



Christmas Angel

Jo Beverley

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HE HAD NO INTEREST IN LOVE

Leander Knollis, Earl of Charrington, was tired of gadding about the Continent on diplomatic missions. It was time he settled down in his family home with a wife at his side and enjoyed a proper English Christmas. But his search for an intelligent woman without fanciful notions of romance was a frustrating one indeed...until he met the very sensible Judith Rossiter. Her figure was most attractive, her manner most pleasing, and her heart kind and gentle. All he wanted was a marriage of convenience, but soon he began to wonder whether his eminently practical mind would be overruled by his surprisingly foolish heart.

LOVE WAS ALL SHE COULD OFFER

It was an odd sort of marriage proposal which left Judith perplexed. Why would an earl, and a most attractive one at that, have any interest in marrying an impoverished widow with two children? It was a peculiar notion to consider but the opportunity to better her family's fortune, particularly in the advent of the approaching holiday season prompted her to accept his offer. It seemed an ideal arrangement in which she had nothing to fear...unless it was losing her heart to this most enigmatic earl!

Christmas Angel Details

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Author : Jo Beverley

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From Reader Review Christmas Angel for online ebook

Patty says

I seem to be averaging two romances a month. My mom would be horrified. She does not read for escape, she reads for learning, for improving her mind. Mostly, I am over her condemnation of my reading habits, because I know that there is only so much reading time left. I have decided life is too short to read only for improving my mind. I want to enjoy what I am reading and there are fewer calories in romance books than in a box of chocolates.

I read some of Jo Beverley's books before I started keeping track on this website. I like her writing style, her characters and the way she links this series together with the male characters. All in all, this was a fun read.

Philippa Lodge says

hesitating between three and four. the hero feels static all the way through while the heroine grows to trust him. the conflict with the hero's family is too easily resolved. overall it kept me reading, but not fabulous.

Pamela says

I actually liked this book I had not read any of the other books before in the series, but it is easy to understand, and catch up. Leander, is an Earl that does not want to marry for love, so he chooses a widow who is a lady with two children. Judith has fallen on hard times since her husband, a self acclaimed poet of only one book passed away. When she meets Leander she cannot be sure he is not playing a prank. Leander likes the idea of having children brought to the marriage, since his home is so large, empty, and holds very few loving memories. I like the way that Leander is kind to the children, and that he and Judith work at the arranged marriage. So many of these books talk about how little options ladies had in that time period. Would it be so different for a widow now left with no insurance, and two children? It would still be a challenge, and many would turn to remarriage. Especially if the gentleman was kind and cared for you and your children. Several steamy scenes. Not over done. Four stars.

Caroline says

So I haven't read many regency romances in my time. In fact, I think the only one I'd read before was a Harlequin, and that was for a library school class. So I wasn't really expecting to enjoy it as much as I did. But surprisingly, I think it was the best so far of my Christmas reads, although all things considered, it really didn't have a ton to do with Christmas. The title "Christmas Angel" both oversells the amount of Christmas in it and the amount of sentimentality. But despite that, it really was good! The plot wasn't something I've read very much before, and there was a surprising complexity in the characters and their interactions. Not that it's great literature or anything, but I was expecting a really cliché plot and cookie-cutter characters. Instead, I could almost imagine myself reading the other books in the series, several of which were hinted at throughout the book, whenever Judith and Leander would call on another "Rogue." I may never actually do it, but it's a credit to the book that I'm even entertaining the idea.

In some ways, the plot is reminiscent of modern "young widow meets young billionaire, hijinks and marriage ensue." But for some reason, it's easier for me to stomach in an old-timey setting. And there were enough other plot elements that I wasn't rolling my eyes the whole time. Anyway, I'd feel okay recommending the series to someone wanting a regency romance.

Timeforme says

This book was very well written and enjoyable. The romance that builds between Leander and Judith was pretty realistic as it moved from one of an arranged marriage to a marriage that contained love and respect for each other. I liked the kids as well as the other minor characters.

My only concern was that the ending seemed rushed with the sudden resolution of problems in Leander's estate and then the identification of the character who was causing problems and then overcoming and stopping his abuse.

Even with that concern, this was definitely an enjoyable book and a good continuation to the Company of Rogues series.

Elis Madison says

Leander, Earl of Charrington, has huge problems. Every woman he meets is madly in love with him.

Thing is, he's bummed about it since what wants is a loveless marriage.

Judith Rossiter is the widow of a popular poet, who slept in curlers (yes he did)

...and wrote all his odes to her, including the perennial favorite, Angel Bride. She scrapes by with her young son and daughter, as her husband's annuity ended with his death. It's only the small charity sent by her brother-in-law that keeps the wolves from the door.

Judith is known as the Weeping Widow, because she's never stopped wearing black (mostly because she can't afford new clothes). Leander hears about her from Lucien, Marquess of Arden, and his wife Beth, and thinks that a woman who's still grieving her dead hubby might just be the loveless wife he wants. So he goes to have a look.

He likes what he sees, so after a two-second conversation, he proposes.

She reacts favorably.

Ah, the perfect woman. But Lee is relentless and eventually she succumbs to his blandishments (whatever that means).

The happy new family sets out for Temple Knollis, Leander's primary estate.

The ~~mausoleum~~ elegant mansion was Leander's grandfather's obsession, and his father's *bête noire*. Leander's father fled the place and warned Leander that if he returned, he might never be allowed to leave. When Leander returned to England for school, his grandfather's increasingly forceful demands that he visit made him nervous; he feared that if he ever acquiesced he would be kept captive there. His father's warnings took an even more ominous meaning when Lee became the earl, and the urgent summons now came from his uncle, loaded with dire words that sounded a bit like threats. A careful examination of the earldom's books revealed that vast sums were being siphoned off. Would his uncle kill for the earldom—or to hide the misappropriation of funds?

And when they meet his cousin, who claims he's fleeing the Temple, which is stricken with ~~ebola~~ the ~~clap~~ diphtheria, what does *that* mean? After years all but dragging Leander there, why are they suddenly warning him off?

The new family diverts to London, where the kidlets explore the town, and Lee does some digging into this newest mystery. Judith uses the time to buy some non-black gowns and settle up her husband's debts with his publisher.

That's when things get spooky.

Judith sees her dead husband's ghost—and he looks pissed. And someone gives the kids some poisoned candy, when they aren't trying to push the boy off a bridge.

Which sets off a string of mistaken assumptions, a mystery that isn't all that hard to figure out, and a lot of "I love him but I can't tell him because he wants a loveless marriage"/"I love her but I can't tell her because she still loves her dead ex hubby" angst which got on my nerves a bit. It all happens around the holiday season so there's talk woven in about family Christmas traditions, etc. Hence the title.

Another "not her best work" book, IMO. But three stars.

Best line: "*Why are you scowling at the pudding, mama?*"

Patty says

Leander is the son of a diplomat who's spent most of his life traveling around the capitals of Europe romancing princesses. Judith is a sensible widow with two children who's never traveled more than a few miles from her small town. Leander wants to stop traveling and make a real home, and decides that he needs a very English woman to help him do that. However, he wants someone who won't fall desperately in love with him, since his parents had an unbalanced marriage. He figures Judith, who everyone believes to be still in love with her dead first husband, is perfect.

I loved this book! Both of the characters are sensible, reasonable adults who actually do things like sit down to discuss their relationship and make decisions based on things other than emotions. And yet they're still adorable as they fumble their way toward each other. There's a mystery subplot that was genuinely compelling (not all that common for subplots in romance novels), and I found the difficulties the characters had with sex – especially considering that neither of them was a virgin at the beginning – to be believable and sweet. Highly recommended!

Cruth says

Author: Jo Beverley

First published: 1992

Length: 4792 locations, 351 pages

Setting: England, 1815

Sex: Not frequent. Explicit but not raunchy.

Hero: Diplomat, soldier. Returning to an England he doesn't know. Wants to put down roots. 25 years old.

Heroine: Widow with two children. Married at 16. Not a comfortable marriage, but not abusive. Poor. 29 years old.

Series: Book 3

Includes: Excerpts from *Forbidden and Dangerous Joy* by Jo Beverley.

A book about grief and second chances. About parenting. And about Love - accepting and giving.

Overall, it's another solid Regency from Beverley. Like Books 1 and 2, it isn't the easiest book. The characters aren't as *appealing* as one would expect of the genre. And the story is a bit of a mishmash. It works... mostly.

I find myself wanting to read the series, but not exactly *enjoying* them. There are some odd concepts and Beverley seems to be promoting some personal crusades - partly as character motivation, partly as "this was how it was during Regency period" but I am also thinking they may be her personal opinions.

An example. In "Christmas Angel", Beverley spent many paragraphs expounding on corporal punishment and its value in turning boys into men. A reader could take this two ways: changing times and opinions, particularly with society's changing views on the role of woman and wife, made the discipline and expectation of youth an important turning point, or Beverley feels society has lost something (control? discipline? responsibility?) in removing corporal punishment from homes and schools. In terms of character motivation, the punishment and discipline of Judith's son was critical in the two recognising a need for partnership, but also Judith denouncing her role as sole carer and Bastian moving forward into a male dominated, sometimes brutal society.

Ultimately, what I am finding with Beverley's "Company of Rogues" are how thoughtful they are. I may not agree with them - and find myself cranky with characters and author - but they stay with me. Beverley puts forward some challenging viewpoints. Not particularly subtly, but they are there.

There's something to be gained in that.

From the World of *The Company of Rogues*:

An Arranged Marriage - Nicholas Delaney
An Unwilling Bride - Lucien de Vaux, Marquess of Arden
Christmas Angel - Leander Knollis, Earl of Charrington
Forbidden - Francis Haile, Lord Middlethorpe
Dangerous Joy - Miles Cavanagh
The Dragon's Bride - Con Somerford, Viscount Amleigh
The Devil's Heiress - Clarissa Greystone
"The Demon's Mistress" in In Praise of Younger Men - Lord Vandeimen
Hazard - Lady Anne Peckworth and Race de Vere
St. Raven - Tristan Tregallows, Duke of St. Raven
Skylark - Sir Stephen Ball
The Rogue's Return - Simon St. Bride
To Rescue A Rogue - Lord Darius Debenham (also Major Hal Beaumont)
Lady Beware - Lady Thea Debenham and Viscount Darien
A Shocking Delight - David Kerslake

References:

Author's website: <http://www.jobev.com/rogues.html>

(ISBN 978-1-61417-447-9)

-CR-

Jacob Proffitt says

I was resigned to this series taking its time to get any good. So I was pleasantly surprised when this one broke the mediocre trend. Unfortunately, you'll still want the background from the first two stories. That or simply put up with the dissatisfaction of not having the background for key characters.

Anyway, Leander and Judith are finally protagonists I could engage with wholly. They're caring and intriguing and have strengths that shore one another up and support a relationship I was interested in from the start. I was a bit worried about Leader's broken idea of love and marriage (built from seeing it done wrong with his parents). That kind of thing can be flogged to death and become very tedious, but I don't think it was here. Oh, it's present and a significant part of what he has to overcome, but he doesn't belabor things and is able to learn from the great examples around him that his parents aren't the only (let alone best) example of love and family.

I do admit to getting a little tired of the harping on the imbalance of marriage in the Regency period. Yes, we get it. It sucked for women who had zero power both legal or social. It's a good point and one that bears examination and exploration. But so far, it's all terribly one-note with each story making the same point over and over with very little variation. Which is fine except that its all expressed in very modern terms and seems more and more anachronistic the more monotone it becomes. If you're going to make a point by contrast, I can't help thinking it'd be more useful (and more interesting) to illustrate variations around the theme and show the spectrum of attitudes and the things that make the difference between healthy and unhealthy attitudes towards the institution of marriage.

But I digress.

The thing that made all the difference between this and the others is that the plot didn't undermine the main characters. It wasn't a fantastic plot (most of the developments were well telegraphed with no real surprises), but it was serviceable and served to give a framework for Judith and Lee to work out their relationship. So this was a solid three plus stars through most of the story. As is a pattern in later Beverley novels, it was the ending that pushed me to round to four stars. That moment of shared epiphany where trust and love are acknowledged is a powerful moment if orchestrated right and Beverley delivers in spades. I really hope this bodes well for the rest of the series and can finally say I look forward to continuing (as opposed to saying I look forward to it getting to the quality I know Beverley is capable of producing).

A note about Steamy: There are only two explicit sex scenes, so this is the middle of my steam tolerance. I actually really liked how this was handled and the mismatch between expectation and reality—particularly that everything wasn't all wine and orgasms from the start as Judith has to rethink expectations built by her marriage to the poetical, but essentially detached, Sebastian.

Desi says

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Preeti ♥? (Romance She Reads) says

Hmmm lets see...

A mildly tormented, Love-is-overrated alpha H who comes around nicely - Check

A widowed Mrs. Robinson h, almost beyond even genteel poverty - Check.

Cute, mostly biddable kids (with other people) - Check.

Head-on collision with a moc - Check.

Mild, very mild suspense - Check.

Inevitable falling in love but let's fight it. - Check.

Sweetness overload - Check.

Good chemistry - Check.

Likeable mcs - Check.

But still a big yawn - Check!

What's lacking?

A tighter, shorter story.

The poppets are cute but do they have to be always, *always* underfoot?

The sexual tension is twanging but this or that or something or everything keeps intruding. After a late and sketchy consummation, we have another pause. I cannot imagine a 25 years old bridegroom having the restraint of a much sedater gentleman.

Many more minor irritants and brow-raisers but let's not blame them.

This apt and lovely review says it better! <https://www.goodreads.com/review/show...>

Writerlibrarian says

This is an atypical Regency romance for Beverley or so I've read. I was really happy to find that the whole woman as possession was tone down to a whisper in this book. Both Leander and Judith are longing for a marriage based on honesty, friendship and the desire to make a home. Judith has been nicknamed the Weeping Widow by the villagers, Leander is looking to marry without the foolish emotion of love and wants friendship and a solid honest relationship instead. He finds a ready made family with Judith and her two children. No real villains in this story, just two persons learning to love each other without realizing it. I found it an agreeable read, something like a nice cup of tea with with your favorite cookies on a Sunday afternoon.

ARomanceLover says

Leander, the Earl of Charrington want to marry quickly and start a family but he wants a wife who will not fall in love with him as all the young debutante's do. He chooses Judith Rossiter, the Weeping Widow who is said to deeply mourn her poet husband and is unlikely to therefore fall in love with him. What he doesn't know is she hasn't loved her husband since they were first married and she is in a bad way monetarily and has no choice but to marry him for his money and the opportunities it will provide her two children.

I really enjoyed this third book of the Rogue's series which gives me hope for the rest of them. I love that though we know Judith's heart we are kept guessing about Leander. I really loved him as the hero, he was playful yet serious and kind but stern when he needed to be. Also there wasn't much focus on his hot looks but more on his personality and charm which is sometimes lacking in other period books I've been reading lately. Judith is a fierce lioness and is also complicated and lovely.

Robyn Echols says

Wonderful

Great Love story about avoiding love for something more practical. I enjoyed the characters-each unique and well-written. Great children characters. They weren't perfect, but typical and so likable. A very interesting Christmas story.

Helen Heavey says

It's the 19th Century

Usually, I like Jo Beverly's book. This book treats the children as if they lived in this Century. Children were not taken to the theater at nite. It simply wasn't done. They were seen and not heard. I do not like when a Regency romance writer tells a story with details that represent 21st Century thinking.
