



# The Love Academy

*Belinda Jones*

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*Do you have enough romance in your life?*

Journalist Kirsty Bailey would have to answer no. She has the essential starter kit - a boyfriend - but somehow Joe seems to have skipped the vows of for better/for worse and gone straight to *for granted*.

But then just as she's on the verge of settling for a swoon-free existence, Kirsty's magazine sends her to a majestic Venetian palazzo to attend the much gossiped-about Love Academy... Her undercover mission? To prove her editor's theory that this 'school for singles' is nothing more than an escort agency with a sexy accent and fancy glass chandeliers.

But what if her editor is wrong and their promise of true *amore* is for real? Will Kirsty be able to resist the kind of moonlit temptations she's been dreaming of for years, or is her relationship with Joe going, going, *gondola*?

If you think Casanova was a bad boy, just wait until you see what Cupid has in store for Kirsty...

## The Love Academy Details

Date : Published July 19th 2007 by Arrow (first published July 1st 2007)

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Author : Belinda Jones

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# From Reader Review The Love Academy for online ebook

## Christina says

What I liked most about this book were the quotes at the beginning of each chapter.

It's obviously a book about relationships. But what's special about this one is that it's helping you realize what you want from a relationship isn't always what you need.

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## Rebecca Haslam says

I managed to finish this book in a few days, which is nothing new admittedly, but it also wasn't as good as I had hoped it would be. If anything, it was a little too unsurprising and I could see where the story was going long before it played out on the pages. Had I been given a few surprises along the way I may have rated this book higher. I won't be reading it again, though I will be keeping it since my copy is signed by Belinda herself ;-)

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## Nikki Bywater says

Journalist Kirsty Bailey is sent on an assignment to Venice by her magazine on an undercover mission to “The Love Academy” to find out if “The Love Academy” is all it claims to be a school for singles, teaching lessons on how to find romance and true love or if it is what her editor suspects it to be just another well dressed up escort agency.

Back home Kirsty love life and relationship with her boyfriend Joe is a big disappointment to her due to the lack of romance that Joe brings into her life. Kirsty feels that Joe takes her for granted. Kirsty dreams of more love and romance in their relationship but expects now that is never to be.

But how will Kirsty feel once she attends “The Love Academy”? When she is surrounded by the love and romance she is craving in her own life. Will she give into the temptation and embrace the romance and send Joe packing when she returns home?

Belinda Jones writes fantastic chick lit that is warm and friendly, keeping the reader entertained along the journey in a fun packed read that sails you away in a gondola of love and romance in the delights of Venice.

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## Rea Cobb says

I am sure many of you are chick lit lovers and I am sure that if you love chick lit then at some point you must have read Belinda Jones books! Belinda Jones has travelled to many different countries through her life due to her work and this shows in her books. She has a way of making you feel as if you are in the same country when you are reading any of her books and this book, The Love Academy is one of them. The book is set in Italy and after reading this book I feel a trip is in order for me!!

Kirsty Bailey is a reporter for Hot magazine, she has a new undercover report to do on The Love Academy. This is where all the single Brits who are unlucky in love and who I struggling to believe in that little thing called romance go to see romance first hand by the true romantics, the Italians!

The problem is for Kirsty is she is already in a relationship so she needs to put this aside in order to find out if The Love Academy is the real deal or if it is a glorified Brothel!

Kirsty takes her newly broken hearted brother with her to get a brother/sister concept on The Love Academy. Unfortunately her brother is not overjoyed to be going back to Italy as this is where he had his heart broken question is will The Love Academy be able to mend his broken heart?

I love the character of Kirsty, she feels like your normal girl next door. She is in a relationship with Joe but like most of us the romance has sort of dwindled away leaving her wanting a little bit more. Her relationship with her brother comes into the story a lot which only helped to relate to her character making her feel real.

The book is very much romantic based which is to be expected from the title and from the location the book is set in but each part of the course at The Love Academy is also teaching them different aspects of romance which makes for a loving read. I didn't find that the book was predictable which helped to keep us as the reader gripped, I found myself closing the book at the end of a chapter only having to open it up again to read the next as I needed to know what was going to happen next!

I liked that the book was on an even keel from the first chapter we are brought straight into the story and even the ending was wrapped up nicely without it feeling rushed.

All in all I thoroughly enjoyed this book. The book is 400 pages long and it is definitely a chick-lit, romance book but it does have a little more depth to the story than many other chick-lit books and I think this is due to the amount of information about Venice itself, the sights they see and the food they eat and even down to the little bits of Italian which is spoken.

I would recommend this book although I would put a warning with it as since reading this book I now have the urge to go to Venice!!

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## **Stacey says**

An entertaining and fun novel about love, romance and Venice!

Journalist Kirsty Bailey is sent on assignment to Venice, to investigate 'The Love Academy' - a 'school of romance', or is it? However, along the way she must deal with temptation in the form of Dante, the Italian gentleman who the Academy matches her up with. What should she do about this when she has a romance-inept boyfriend back in London?

Belinda Jones is a fun writer, very down-to-earth and natural, and I wouldn't hesitate reading her books in the future. I think some other of my favourite chick-lit authors formulate more interesting, and well-rounded characters and believable plots (Keyes, Mansell), however, this was a superbly easy book to read. It didn't completely give me everything I wanted, but it definitely made me fall in love with Venice all over again.

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## **Nicholas says**

This was an okay book, but I will admit the ending just didn't do it for me. About halfway through the book it was easy to see that the book could go in a few different directions. The book was a pretty fun read. The story was pretty interesting and the characters really did grow on me by the end of the book. It was sad to see the story end.

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## **Steph says**

As I intend to visit Venice with my mother early next year, I thought it a light way to learn about the less serious aspect of Venice. Belinda Jones definitely has a way of making every corner seem enticing, and she also offers a sugary alternative to an official guidebook. As far as the story goes ... less said the better.

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## **Dark-Draco says**

Light - check! Fluffy - check! Happy Ending - check!

To be honest, there's not a lot more I want out of this sort of book, as I usually only pick up a romance between heavier books or when I need to lift my mood a bit.

The story is fine - Kirsty is a reporter goes undercover at 'The Love Academy' - a luxury package holiday in Venice where the guests are partnered with Italian 'Amores', who teach them romance, confidence and how to be just a little more Italian! Only Kirsty has a boyfriend back home, has dragged along her broken-hearted brother, and is almost instantly attracted to her handsome Amores, Dante.

This had humour in places and the characters were well written - not the standard neurotics that usually put my off reading some modern romance. Venice is captured nicely and I liked the sub plots involving Kier and George Clooney :)

Well worth spending a few days in its company.

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## **PrettyFlamingo says**

I quite liked this book, but I didn't love it. I remember reading I Love Capri a good few years ago now and I enjoyed that very much. One thing I really liked about that was how it was firmly set in a specific time owing to its topical references of Heat magazine, Simon Cowell and so on. That is a fab element of chick lit and something I love when I pick up a new to me book that may be a few years old; it's almost amusingly retro. Basic premise: Kirsty is a journalist and feels that her boyfriend doesn't show her any romance in life. She wants more, and jumps at the opportunity to report undercover on an expose of the Venetian "Love Academy" where Italians (Amores, no less) teach us behind-the-door Brits how to romance our partners. She also sees it as a chance to help out her lovelorn brother and pick up some ideas herself to improve her relationship. I was cross with her at first, thinking for goodness sake, think about how love is shown to you in real life! It isn't all about flowers, satin sheets and grand gestures!

This was good in parts. It wasn't as predictable as I thought it might have been at the outset and I felt the ending was the right one for all the characters. I just didn't "buy" all of it. The whole idea of the Love Academy didn't ring true. Would such a place exist in real life? I couldn't take it seriously. I also didn't buy that Kirsty, a journalist on "Hot" magazine (rather like Heat, I imagine) would really have had access to Sophia Loren, George Clooney and other A listers. Aren't they more likely to interview the likes of Mark Wright or people from Hollyoaks? Would such a magazine have the funding to pay for such luxurious accommodation? I wasn't convinced however, perhaps Belinda knows better having been in that line of work herself. I also thought there was far too much going on at the Love Academy - it was a completely exhausting whirlwind of activity.

What I did like a lot was Belinda's real life knowledge of the Italian settings. I've been to Venice, Verona and Garda and it made me nostalgic for my time there, the food and the drink. Her descriptions were flawless and I felt transported back there. I also loved the character development and the realisations that Kirsty comes to whilst in Venice. She veers from immaturity to understanding. She realises the truth about love and romance. One lovely scene is when she visits a cemetery and sees the graves of couples who have been together for years, and marvels at their lives together. She wonders why "love from a lover is held in such high esteem, almost more so than the love of a friend or a relative which is often more enduring or unconditional" and so do I. She realises that she may not have shown Joe everything she is expecting of him, and grows up a bit. Not a minute too late either at 36.

There was, of course, comedy which was for the most part believable, but I felt the most marvellous part of the book for me was the introduction to Raeleen D'Agostino and her real life book, *Living La Dolce Vita*. Now that really is worth a read.

But I have to say a huge irritant was that people don't just speak. They "coo". Repetitively. Over and over. Belinda uses this verb so often it becomes screamingly annoying and I found myself looking out for it (and there were many occasions to become annoyed at) just to get it out of the way. She also uses it incorrectly when a character is being sarcastic - that isn't cooing! Please stop it!

I would recommend it for the information about Venice, the character development and the snippets of self-help in there that we can all learn something from. Love yourself first, before you try to love anyone else.

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## **? Sara ? says**

if i could give it zero stars, i would.

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## **Moya says**

I love Belinda Jones; she is hands down one of my favourite authors. Not just for the book content themselves, but moreso that after reading any of her novels, you feel as though you have been to the place yourself, and experienced the town / city / country that the book has been set in. She certainly does her research on locations!

The Love Academy is no exception, from the passionate drama of the Italians, to the delicate descriptions of

glass-blowing (which, by the way, I loved the idea of!) The story keeps you holding on through to the last moment - and to be honest, I had no idea how it was going to turn out. Women's fiction is usually quite predictable in the whole "happy ending" genre, but Belinda always keeps a twist or two hidden in the depths!

Fully recommend!!

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### **Alice Rose says**

It's very hard to enjoy a book when you think the main character is a whiny, high maintenance, selfish, irritating, self-pitying idiot.

Kirsty Bailey is a journalist who is sent by her magazine to the Love Academy, a mysterious place that promises true love at the end of your stay. Kirsty's mission is to find out if the Love Academy is nothing more than a brothel all dressed up in fancy clothes.

I have a major issue with the main character. In general, I cannot bear women who constantly moan that they want their boyfriend to be more romantic, to sweep them off their feet, to make big fancy gestures every day of the damn week, because if they don't, they can't possibly love you, can they? What is so wrong with being happy with a man who is dependable, who doesn't feel the need to constantly be a smooth talker and try and impress you all the time? Because I'm pretty sure that Kirsty doesn't do the same for her boyfriend, Joe.

Anyway, instead of doing the normal thing and telling Joe how she feels, Kirsty buggers off to Venice and becomes smitten with a nonce named Dante. And this is where it gets even more annoying. Kirsty is constantly comparing the two men, ripping apart her relationship because obviously Italian men are so much more charming than the lowly British ones. Dear lord.

I won't ruin the ending in case anyone wants to read this. I have given two stars because I love Belinda Jones' descriptions of Italy (and foreign lands in general).

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### **Ann says**

The Love Academy was a lovely, fun read. Kirsty, a reporter, and Kier, her brother go to Venice to attend a course in The Love Academy. Kirsty is sent undercover to reveal The Academy's secret agendas and Kier goes against his wishes suffering from a broken heart by a Venetian woman.

They spend 9 days, learning about themselves and being reminded what romance is and isn't. I really liked the message of the book. It has been my belief for quite long now and it was nice to be reminded. One cannot force neither love nor romance. One has to love herself/himself and be fulfilled first and then love can come to our lives. Love is a dessert, we are the main course.

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### **LadyTechie says**

I really had fun with this book. There were secrets and the amazing Venice that so far I only know from live webcams, pictures and books. I hope to make it there this year so I can see all of the beautiful spots that

Kirsty saw during her visit. Murano sounds so amazing. The story was interesting and had some great characters who each needed to grow in their own way. I have to admit that I could go either way with who Kirsty ended up with at the end of the book because Dante was amazing, but, at the end of it we find that Joe was also pretty good too. I will read more from Belinda Jones just to see my beautiful Italy.

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### **Carlin says**

I actually purchased this book, written in 2007, from Amazon because I could not find it as an ebook, \$.01 + postage! I had to read it because I knew the characters in another book make a cameo appearance in this one. I Love Capri was such a fun book, and since this book was also set in Italy (Venice), I knew I would enjoy it as well. Belinda Jones obviously knows her settings. Everything she wrote about Venice rang true (I've been there), and I could easily imagine the scenes.

I gave this a 4-star rating because I wasn't keen on the ending. It felt too contrived, and the romantic in me wanted a different outcome! But I do recommend it and will continue searching out this author's chick lit travel books.

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