



The Lady Travelers Guide to Scoundrels & Other Gentlemen

Victoria Alexander

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Embark on the breathtaking romantic adventures of The Lady Travelers Society in the brand-new series by #1 *New York Times* bestselling author Victoria Alexander

Really, it's too much to expect any normal man to behave like a staid accountant in order to inherit the fortune he deserves to support the lifestyle of an earl. So when Derek Saunders's favourite elderly aunt and her ill-conceived—and possibly fraudulent—Lady Travelers Society loses one of their members, what's a man to do but step up to the challenge? Now he's escorting the world's most maddening woman to the world's most romantic city to find her missing relative.

While India Prendergast only suspects his organisation defrauds gullible travelers, she's certain a man with as scandalous a reputation as Derek Saunders cannot be trusted any farther than the distance around his very broad shoulders. As she struggles not to be distracted by his wicked smile and the allure of Paris, instead of finding a lost lady traveler, India just may lose her head, her luggage and her heart.

The Lady Travelers Guide to Scoundrels & Other Gentlemen Details

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From Reader Review The Lady Travelers Guide to Scoundrels & Other Gentlemen for online ebook

Guilty Pleasures Book Reviews says

Victoria Alexander's new story, The Lady Travelers Guide to Scoundrels and Other Gentleman, is a pleasant romance adventure. India Prendergast is on a mission to find her missing cousin. She wants the Travel Society to help find her relative considering this group sent her out on a trip to the continent and apparently has lost her. Derek Saunders realizes this can't be good when the person who is threatening his aunt arrives in person and demands resolution. His only choice is to go to Paris and look for her himself. With escorts in tow, Derek and India set out on this adventure and go from adversaries to lovers.

I love nothing more than to see characters that go through a total transformation over the course of a story like the heroine in this story. India was an uptight, sensible spinster who had a narrow view of things and those rigid views were never wrong. She was independent and had a job which wasn't typical in those days. With each passing day in Paris and in the company of a carefree scoundrel, she realizes she was wrong about a lot of things. Her rigid stance, and even her hair, started to loosen and relax. She also sees Derek in a new light and sees a different and caring side to him. The journey she makes to become a new person yet the same was a delight to read and made the happy ending even sweeter.

Derek Saunders is a hero in the making as he tries to reform his wicked ways. His uncle wants him to clean up his act and start acting like the earl he is to be. He's loyal to family and goes the extra mile to protect his aunt and takes on her problem to keep her from scandal. What isn't easy for him is how India gets under his skin with her opinions and actions. Those moments were fun to read to see him work to get along with her. His mother and stepbrother enter into this story and support his efforts and even help with India's transformation. He is definitely up to the challenge of keeping her in check while she keeps him on his toes.

I love Victoria Alexander's writing style because it is descriptive and whimsical. She took me to Paris of 1889 and had me smiling and chuckling throughout. The main characters developed over the story and I found them very likeable. Even her secondary characters were a hoot when they were in the scene. It might have been slow in the beginning, but with every new series, you need to set the place and people and that takes time. Once that was complete the story took off. The ending wrapped up nicely and I loved how she tied up all the loose ends. Victoria Alexander is one of my favorites and I look forward to more stories in this new series.

Review copy provided for a voluntary review.

Joanna Loves Reading says

I am wavering between 3 and 4 stars here. I enjoyed it, but there were a few plot points that I felt, as the listener, that I was expected to suspend judgement and trust it would all come right in the end. It did, but just. It was superbly narrated, though.

India is a very prickly heroine, and it took me at least an hour to even start to like her. She did come around, and by midway, I liked and felt for her quite a lot. Her prickliness was very understandable. Derek is a sweet,

well-meaning hero. He is supposedly charming, but I didn't feel we saw that much. His aunt and her friends, his mother, India's cousin, basically all of the characters of an older generation are very entertaining, great cast of supporting characters.

Edit: I decided to bump this up to four stars. The way the never-wrong uber-competent India transforms after finding herself in an untenable situation that causes her to rely on others was well done, and it is sticking with me. I also think if/when I visit this one again I will like it even more, seems to be one that grows on you.

Mariana says

This may be the first audio book I have given 5 stars. I read one other book by this author. I enjoyed it but not enough to seek out an entire series by her. I loved this one! The story is funny, and the narrator is great.

Unlike others, I did not dislike India. It was Lady Heloise who I did not like. To me, she was just as weak-willed at 50+ as she was at 17.

I definitely recommend giving this one a listen!

Caz says

I've given this a B- at AAR, so that's 3.5 stars rounded up

The Lady Travelers Guide to Scoundrels & Other Gentlemen might well win an award for being the longest title in historical romance! The first book in Victoria Alexander's new *Lady Travelers Guide* series, it's a light-hearted romantic comedy, set mostly in Paris around the time of the Great Exposition, in which a starchy spinster comes up against a charming scoundrel and discovers perhaps her previously held, deeply entrenched opinions aren't as set in stone as she'd believed them to be.

Miss India Prendergast has come to a meeting of The Lady Travelers Society in an attempt to ascertain the whereabouts of her cousin, Lady Heloise Snuggs, who recently set off on an extended journey which, India has been given to understand, was organised by the society. But she hasn't received a letter or other communication from Heloise for some weeks and has become concerned for her safety. Further investigation has revealed that the society has done precisely nothing for Heloise; there is no record of their reserving hotel rooms or making any travel arrangements on her cousin's behalf. India is convinced the organisation is a fraud, taking money from unwitting women whose dreams of exotic travel and desire to *throw off the shackles of everyday existence and live an adventurous life* blind them to the fact they are being swindled.

Derek Saunders has lived the life of a rakish young bachelor, kicking up a storm in society and enjoying a reputation as a scoundrel of the first order. Or he did, until his uncle, the Earl of Danby told him that he'd cut him off without a penny if he didn't change his carefree, frivolous ways and start acting a bit more like the heir to an earldom should. Oddly enough, Derek finds he has a talent for numbers and business and he quite enjoys working with the earl's estate and business managers. But the discovery that his great aunt Guinevere and a couple of her friends seem to be running some sort of scam is something he hadn't banked

on having to deal with. Deciding that his uncle won't look kindly upon Derek's abandoning his duties in order to pursue a missing traveller and work out what his aunt is up to, Derek apprises the earl of the situation, and is surprised when he comes up with a plan to both find Lady Heloise and keep aunt Guinevere and her friends out of prison.

Derek had already decided that it's his responsibility to find Heloise, and that as her most recent letters came from Paris, that he's going to start looking for her there. When India insists on accompanying him, he already knows enough about her to know that she won't brook a refusal, but his uncle takes that news in his stride. He undertakes to employ a firm of private investigators to find Heloise while Derek keeps India otherwise occupied and out of the way in Paris... it's a good idea, and although Derek isn't completely happy about keeping Miss Prendergast in the dark, he recognises it's the most likely way to find her cousin.

So the stage is set. The prim and proper spinster and the dashing rogue – accompanied by Professor and Mrs. Greer, who are acting as India's chaperones – arrive in Paris and start to make the rounds of all the hotels at which Heloise might have stayed, and continue the bickering and verbal sparring they'd begun at their initial meeting. India is stiff and unyielding in her attitude and outlook and makes it very clear that she doesn't trust Derek as far as she could throw him. Fortunately, however Ms. Alexander saves her from being a complete prig by having her be able to admit when she's wrong and hinting at the vulnerability that lies beneath her unbending exterior.

Derek is handsome, charming and clever, and while India infuriates him, she intrigues him, too. During the time they spend together in the course of their search for Heloise, he discovers a different side to her, one she rarely allows to come to the surface, but one he likes very much. India has thought herself ordinary all her life, and while she isn't exactly a great beauty, there's no doubt that she's striking and intelligent, and Derek likes that she isn't afraid to speak her mind. She's practical, sensible, self-assured and annoying; in short she's the exact opposite of everything he has ever wanted in a woman, and yet he finds himself wanting rather desperately to kiss her and, in a few short days, feels as though she has become a part of his life.

As their search continues, India has to admit to herself that she truly likes Derek and is attracted to him, but there's still the pesky matter of whether she can bring herself to trust the man when she believes him to be responsible for the fraudulent activities of the Lady Travelers Society.

One of the things I've enjoyed in other books I've read by this author is the dry humour and witty dialogue, and both those things are present in abundance here. The verbal thrust and parry between India and Derek is delightful, and there's plenty of banter between them and other characters, too, most notably between Derek and his step-brother Val, the Marquess of Brookings (who I hope is going to get his own book at some point), whose relationship is obviously one of deep affection and frequent exasperation. The author has a splendidly deft touch and the dialogue never feels forced or too drawn out; it's not laugh-out-loud, but it's wry, funny and clever.

But while this is all lovely and light and frothy, the problem is that there's not a great deal of substance beneath the surface. While India's growth – from a woman who believes herself to be content with her narrow horizons and who thinks that efficiency, practicality and being well-organised are all she needs to be – into a woman who realises that there is more to life and has the courage to reach for what she wants, is nicely done, there isn't a great deal of chemistry between her and Derek; there's no question they like each other, but there are none of those spine-tingling moments of sexual tension and awareness that are hallmarks of a really good romance.

The book boasts a colourful supporting cast, including Derek's stepbrother, and his mother, a grande dame in

the truest sense; and I really enjoyed the author's depiction of Paris, the street cafés, the grand hotels, the wide boulevards, all of it putting the reader right there on the viewing platform of the Eiffel Tower or among the crowds strolling along the Champs Elysées.

The Lady Travelers Guide to Scoundrels & Other Gentlemen is not going to find its way onto my keeper shelf, but it is an entertaining, easy read, and is exactly the sort of thing you might want to pick up when you're in the mood for a non-angsty, funny and well-written historical.

Christina ~ Brunette Reader says

London, 1889

The newly established Lady Travelers Society, catering to the whims and dreams of women "*longing to throw off the shackles of everyday existence and live an adventurous life of travel*", may be a place where ladies are given the opportunity to expand their interests and learn their way at globetrotting, but if Miss India Prendergast is not mistaken, it may also be a cover for illegal activities swindling the unsuspecting and naive members out of their money. And her suspicions have grown even stronger after her cousin disappeared during her whereabouts on the Continent. The three sweet elderly ladies, founders of the Society, cannot surely be law breakers in disguise... and this leaves only Mr. Derek Saunders! Why, he must be the mastermind behind all the frauds, so India has no other choice but to follow him all the way to Paris and see for herself whether the handsome and infuriating man is friend or foe...

Book 1 in a new series, *The Lady Travelers Guide to Scoundrels and Other Gentlemen* is in equal parts a gentle Victorian romance and a witty comedy of manners, and it showcases all the trademark scintillating humour and polished writing I've come to expect from this author.

The descriptions of Paris during the World Exhibition were delightful and truly added an atmospheric touch to the plot, but most of the charm relied on the characterisations and the tongue-in-cheek banter. India and Derek were an intriguing case of opposites attracting each other and, even if it was India who had to work harder on herself in order to evolve, they both had well-rounded personalities striking a nice chemistry that leaped off the pages.

Also the entire cast of characters was deftly fleshed-out and I was anticipating their antics as much as those of the leads. And if the pace of the story felt definitely relaxed, the exuberant dialogues and some zany situations more than made up to keep me engaged in the reading.

Surely a series I'll look forward to and oh, I really hope Val, Derek's brother, gets his own book, he was scrumptiously naughty!

Buddy-read with Anna :)

Joana V. says

3.5*

Review in Portuguese:<http://pepitamagica.blogspot.co.uk/20...>

First time I ever read anything by Victoria Alexander. It may be a bit too big – if had 50-100 pages less, it might have been better.

It was a bit slow to start, but when the plot starts to develop, it gains some strength. This “guide” is about a girl/woman who was always very serious and never enjoyed the good things in life – and a trip to Paris is going to change that.

I liked Derek Saunders from the very beginning, and India Pendergast as I started reading a bit more and more of the book, just like I think it was supposed to be. She starts to realize that she doesn’t treat people – and herself – very well, as well as understands that there is a place for everything in her world, be it a practical dress or a ruffled, very feminine dress.

India’s evolution is very well done and the mystery of Cousin Heloise, although a bit strange and too easily resolved in the end, also had its degree of interest.

In the end, it was a fun book that I thoroughly enjoyed.

Melisa says

It took awhile for the plot to get there, but when it finally did, it was worth the wait!

More than the first half of the book drags, presumably because the main character, India Prendergast, is extremely unlikable. However, when the story began to (finally!) unfold, there were several sweet and laugh out loud scenes which were highly entertaining. I absolutely loved the characters of Val, who was hilarious, and Mother, who always knew best (of course).

I highly recommend this books prequel novella The Proper Way to Stop a Wedding in Seven Days or Less.

3.5 stars

Thank you to the author, the publisher and Netgalley for a copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

steph says

3.5 stars

This was a cute book. It's a cheesy premise - heroine's elderly cousin has gone missing on trip to Europe. Heroine blames hero because his great aunt runs the travel company that booked her now lost cousin so hero and heroine travel to Paris to find cousin and of course, romance and sheanegians ensure!

That said, I really liked it. I especially enjoyed the character of India and how she matures and grows over the course of the book. Her banter with Derek was great, I really enjoyed their back and forth. I liked how for the most part, both leads were open and honest with each other and the secondary characters. While they were keeping some secrets from each other, it made sense why and I liked

that. I did have to suspend my disbelief a few times over the way things fell into place but overall, this was a light, enjoyable read.

The only quibble I had was that Derek rarely apologized to India, she was often the one admitting she was wrong. Now granted, she was more judgemental than him and she did often jump to the wrong conclusions but still. Derek didn't explain/apologize for (view spoiler) and that annoyed me. Apologize!

Christina (A Reader of Fictions) says

The Lady Travelers Guide to Scoundrels & Other Gentlemen started off a bit slowly, but I devoured the second half in one sitting. Funny, irreverent, and charming.

India Prendergast has lived a very correct, independent, and proper life. Though well-bred, she is not a member of high society, and she chooses to work so as not to be entirely dependent on the kindness of her aunt Heloise. The ever-organized and controlled India works as a secretary to a gentleman ten years her senior, essentially serving as both secretary and housekeeper. Her life is quiet and, while not the stuff of dreams, good.

That is, of course, until Heloise goes missing on a European vacation. No one, from the police to the lady's travel group that "arranged" her travel plans, cares, except for Derek, the greatnephew of one of the old ladies running the travel group. India, a fan of detective novels, suspects Derek is the mastermind behind the fleecing of her aunt, but she insists on traveling with him to Paris to locate Heloise.

The characterizations a bit clunky, mostly of India. The India of the beginning is difficult to reconcile with the India of the end. It's not that she changes so much but that some of how she's defined really doesn't line up with her actions. She's an intelligent and logical girl with a love of mysteries, but she comes up with hare-brained theories based on zero evidence and does nothing to revise them. I found it very difficult to believe that India would have blamed Derek, and even more difficult to believe that she wouldn't have figured out that she was wrong along the way.

That said, once she opens up, she's quite a fun heroine, and I love her responses to other people. The secondary cast almost steals the show in this novel, which is something I enjoy. Derek's mother and brother are entirely charming. The resolution of the second love interest plot is done very well and atypically. The flip of the reformation of a bad boy trope is delightfully done, and it's fucking adorably how much everyone else (except aforementioned second love interest) ships Derek and India. I also super love the reminder that the older people have romances too, both those currently wed and those about to.

This book was super cute, though it took a while to warm up.

Jenny Q says

Extremely slow-moving, and frankly, boring. A quarter of the way through and nothing has happened. Disappointing considering the title and blurb made it sound so delicious. I just don't have patience these days for books that don't grab me right off the bat. Moving on to the next.

Jacob Proffitt says

I gave this a shot, but in the end, the writing style just wore me down. And it wasn't really anything *terrible*. It's just that Victoria Alexander takes her own sweet time with things. You can kind of tell that's the case when you first pick up the book, just from the heft. That many closely-written pages means that either a lot of stuff happens or you're going to have to get down and savor every moment because the author surely has.

I got as far as I did (about halfway) because I liked both India and Derek quite a bit. Well, I hated that India's entire schtick was bad assumptions with poor extrapolation because that made her look both stupid and judgmental. And she wasn't really either of those things, so it felt like the author was cramming her into a shape to fit the story...

But that's beside the point because I stopped because I just bogged down and realized that it was taking forever to develop, well, everything. And once I noticed that, it felt like someone had strapped this book under an elephant's foot it was that hard to pick back up.

Jen (The Starry-Eyed Revue) says

Slow to start but pretty par for the course once it got going. Maybe *slightly* floofier than the standard historical romance fare -- at least what I've read of it -- but also less sexy-times. It was cute, though, and an enjoyable way to pass this dreary Monday.

Audra (Unabridged Chick) says

I love romance novels for the fluff escapism: tame drama, happy-ever-after, armchair time travel, appealing sexytimes.

This first book in a new series did that for me, and if you like tame, slow-burn romances, this one is for you. Our heroine, spinster India Prendergast, is convinced the Lady Travelers Society is a scam. Her beloved aunt has disappeared, and the women running the society are unable to locate her. Worse, Derek Saunders, famed bad boy, is related to one of the women who run the society, and he has taken it upon himself to "help" "find" India's aunt.

Obviously, their instant dislike for each other means they're going to fall madly in love (and that was fine by me).

Normally I wolf down romances in a matter of days, but I actually took a break from this one because it's pretty slow moving. The mystery was a little tiresome because there was an intentional can't-tell-the-truth-for-this-rather-flimsy-reason plotline and it did stretch on a leeeeeeeeetle too long. But I found India charming -- a working woman who enjoys order and control -- and Derek -- to-be reformed raconteur who helps India loosen up -- and the secondary characters were fun.

The reveal was fun, and an interesting set up for the Lady Travelers Society. In terms of sex, there was none

(or virtually none, I really can't recall), so if you're not feeling the hot-and-heavy, this is a good romance to read. I've had my eye out for the second book -- something to keep in my back pocket for cranky days and depressing weekends.

Ally says

This is a slow go and yet, still awesomely enjoyable

Series: Believe so.

Sexy times: Do not recall. I think there was a bit at the end. Tame city.

Plan on reading more by the author: Why not? I'll have to be in the mood though and as of late....

Synopsis

India's aunt goes missing after "planning a trip" with the Lady Travelers Club which is really just a scam to take elderly women's moola. India is just convinced Derek is the man behind the scheme after she sees him meeting with the three women who run the Club, one of those women being his aunt. Off we go to track her last few stops to try and find dear old Auntie.

Derek decides they are heading to Paris, the city of lights. Derek has reasons of his own for making this stop #1, and after a bunch of back and forth, India is all like "Well, if we must."

Heroine: India. She's rather stern, super opinionated and always right. But she's not. Always right that is. If the woman were a knife, she'd be a ceramic knife...the kind where you accidentally cut your knuckle when chopping onions.

Hero: Derek. So he's no better here. He's hell bent on correcting India's way. Um, who asked you, dude? At the same time, he's doing the best he can with what he's got. And he's mighty shocked to find himself all attracted to sharp India.

Why it did or didn't work for me: So it worked. It was a wonderful story of both a woman and a man trying to figure out who they really are and how to love themselves and right their wrongs. Talk about a journey. I love that both MC's had to walk that road. They certainly needed to. They were both kinda cranky f*ckers.

What I didn't love? That everyone in the book felt the need to point out to India all of her wrongs. Yo, talk about keeping a good woman down...

It's one thing to talk to someone about their behavior and encourage them to seek out alternatives and it's a whole other to constantly harangue a person and tell them what a crank they are. Nope. That did not work for me. Happened like 10 too many times.

If you can get past that, this really is a fun read. And it's a wonderful journey.

Signed,

A little more tenderness and this might have been five stars

Marlene says

Originally published at Reading Reality

This is my second book in a row where one of the main characters begins the story desperately requiring the surgical removal of a seemingly permanent stick shoved up their fundament. As in today's story that's the heroine rather than the hero, I'm being a bit more delicate in my language referring to the deformity.

India Prendergast is more than a bit of a prig. I'd say that she is a "stick in the mud" but as has been previously established, the stick has already been firmly lodged elsewhere. In today's terms, we'd say that she needs to lighten up more than a bit.

She is also both extremely judgmental and an unbearable know-it-all, and not in the useful way that Hermione Granger was a know-it-all. Miss Prendergast's version of omniscience is that she has made rather firm decisions on exactly how the world works, according to her designs, and that she is always right in all of her judgements. Which are very exacting.

She's great at managing things and people, but not very lovable. Or even likeable. And she's certainly not terribly forgiving. Or much fun.

And she's not quite 30.

In the case that begins the story, she is both right and wrong, but not, as she discovers at the end, in any of the ways she expects.

Her cousin Heloise, the woman who raised her after her parents death, has gone missing. Or so it seems. Heloise, a middle-aged spinster with a small but secure income, has become a member of The Lady Travelers Society, and after consulting with the Society, has planned a solo (well, solo with her lady's maid) European tour of indeterminate length and rather sketchy itinerary.

As the story begins, India has not heard from Heloise in over six weeks, and her inquiries to the Lady Travelers Society, increasingly frantic and belligerent, have gone unanswered. As the police have been thoroughly dismissive and unhelpful, India is taking matters into her own hands.

She has investigated the Lady Travelers Society and has discovered that there is a fraud afoot. In her decided opinion, the three elderly ladies who appear to be running the Society, using the term "running" very, very loosely, are covering a scam. They seem much too dithery to be the masterminds of such a pernicious scheme to separate women of limited means from both their pounds sterling and their dreams of travel.

India is certain she has discovered that mastermind in Derek Saunders. Mr. Saunders, on the other hand, has just discovered that his great aunt and her two friends are, in fact, perpetuating a fraud in order to maintain their independence as widows. He's there to put a stop to what India believes he is the mastermind of.

But they both need to find cousin Heloise, both for India's peace of mind and for Derek to keep his great aunt and her cronies out of jail, or at least free from scandal.

India's distrustful nature won't allow her to let Derek search for her wayward cousin, as she believes Heloise's waywardness is ultimately his fault. And he can't let India go off investigating on her own in Paris, because if anything happens to her, society will certainly hold him responsible, even if he was not responsible for the original scheme that got them all into this mess.

And his great aunt and her cronies are very definitely matchmaking. Not that India and Derek don't need their guiding, if slightly guilty, hands.

It's up to them to not screw up their best chance at happiness. Their escapades prove that they both need all the help that they can get.

Escape Rating B: This story is solidly good fun, but the portrayal of the heroine in the first half of the story does make the reader want to shake her. India at the outset, while extremely effective, is also intensely annoying. Her self-righteousness sets the reader's teeth on edge, as it does that of nearly every character she meets in the story.

On that other hand, one of the terrific things about this story is the heroine's journey. The hero has already gotten most of the way to where he needs to be, courtesy of a swift kick to the posterior delivered by his uncle several months before the story begins. Derek, while he has not lost his sense of fun and adventure, has grown up after being threatened with being cut off from his inheritance. And it's been the making of him.

Meanwhile, none of India's acquaintances nor her (very) few friends have been willing to risk her judgemental nature long enough to tell her that she generally goes well beyond holding up standards into outright rudeness. She never gives anyone the benefit of the doubt, and makes no allowances for any human frailty on anyone's part, including her own. Because of course she believes she has none.

And that's where the story really lies. India doesn't so much need to grow up as to just grow. Or the wooden puppet needs to become a real girl. Not necessarily in the sense of enjoying fashion or shopping or any of the things that women were supposed to enjoy in the late Victorian era, although she does come to that, but grow in the sense of accepting others. She can be kind without being judge-y, if she can finally admit that no one, including herself, is right all the damn time.

The setting of this story is marvelous. It is Paris in 1889, at the beginning of the 1889 World's Fair. Some of the best and most evocative scenes in the story take place at the top of the newly opened and still quite controversial Eiffel Tower.

All in all, this is a lovely story of wheels within wheels, featuring an intelligent (if bull-headed) heroine and set in a marvelous place and time. And there will be more! The Lady Travelers Guide to Larceny with a Dashing Stranger is coming in November.
