



The Deadliest Sin

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Dark Dreams

They had haunted Julia Woolcott all her life, but the strangest of all began with an invitation to a scandalous house party and a game more dangerously arousing than any she'd ever imagined.

Unbound Desires

Driven by his ruthless ambition, Alexander Strathmore would do anything to come face to face with the mystery man who'd challenged him to first debauch Julia, then destroy her.

Deadly Sins

A wild shot...a frantic carriage ride through the night...a forbidden seduction. Rakehell adventurer and sheltered spinster, Alexander and Julia will break every rule of propriety to chase down their nemesis and consummate their unlikely passion.

The Deadliest Sin Details

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From Reader Review The Deadliest Sin for online ebook

Maggi Andersen says

After an invitation to a scandalous house party, sheltered spinster, Julia Woolcott embarks on a dangerous and enlightening journey, beset by dark dreams. A rakehell adventurer, driven by ruthless ambition, Alexander Strathmore seems prepared to commit murder to gain what he wishes from a mysterious foe, who proves to be Julia's nemesis.

As they join forces to chase him together, not fully trusting each other, they embark on a seductive journey of the senses.

The character's metamorphosis is handled extremely well in a novel filled with terror and horrific happenings that raced along and kept me turning the pages. Their physical attraction to each other is something they cannot fight or understand. It is primal.

Caroline Richards writes beautifully. I enjoyed her prose. I enjoyed her characters. What I didn't enjoy was the unresolved issues at the end of the novel. Too much was unexplained for me, but I'm prepared to take it back if another novel is in the mix.

Sassapphras says

This is very different than the majority of the books I read from this time period. The Deadliest Sin is very dark. I found it exciting to read something a little more foreboding than the fluff from a typical regency novel.

This is the first in a trilogy. If it wasn't, the ending may have led me to give it 2 stars instead of 3. It's not completely closed, but it left me relatively satisfied, nonetheless.

Jennifer says

[I was surprised that Faron ended up being Alexander's father, but they made such a point out of saying what loose morals his mother had that I should not have been surprised. The only thing I did not like was that we never figure out why Faron hated Meredi

Christine Strowbridge says

Very dark, very intense, very gripping. I really enjoyed this book. I bought it on a whim at the bookstore, it taunted me and made me buy it.

The passion between Julia and Alexander bordered on obsession which I loved. I love reading a book where two completely different people fall in love.

I am thinking there is a next book? Hopefully! Because one of the biggest mysteries wasn't solved! I was so disappointed. But if it's solved in the next book, then all will be well. I'm definitely going to read the next

book.

Tammy Walton Grant says

My name is Tammy, and I am a lazy reader.

I have a short attention span and I skim read. While this might mean that I have undiagnosed ADD, it also means that, from time to time, if an author doesn't smack me in the face with information I'm left wondering what the fuck is going on. On some occasions it is strictly my fault - lazy reader that I am. Others I must lay at the feet of the author, and I'm going to do that with this book.

I wanted to love this book. I SHOULD have loved it. I enjoyed the story the author told very much. I liked the prose, the dialogue and the setting. I liked the Hero, the villains, and the descriptions of the leering, middle-aged horndogs at the country house orgy were unsettling and vaguely menacing (just as the author intended). The whole thing had a very gothic feel to it.

BUT...

It's one thing for a book to be a mystery, it's quite another to have no freaking idea what the connection is between the bad guy, the heroine (and her family's mysterious background) and the Hero. I know we're not *supposed* to know all of it, that's why it's a mystery, but you have to give me something so that I give a shit about it. I re-read the first 3 chapters of this book twice, and then looked it up on GoodReads to see if I'd missed a book in the series.

AAAUGGGHHH!!! Frustrating.

The Villain's name is given to us in the first chapter, but in the same way that you would use the words "Jesus Christ", with an assumption that the rest of the world knows who you are talking about. The same with references to Julia's family, and her Aunt Meredith, and the fact that she has no memory of her life before coming to live with her. Same with the Hero's background, for that matter. The author has the characters talking about the villain, mentioning that he wears a mask, that he has scars and allows no one to see his face, that he is insane and prone to fits. But she never tells or shows ME, the reader. Same with important details about Julia's past, her Aunt, and Alexander. They tell each other, but never show ME.

And isn't it all about ME, the reader? Even if I'm lazy?

I found the heroine the teensiest bit tiresome by the end of the book. There are allusions to this private world they lived in on the estate, almost as if they were being kept safe from something. (This was intriguing, but there was absolutely no pay-off at the end of the book.) She refuses to tell the Hero about her past (or much of anything about herself) and at one point actually becomes mute (at which point I would have slapped her around, but the Hero was much more patient).

The bad guys are dispatched with ease at the end of the book, and there is an ever-so-sweet epilogue as well. All very nice, except it all seems pret-teeeeee convenient. And, as we never do find out what the connection is between them all, or the reason the Villain was after them in the first place, I felt cheated.

(Oh, look! There's a book two! Shocking.)

So, to sum up:

If you're a lazy reader like I am, you might plow through this with little to no understanding of the details I have complained about above. You might not like it much.

If you actually read your books word for word and like to figure out the background and details on your own, you'll probably love this book.

I'm going to read the next one in the series, for two reasons:

- 1) to find out what the heck the story is about their Aunt Meredith. I'm not hugely optimistic that I'll find out, as I've just seen there is a third book in this series.
- 2) to see if the author is still as coy with her details as she was with this book.

3 stars.

Nicole says

2.5 - Historical mystery romance with a plot that moves along rather quickly. But there were some major gaping holes with the story line that took too long to be organized that took away from the enjoyment of the read. There were also character inconsistencies that made the read a bit frustrating read - and at times almost felt like the author purposely put them there. And the end left you wondering, there was no clear cut answers or resolutions.

Elizabeth (Liz) says

Very glad this was free from Amazon Kindle. I had never heard of this book or author prior to finding this on Amazon, and I guess I really hadn't missed anything. The story and relationship felt terminally slow to me. I don't need action and excitement to whip me to and fro in a frenzy while reading. But, good God, there has to be *something* to keep me going. Perhaps it was just my mood while reading it, but I honestly wouldn't recommend this to anyone unless it's still free and you need an all-natural sleep remedy.

Leah says

It was a mix between romance and erotica. I didn't like hardly any of it. I didn't like Julia at all. I don't understand why Julia stayed with Alex when she caught him red-handed. I know he was drugged, but why in the world would a woman allow a man to do that and be fine with it. Alex was lucid enough to know he was drugged and he was lucid enough to know that Julia was coming into the room. He had enough self-control to handle the situation if he wanted to. He let himself be caught up in the moment. I didn't like how weak she was in the book either. Going mute all the time SO WEAK! She got on my nerves throughout this book. There was absolutely nothing endearing about her at all. The only reason why I gave the book a 2 star is because of the mystery part of the story. I figured it was Alex's father when she developed the picture. I didn't like how Alex's father had supposedly shot himself in the head and then Alex knew it was father that was toying with his head. I also didn't like that we never find out what Meredith did to Alex's dad in the first place. As I'm writing the review, I realize I should probably give the book a one star instead. It just wasn't a

very good book.

Mily Lou says

This was a free Kindle book. I struggled reading it because it was slow to start. I found myself reading other books skipping this one for several months. I finally came back to it and forced myself to read it, and it took me about 8 months to finish it. Sorry guys, this is not a good book to read. But if you find yourself trying to sleep and can not, read this book, I found that it made me sleep quickly. Have a great day guys.

Lexie says

I...I'm not entirely sure where to begin my review here.

I mean...I guess...

[lapses into silence]

No! I shall not become silent like the heroine whenever faced with an impossible situation! I shall rally myself and describe, in as much detail as I very well please, what I found so...so...UGH about this book.

Let's start with the 'heroine'. We're told--by her, by the 'hero', by the kidnappers, the villain, the villain's henchmen, the heroine's Aunt, random people on the side of the road--that she is a retiring, fragile, curious spinster bluestocking (the terms are used interchangeably really) who is a virgin (of course she is) but is VERY widely read. So she understands about carnal things. She just doesn't like to discuss them so why is everyone discussing them around her all the time? (It could have something to do with being stuck at a debauched party of revelers of sexual proclivities that would make de Sade blush)

Now let's talk about the 'hero'; an adventurer and purveyor of sexual delights he most assuredly does NOT want to have anything to do with the heroine. Who he's supposed to kill. Who he instead helps to survive, against his own better survival, who he most assuredly does NOT want to bed. It's because he's been celibate all these months and surely he wouldn't be attracted so intensely to a bookish spinster VIRGIN of all things! Never! Ever! Except when she shows off her ankle. Or when she curses. Or when she looks at him. Any time at all really.

The villain? Who ISN'T a villain? She's hunted, kidnapped, drugged, hit and propositioned most lewdly by almost every guy in the book, there's only two other women ever seen for any length of time and one wishes her to hell for stealing the attention from her and the other has kept her in the dark about her entire life. The nominal actual villain is a bit of a caricature with such an overblown convoluted plot you'd never guess he'd been planning it for eons (of which he would have never been able to enact if our heroine hadn't been foolhardy and her aunt hadn't hidden her away like a nun).

The romance is spotty, skirts the line of dubcon depending on the situation (does it count as being seduced if the alternative is to a) be shot or b) be ravished by a pack of animalistic strangers?) and quite frankly unbelievable. Oh I truly think Julia felt lust for Alexander, but love? With what they go through? And how often they BOTH lie and manipulate and are spiteful? Not hardly.

I'm also not a fan of the fact that because there's two more books to come (which I won't be reading, unless I'm paid and even then I'd have qualms) we don't get answers. It all ties up so very neatly. And as another reviewer mentioned how in the blazing hell is Julia NOT stabbing Alexander after finding him (partially drugged or otherwise) engaged in a compromising situation with that dreadful woman? HOW. Just HOW. At that point it wasn't like undying declarations of love, trust and transparency were uttered. Really it's a miracle that Alexander convinces her to forgive him (except really, Julia has no other hope and she does like sex).

A Voracious Reader (a.k.a. Carol) says

I went into this book thinking it would be a pretty good read. I'm not usually wrong, but this time I was way off. I don't like the writing style or the characters. On the first 100 pages there are plenty of words on the pages, but they say precisely nothing. I was completely lost the entire time. A little mystery is fine, but not having a damn clue about the characters, the plot or the back story irritated the piss out of me. I ended up skimming the rest of the book and only lingering on the sex scenes which, at least, weren't too bad.

This story started out with the woman in the dark. Fortunately for her she gets out into the light. I wasn't so fortunate. The only bright spot about this book is I know not to read the other two books in the series. And I was looking forward to them. Crap!

Tina Theresa says

I have mixed feelings about this book. It took me awhile to get into because I didn't understand what was going on. Though I never felt that I should give up. It wasn't until around half way through the book that I had my "oh, I get it now."

The book starts off with Julia Woolcott locked up in a room at a house party that she was invited to take photographs. She was trying to get away when she walked into what the house party was really was about sex parties which the author didn't get into graphic detail about it. I like smut but it would've taken away from the story. Strathmore is supposed to act as Julia's escort. He is part of an game with Montagu Faron. Faron has a map that Strathmore covets and in order to get the map, he has to debauch and kill Julia. Julia realizes she isn't at the party to take pictures and that Faron is behind it. He has been after her family for a long time but she never met him or knows for what reason. Julia and Strathmore make a pact to stick together even though she doesn't trust Strathmore and fake Julia's death. Thats when the carriage rides begin.

There are lots of twists and turns in the story. Julia is very independent but not the strongest character. Her distrust in Strathmore made her unpredictable. I liked the romance between Strathmore and Julie. It was different. Thats why I rated it with four stars. The ending left me with more questions which stems from knowing there is another book in the series.

Ruth says

I really enjoyed this freebie from Amazon. It was the first book by this author that I have read, and the first in a series of three (the others are The Darkest Sin and The Deepest Sin).

It has a gothic feel to it, but none of the lightness and humor to offset the darkness that, say the Lady Julia series by Deanna Raybourn, but also none of the irritating screeching heroines who faint at the slightest glimpse of the hero's weapon that others seem to have which are a bit gothicky (OK, maybe I'm reading the wrong books here, but the heroines do seem to be more than a bit irritating in most of them). Also, there are no ghosts, ghouls or magic. This really is a story about an evil that lurks in every shadow, but we are not shown until the end. The darkness really works for me.

But it's not all unerring, boring darkness. I LOVED the use of the country house orgy theme. It was scary (the heroine is a virgin, so I would imagine that would be pretty traumatic - hell, I'm not a virgin, but I think I might find a roomful of people going at it rather disconcerting), the participants seem willing and debauched enough, but the way it's written really successfully conveys the boredom of it all. I mean, who would attend a country house orgy (based upon one of the many incarnations of the Hellfire Club, complete with limestone caves)? The wealthy, the titled, the depraved, the troubled, the paid and the bored, who would all come together, do what they wanted to do, to whom they wanted to do it, and then go back to their boring lives doing. All really rather sad, when you think about it, and this book gets that across with subtlety.

There are other touches that really add to the story, such as the hero's explorations and the heroine's career in photography. They add to the atmosphere, but don't dominate, and are completely in-tune with the era. People really did go bonkers seeking the source of the Nile, and photography was a great intersection of magic (capturing the likeness of a person almost instantaneously - hey, it was a slow world then, 10 mins meant nothing) and science (all those nasty, smelly chemicals).

Yes, there were a couple of things which jarred a bit, like the heroine indulging in a long night consisting entirely of rampant games of hide-the-sausage straight after she loses her virginity (it's an old trope, and every time I read it, I find myself thinking, "Don't you think that would sting a bit?"). Sorry, but I really don't buy that one.

Also, there is some confusion over time taken to travel distances. I'm being really picky now, but actually it does bother me when an author gets something wrong like times, since it disrupts the flow of the book, especially when timing and meeting deadlines is important as in this story. I LOVE how the author has written in real places into the story, and Hadrian's Wall is one of them. It's such a fabulous place, and is incredibly old and gothic (hey, the Romans built it, and it's still there - mostly). However, it's in northern England, and to travel from London to Yorkshire by carriage really would have taken quite a long time (not a day like the story suggests). Also, I couldn't quite work out if this book was set in a time when rail travel would have been more appropriate for longer distances such as London to Carlisle, but I got the impression it would have been.

Anyway, they were two things that bothered me, but neither detracted from the story, nor from the hero and heroine, who were exceptional characters, I thought. They were both flawed, moderately damaged (neither were nutters, but had their issues), and both intelligent people (and unlike other books, where you are told to believe they are intelligent, I got the feeling they were - I didn't need to be told). They are both a wonderful mixture of real qualities, and, wonderfully, both are supposed to be "beautiful", but neither really sees it that way, and have that healthy skepticism of their own beauty that most people really have about their faces and bodies. We get that the heroine thinks the hero is a god, and that the hero can't keep his mitts off the heroine's boobs, but that's as far as it goes.

So, a great story, in which not all answers are revealed (which I loved, since I hate a nice, neat ending). I'm going to buy the follow-ups.

4 stars, really liked it.

Taina says

The book started out great and ended great. Julia Woolcott is a spinster who lives a shy and unassuming life with her aunt and sister. She is thrust into a situation that puts her life in jeopardy. Enter Alexander Francis Strathmore. He first saves her from the dungeons then saves her from being ravished (yes, I used the word ravish...this is a historical romance after all). There is an overall villain who is trying to destroy them both, or so it seems.

This becomes the pattern for the rest of the book. Julia ends up not being the quiet shy person everyone thought her to be. In fact she becomes quite adamant about being part of every plan that Strathmore has. That got boring very quickly.

To be honest I did not like Julia at all, that's why it took me so long to finish this book. I kept putting it down because I wanted to just yell at her to sit down and let Strathmore do everything! She was very self aware and admitted frequently to knowing she was acting stupidly, yet she would do it anyway. Also, she kept so many secrets, that by the end I thought she had some great Evil (with a capital E) that she was hiding. But no, nothing that interesting.

Alexander was a much better character. He was blunt and honest about everything, including when he decided he wanted Julia above all else. His motivations were clear and he almost never wavered.

This brings me to the ending. I take back the great ending bit that I said in the beginning. Julia and Alexander seemed to swap roles, he becoming someone unable to make the right choices and almost down right stupid, and she became bold and brave and smart.

All this, and we still don't know what the great secret is...Ms. Richards has definitely set us up for a sequel, perhaps involving Rowena and Montagu Faron(I don't think we've seen the last of them!).

Radella says

Julia Woolcott is supposedly a shy bluestocking spinster, living in isolation with her sister and aunt. Alexander Strathmore is guided only by his ambition, adventuring across the known world with little thought to others. They are thrown together though the machinations of Montagu Faron. Faron's plans quickly go awry as Julia and Alexander join forces to bring an end to Faron's dark schemes. Julia and Alexander don't trust each other, and don't seem to like each other much, but that doesn't stop passion from flaring between them. Each is willing to risk much for their desired goals, without knowing quite the price of that risk.

I did not enjoy this book but I did manage to read the whole thing, if only to write a fair review. I was mostly turned off by the author's style. When the characters were conversing, or even thinking, they were way too formal. The choice of words they used didn't fit the character's role. For example, there is a character that is made to have no more thoughts than those above sexual gratification. She is rather practiced in the art of debauchery, and is rather crude in her conversations... until she starts tossing out words like "milquetoast". They just don't fit. There are many of those words that, while technically accurate to what the character is

thinking or saying, still feel like the author was having a rather grand affair with her thesaurus. Not that I mind the use of mostly-forgotten vocabulary words, I actually enjoy it, but it was off putting in this book because it didn't fit.

I also didn't like that it pretty much started in the middle of the story, and you never really found out what happened in the beginning. Things were mentioned briefly, but never really solidly explained. The author continually tells you that Julia is behaving out of character... if this is the case, you never actually see Julia behaving IN character. The entire story is her not being herself. In other words, you don't see that the characters have changed, you just are told they have. The ending was likewise abrupt, with gaping holes and things left undiscovered. I doubt I would even consider reading the inevitable sequel.
