nuance. Too many other characters are simply names on the page. Most of the novel is set at a two-week house party. Characters appear midway into the story who have apparently been present for days without ever being mentioned, and characters introduced early on are forgotten for chapters at a time.

My biggest problem, though, was that I simply wanted more depth, in both character and story. This is, ultimately, a parlor drama. The conflicts are all interpersonal, and the only problem confronting the central characters is the "will they or won't they" romantic dilemma. About one-third of the way into the story, I began to wish there was something more at stake, some problem that would take the characters outside the confines of the house party and their preoccupation with each other. That, however, would have made it a different book, and probably not the one the author intended to write.

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### **herdys says**

4.5 stars! LOVED IT!

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### **Pamela says**

I loved this so much. So much! The good thing about the relatively low ratings it's received is that my expectations were fairly low, allowing me to be so happily surprised by just how much I adored this one: the characters, the prose, the dialogue, the psychological themes about being true to yourself regardless of others' expectations of who you should be, and the fact that these characters are both turned on by books and libraries! You guys, they cleverly and sexily quote Dante to each other...my geeky bookworm self was in heaven :)

Our heroine Louisa is a scholarly "bluestocking" bookworm who's curious and passionate and whose introverted nature has allowed her to become a keen observer. Our hero Alex is a supposed 'rake' who's got genuine charm and charisma, and whose habit of living up---excuse me, DOWN---to expectations have concealed a lot more emotional depth and intelligence than anyone would have suspected. Despite initial appearances, this is actually not an opposites attract story: Louisa and Alex are both curious observers of human nature, both searchers, both book and poetry lovers, and both trying to find themselves and real happiness outside of the narrow corners they've allowed loved ones and society at large to paint themselves in.

The plot: It takes place over an extended holiday house party and....well, there isn't much more of a plot than that :) There are a lot of Christmas rituals and a little code breaking (you'll see what I mean when you read it, which I hope you do!) and some amusing focus on the other inhabitants of the house. But mostly this is the witty, effervescent, yet surprisingly substantive character-driven story of two people who shed the confines of who they used to be in favor of creating a new, happier reality with each other. I truly believed these two were meant-for-each-other 'soulmates', which, oddly enough, is not a feeling all that many romance novels leave me with :)

I do understand and even agree with a few of the criticisms of this book. Do a few scenes drag on for a page or two after they should have ended? Yes, probably. Are some of the conversations a little repetitive? Sure, though I'd argue that criticism applies to about 95% of romance novels out there :)

So clearly this book is not for everyone, but wow, was it ever for me! Gorgeous prose, lots of humor and insight, witty dialogue, subtle psychological themes that I can really relate to, and among my favorite hero and heroine ever. I hope a few of you will overlook the generally unfavorable reviews and give it a shot!

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### **rameau says**

*This review can also be found on Book Girl of Mur-y-Castell-blog*

It's 1818 and Earl of Xavier has created a problem for himself. He's agreed to a bet he never should've agreed to, but a renown rake and gambler must keep up appearances. Oh, well, he could always manipulate the circumstances in his favour by rewriting the Christmas celebration guest list to ensure Louisa Oliver and

her aunt would stay the full two weeks. Fortunately, reputations deceive. Louisa is as little a bluestocking as Xavier is a thoughtless philanderer, but it turns out both of them are seducers.

A few wagers later Louisa owes Xavier hours of her time and they start discussions beyond normal scope of society gossip and imminent scandals that are so closely associated with both of them. As Xavier reluctantly tempts Louisa's virtue, she seduces him into showing the man behind the numbered expressions.

*Season for Surrender* starts slowly and I had trouble getting into the story. I did come to like both Xavier's and Louisa's voices, but unfortunately I wasn't ever fully captivated. That isn't to say I didn't like the story—I did—but I have the attention span of a gnat and I need to be continuously lured into turning the page and starting a new chapter. Most of the time, the chapter titles did that by reminding me of Gail Carriger's wit and hinting just enough to what was coming. There were a couple that could have been considered as mild spoilers, but I didn't mind them.

I liked the fact that Louisa's interest in books wasn't something to be taken on faith; it was shown and it helped to provide her an organic connection with Xavier. It also helped me to suspend disbelief long enough to accept the sexual aspects of their encounters. (view spoiler).

Their discussions over the state of his library and literary in general helped to mirror the progression of their relationship. I usually hate when authors start quoting other people's works, but here the quotes were used sparingly and chosen for the maximum impact—it is to say I didn't feel the need to automatically skip them and that I did in fact read them through.

More than just the quotes, though, some things about this book reminded me of Jane Austen's *Pride & Prejudice*. It wasn't just the descriptions of regency era festivities with a bigger company than three or five, but also a few—one in particular—specific scenes in the end that made me imagine Colin Firth striding across a long room thinking of Jennifer Ehle.

I also liked Lady Irving and Xavier's cousin, Jane, whom I suspect could be the heroine of a future Theresa Romain novel. More than that, I'd be interested in seeing whether or not the author can turn the villain, Marquess of Lockwood, into a character with a bit more depth.

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*I received a copy of this book from the author in exchange for this review.*

## **Hannah Givens says**

11/22/14:

Y'all, I think I've found a new favorite! The title and cover make this Christmas romance look like a formula bodice-ripper, but it's not. It's funny, an extremely light take on "historical," but there's surprising emotional depth as well.

The two leads have an emotional barrier that MAKES SENSE for them, that isn't totally contrived and silly. It really does take a whole book to unravel. Both of them have changes to make, but especially Xavier. He's the one trapped in his own reputation, a rake who never realize he could be more than that. Louisa

inadvertently shows him the way out -- but she can't do it for him. He has to free himself. On Louisa's part, she's a bookworm and introvert who doubts her own worth after a failed first season and a broken engagement. She learns to come out of her shell a little, but it's not the deeply offensive kind of "coming out of her shell." She learns to relax a bit and go for what she wants, but she's still an introvert to the core!

The book sports a lovely female friendship that develops before the romance takes off, a cast of memorable supporting characters, and an extremely satisfying villain smackdown. And it's just smutty enough. ;)

There are no historians, but there are amateur librarians, and apparently that's good enough for me! They spend a lot of time in the earl's huge library, and their "dirty talk" is quoting Dante to each other. In a dirty way. It's amazing.

12/25/15: Reread along with the rest of the series. Still adore.

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### **Becca says**

Alex, Lord Xavier, is a man of many masks and during his scandalous Christmas house party, he meets his match in an observant blue stocking who wears a few masks of her own. In some ways, *A Season for Surrender* reminded me of a book I adored, *What I Did for a Duke* (by Julie Anne Long) because each of the characters presented a facade to the world, but found that with each other, they could be their true selves and drop the masks.

At first, I did not understand why Louisa could see through to Alex' true self when others he had known for years could not, but Romain did a good job providing enough details about their characters to make it believable. I read this story quickly because I always get drawn into books where hero and the heroine, while seeming to be different actually share similar hopes and interests in a way that binds them in a way that is a joy to read.

This story implies that there is a lot of holiday festivities, but really, the Christmas theme is so minor that you could read this at any time. There are a few nice scenes with charades, Christmas punch, and mistletoe, but for the most part, the book centers around Louisa and Alex and their quest for trust between each other.

I felt that the book bobbed a bit with characterization (particularly with Louisa who would say or do things that were too bold or too shallow...or they became intimate in a place where they could be easily caught) but for the most part I enjoyed it. I loved the discussion of books, poetry, and ciphers. I sympathized with Alex more than I thought I would upon reading the first few chapters. And I was happy when Louisa and Alex finally opened up to each other. Oh, and Louisa's aunt Estella is a hoot....I would love to see a match up between Estella and Julia Quinn's Lady Danbury. She stole the show in scenes she appeared.

Overall, it was a worthwhile read. It was strongly character driven and emotional, as many of Romain's books seem to be, and did have a sprinkle of holiday cheer. 4 stars.

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### **Manda Collins says**

Charming Christmas house party romance with a hero and heroine who are neither what they seem. Loved

that Alex and Louisa fell in love over poetry and books:)

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### **Jan says**

I really enjoyed this novel. Great dialogue and build-up and well-defined characters.

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### **Rachna R says**

I loved the leads in this book *so much*. and I hated the main antagonist in this *so much*, too. I'm basically surprised by how much I felt about this? the male lead in particular got to me - I usually dismiss dude angst, because they're frustrating and tiring and repetitive and nothing really *comes* of it, so all it does is give dudes a reason to brood for no reason - but Alex's problem was really relatable, in ways that struck me, and it was explored in a way and given consequences in a way I found really *good*. And Louisa wanting to be something more than shy because she can be great and cutting and intelligent and warm was also so relatable, especially because she didn't magically become better at it by the end of the book in a way that made everyone stop and stare - she was just improving little by little!!

The 'ship in this was *wonderful*, they made me smile so much. my favourite thing about them was how every time one of them stepped away or stepped back the other one realised why it was that they did it - not ridiculous, prolonged misunderstanding, and not immediate understanding either, but a learning curve. I like it when couples get better at things, especially when they get better with each other. And the way they *talked* about things!!! - not witty or anything, but where both of them got each other. I loved it.

This book was a little slow, and I think it felt a little stilted in places, but I loved the leads enough that I had to give it four stars.

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### **Amanda says**

*"Despite everything he had done that was foolish and wrong, Louisa wanted and liked him. The knowledge seeped through him, bone-deep and astounding. He wanted her to know his very self.*

*So he kissed her, slow and gentle, his lips entreating: **trust me.***

*Tilting her head in the cradle of his hands, he slid his mouth to the hot pulse on her neck, then murmured down its length.*

*Nonsense? Poetry? It didn't matter. She shivered, and he sucked lightly at the fragile skin. Not hard enough to bruise; only enough pressure to mark her memory with pleasure.*

***You are wanted. You. Louisa.***

4.5 swoony stars

In direct contrast to the first book in the series, Season for Surrender upped the stakes by adding a dash more angst and a lot more seduction. This book had so much going for it! A more than she seemed to be

bluestocking, a farsighted faux rogue with a penchant for poetry, an outrageously bawdy aunt, ciphers, family secrets and a really big library. And it all begins with a bet...of course it does.

I liked how Xavier, no, *Alex* and Louisa connected almost immediately on a deeper level. They appeared, on the outside at least, to be total opposites but in truth were very much the same, for both secretly masked their true selves out of fear and self protection. But neither could hide from each other, a fact that terrified and intrigued them. I loved the way their kinship and intimacy grew over time, mostly taking place in Alex's library (*oh* how that fact set my bibliophile heart ablaze). And it was also wonderful to see Alex and Louisa's individual growth in confidence and self worth BEFORE the L-word entered the picture. Another couple that made each other better, yay!

Something I really love about Theresa Romain's writing is that she's very good at delivering twists on the expected, such as having Louisa find out about the bet early on which in turn gave her the upper hand in the game. I did find that the conflict concerning Alex's smarmy cousin was the weakest aspect of the book if only because I didn't give a wit about him or his ~agenda. Other than that insignificant nitpick, I have so much love for this book, Alex and Louisa and OF COURSE, Lady Irving. Now I'm really looking forward to reading Jane's book next since she was a shining new addition in this one.

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### **Erika Williams says**

Witty and engaging, this book is the perfect joining of Jane Austin's *Pride and Prejudice* and Oscar Wilde's "A Woman of No Importance."

Lord Xavier would stake his reputation on a wager. In fact, his entire reputation is build on wagers. So when his cousin proposes a wager on whether or not Xavier can keep a certain house guest at his party for the entirety of the season, he feels like he has no choice but to agree.

The guest in question is Louisa, a intelligent young woman who is no stranger to scandal. The year before she was engaged, but her fiance fell in love with her step sister and ended up marrying her instead. So Lord Xavier's party is the perfect excuse for her to get out again. And at least she'll be supervised, so she shouldn't be able to get into too much trouble.

While Xavier is doing everything in his power to keep Louisa there, his cousin is doing everything possible to scandalize her and send her packing. Meanwhile, Louisa knows about the bet the entire time, so everything either of them does either angers her or amuses her, depending on which one it's coming from and her mood at the time.

Xavier gives her access to his library, where she comes across some family secrets, and the two bond through something I've haven't seen much in romance novels, their intelligence. They have conversations where they quote classical literature in the original language. It's amazing, and I love to see such intelligent characters grace the page. Theresa Romain really shines in her dialogue, especially between Xavier and Louisa.

There was only one issue I had with this particular book, and it was with the second sex scene. The first and third one were absolutely fine, but the second just felt off to me. It was like these two witty characters I had enjoyed reading about were suddenly replaced with cheap porn stars, and it was rather jarring for me. Note, I must again point out that this was only a problem with the second sex scene.

Overall, I found this book to be witty and engaging, perfect for reading in a bubble bath at the end of a long day. I fully intend to track down the first book now.

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### **Annie (Under the Covers Book Blog) says**

#### **Posted on Under the Covers**

Alexander Edgeware, Lord Xavier doesn't like to turn down a bet, so when his cousin Lord Longwood wagers that he cannot get the prim and proper Lady Louisa Oliver to attend his famously naughty Christmas part and stay for the whole two weeks, Xavier makes it his next goal to prove that he can. As a man notorious for his wicked ways, Xavier uses his charm to get a rise out of Lady Louisa. So the question stands, does the bookish Lady Louisa stand a chance against the wicked lord?

SEASON FOR SURRENDER was a sweet and uplifting read. I enjoyed the characters very much. Lady Louisa was particularly endearing because of her love for books and a secret thrill for experiencing the unspeakable. She's a curious one who seemed to bring a bit of innocence and light into Lord Xavier's world. They got along wonderfully and I loved Romain's ability to infuse the book with sweetness and teasing sexiness.

As my first book from Theresa Romain, I found that I enjoyed her writing style very much. She has a great voice, but sometimes I felt that some scenes went on for a little too long. But I do think that the characters made up for that.

I was a little skeptical because I don't usually enjoy books where a bet is the key to which the hero and heroine meet, but Romain put her own unique twist to this trope that made it enjoyable.

The holiday theme is prominent and definitely gives this book a more romantic feel. After reading this, I think I'm likely to seek what's next for Theresa Romain.

\*Review Copy provided by publisher

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### **Vanessa Kelly says**

Theresa Romain writes gorgeous historical romance. This book has lovely prose and a very appealing hero, who is struggling to become more than society expects of him. It's really a wonderful Christmas romance, with lots of great dialogue between two very witty but deeply emotional people.

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