



Your Scandalous Ways

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James Cordier is all blue blood and entirely dangerous. He's a master of disguise, a brilliant thief, a first-class lover—all for King and Country—and, by gad, he's *so* weary of it. His last mission is to "acquire" a packet of incriminating letters from one notorious woman. Then he can return to London and meet sweet-natured heiresses—not adventuresses and fallen women.

Francesca Bonnard has weathered heartbreak, scorn, and scandal. She's independent, happy, and *definitely* fallen; and she's learned that "gentlemen" are more trouble than they're worth. She can also see that her wildly attractive new neighbor is bad news.

But as bad as James is, there are others far worse also searching for Francesca's letters. And suddenly nothing is simple—especially the nearly incendiary chemistry between the two most jaded, sinful souls in Europe. And just as suddenly, risking everything may be worth the prize.

Your Scandalous Ways Details

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From Reader Review Your Scandalous Ways for online ebook

sraxe says

This book, while it was a good idea, the execution failed on so many fronts. If you're looking for a book in which there are ramifications for lies and deceit, this is not the book for you. Skip it.

I really wanted to read this book because YAY, a woman that isn't all shades pure and virginal and being paired with an unrepentant rake. That had been done so many times over and six ways to Sunday...and then at least three times more. I've got to say, though, that, prior to reading, I read a review that described Francesca as a "slut" or that her behaviour was "slutty" and my God...how damn sexist. Good God, the damn book opens with the hero sleeping with someone other than the heroine...and somehow it's Francesca that's solely branded the slut? Francesca, who doesn't kiss or sleep with anyone other than James for the entirety of the novel? She's the slut and the reason for your abandonment of the book? Oh, I see.

Please. Just go ahead and embrace the fact that you're a big ol' sexist.

Anyway, moving on.

I thought it was amusing that James refers to Francesca as a "whore" and a "harlot" in the infancy of their acquaintance. I know that's what she is by trade, but I still found it rather amusing coming from him considering the fact that he, too, sleeps with others for his job. The only difference is that she embraces her trade fully while he is a spy/thief...who sometimes sleeps with the target to get the job done (and then get paid). At the end of the day, I see little difference. He admits himself that "he'd whored before for his country." That's why I really hated it when he slut-shamed her.

"How many lovers do you have, exactly?"

"How curious," she said. "Most men would give a great deal to watch me undress."

"That's the trouble, you see," he said. "So many men have."

It's all rather quite amusing since he, himself, is a whore. Frankly, he's probably got far more years of experience in whoredom than she does. While she's only been a courtesan for the five years since her divorce, he, on the other hand, has been a spy, and presumably a whore, for at least the last fifteen. What right does he have to shame anyone?

One of my biggest disappointments in the book, however, is the general lack of emotion. The reader knows right from the start that James is lying to and deceiving Francesca. This is not a secret. We also see

Francesca, who is wary of men and not in the least trusting of them, falling for him throughout the novel. She starts softening towards him and James, on multiple occasions, sees her look at him "with all her heart in her eyes." From James's POV we even see him understand and admit that "[Francesca] felt deeply, experienced deeply, loved deeply...and she would hate him with the same ferocity." All of this made the wait for the other shoe to drop and the fallout to ensue so much sweeter.

And, unfortunately, I'm still waiting.

I was hoping that wouldn't be the case because of the risk she took in making Francesca a courtesan and not a different profession. I was hoping that risk would extend to giving James some well-deserved consequences in response to his deceit but the author seriously copped-out on that front. We get a few angry words and sentences from her but that's it. It's so paltry in comparison to his duplicity. Even that, however, had no emotional impact and came off more amusing than serious. There was absolutely no satisfaction in the reveal. He stalked her, deceived her, played with and used her feelings and, then, when she's telling him to GTFO, **he straight up tells her that "[he'll] choke the information out of [her] if [he has] to"**...and there's absolutely nothing from her.

I honestly don't understand what's so appealing about James (other than his curly hair). He's duplicitous through most of the novel. Their entire relationship is engineered by him to get what he wants and is based on a foundation of his lies and deceit. He plays with her heart and feelings, knowing that he's doing so. He bodily shakes her on three separate occasions. He tells her that he's "choke the information out of [her]" when she's angry. He also tells her that, had she been scarred, he doesn't know if he'd still love her!!

"Ma amo solo te, dolcezza mia," (But I love only you, my sweet) he said. "I mean it."

She regarded him for a long time. He felt his face grow hot.

"If she had disfigured me," she said, "would you still feel the same way?"

The answer, the usual answer, was on the tip of his tongue: *Of course I'll feel the same way.* But was that true? And could he risk not being true, even if the answer he gave was the wrong one? "I don't know," he said.

Wow. That's the sweetest most romantic thing a man could ever say to me. ~True Love~

Angela says

I'm going to have to DNF this. I just don't care about either MC, or the plot. Not even enough to do a review.

9 June 2015: \$1.99 on Kindle

BJ Rose says

I liked this a lot more than I thought I would when I first discovered she was a courtesan and proud of it. As the story evolves, you realize that Francesca had few options open to her after her husband divorced her and ruined her in society. Her only choice was to flee England, but there were several things about her that didn't sit right with me. First, she had an affair while married - out of revenge for her husband's mistresses. When she decided to become a courtesan, she made sure it was very public so she could gloat to her husband, in weekly letters, about her high-placed protectors. She was treated very badly by her husband and by English society, and her choice of profession was not completely unreasonable given her circumstances, but she did it mainly for revenge - a 5-year vendetta was enough for me to take away a star from a well-told tale.

Christa says

Although I didn't consider this to be one of Loretta Chase's best books, I did enjoy the story. I am not a fan of the courtesan theme, so that influenced my opinion of the book, but Chase portrayed it in a way that made me almost forget I did not like this plot device.

James Cordier is an agent for the British government, and after many years of danger and disguise, he is ready to leave it all behind for a normal life. As he finishes his last mission and is relishing the idea of retirement, he is called into service for a final time. An English born courtesan in Venice has letters in her possession that prove her ex-husband, newly titled and hoping to soon be Prime Minister, is a traitor to his country. James is tasked with recovering the letters from the courtesan, Francesca Bonnard. James leases a villa across the canal from Francesca, and plans how he will carry out his mission, but before the opportunity arises, he witnesses an attack on her and leaps from his balcony to save her. James and Francesca are immediately attracted to one another, and against the better judgement of both, become intimately involved. Very quickly, they realize that they have strong feelings for one another. In order to find happiness together, they will have to stop another party who is determined to get Francesca's letters at any cost. Francesca will also have to come to terms with the fact that James withheld his true purpose and agent identity from her.

I enjoyed Chase's characters in this novel. Although I am not prone to enjoy the courtesan heroines, I did like Francesca and felt for her due to the suffering she had endured in England as a young woman with no one to offer support. I thought that James was an enjoyable hero, and I liked the way that he fell so quickly and thoroughly for the heroine. I appreciated the way that both the hero and heroine admitted to their feelings for one another quickly without denial. Even though the theme of the courtesan is one I seldom like, I found this book to be very enjoyable.

Wollstonecraftmegirl says

Loretta Chase can write, no doubt. So much of what was on offer here is well above the historical romance curve of good writing. And it was a bit less flowery than some of her other books [by which I mean, we get 'breasts' rather than 'globes'].

But, by God, it's hard to express how much I Did Not Care about this book. The romance, the plot, the characters left me stone freaking cold.

I have been trying to piece together why that is, given the aforementioned decent writing on display here.

I think it comes down to the fact that the characters are just inherently unlikeable. It's not unusual to have a troubled H/h dissatisfied with their lives, but here it was a bit unremitting. It lacked the usual light touch of a Loretta Chase in which the doom and gloom is lifted by the romance. She tried, don't get me wrong, but it never landed for me. The romance was built on heady mutual lust but didn't have any real substance behind it and I was waiting for these two people to find some light through one another and it just never happened.

Add to that the confuddling plot - to be fair, I have an active dislike of spy plots in romance and this one did not save that trope for me. This was overly convoluted and didn't make too much sense. Also, is the hero the World's Worst Spy? What exactly was his plan? Why did he disguise himself at the start only to reveal himself pages later? God, it was in equal measure irritating and confusing.

The setting was also mystifying. Very nice to Get Out of London in a hist rom. Even nicer to make it all the way to the Continent. Buuuut Venice is more than gondolas and canals. And in some of the 'action' sequences that's all we really got and poorly drawn to boot.

I did read this through and I didn't skim. If someone told me they really liked this book I could understand why that might be, but it didn't work for me, so 2.5 stars rounded up.

Fani *loves angst* says

I'm doing this book an injustice by rating it with only 3 stars, because it's objectively much better than that. In fact, technically, it was an almost 5 stars book. Chase's writing is flawless, her characters well developed and likable with a few flaws to make them seem more human, her descriptions vivid, her plot intriguing. However, I put her in the same category as Madeline Hunter and Liz Carlyle, whose ability to write non wall-paperish historicals I cannot argue and yet their books, almost without fail, do not touch me emotionally. I think this is because I personally have a preference for mostly stark, plain writing and those three writers are fond of a more elaborate, refined style. People who like that way of writing will love this book.

Lady Wesley says

Hot romance between gorgeous man and beautiful courtesan? Check. Incredible sexual tension? Check. Engaging characters and a clever plot? Check. Set in 1820s Venice, Italy? Check.

The Kindle version of this book was only \$1.99, and Mrs. Giggles gave it a 95 (out of 100) rating. She raved about it, so i decided to give it a try.

The Venetian setting sets this book apart from other Chase romances, but I think it only adds to the book's wonderfulness.

Alba Turunen says

#reto verano 2017

4 Estrellitas. Una novela simpática que me ha hecho reencontrarme con el saber hacer de Loretta Chase, y es que ésta mujer tiene libros que o me gustan mucho, o no me gustan nada.

Lo que más me ha gustado de éste libro es su ambientación: Venecia, adoro la ciudad y todo lo que en ella hay (salvo el olor), me ha parecido el marco perfecto para encuadrar el libro. Pero si hay algo con lo que he disfrutado es lo bien que describe Loretta Chase ése ambiente de decadencia que vivió Venecia tras la llegada de Napoleón, y es que a pesar de que la ciudad empezó a decaer en el siglo XVII, se convirtió en una ruina cuando llegó Napoleón.

En "La Cortesana" nos encontramos una historia muy típica, pero tampoco tanto, pues Loretta Chase sabe darles a sus protagonistas unas personalidades muy fuertes y particulares. James Cordier es hijo de un noble británico, posee una doble nacionalidad debido a que su madre es italiana y tiene lo mejor de ambas culturas. Actualmente es agente de la corona y lo que espera es retirarse de una vez para volver a Inglaterra y sentar cabeza. Pero antes deberá ir a Venecia y hacerse con un fajo de cartas muy importantes que posee una de las más famosas cortesanas de Europa: Francesca Bonnard.

Francesca sabe lo que es el miedo y la desesperación, nació y creció rodeada de lujos y se casó con grandes expectativas, hasta que su esposo se divorció de ella. Sin dinero, ni amistad, ni influencias, Francesca se dedicó a sacar lo mejor que pudo de su vida, y a no confiar en ningún hombre, aunque sí para vivir de ellos: se convirtió en cortesana. Su entereza, su voluntad y su belleza pronto hicieron de ella una de las mujeres más deseadas, pero hay algo que empaña su vida; vive esperando el momento de poder vengarse de su exmarido.

Los primeros encuentros entre los personajes son muy divertidos y he disfrutado un montón con las pullas que se lanzan. Una particularidad de los personajes de ésta escritora es que normalmente sus protagonistas femeninas valen más que los masculinos, que suelen ser tontos rematados, con mucha suerte y muy buen corazón. Ellas son fuertes e independientes, y dejan al protagonista masculino a la altura del betún. En "La Cortesana" no es exactamente así, James no es tan tonto como otros personajes de la autora, y Francesca, pese a su independencia y entereza es una mujer indefensa y asustada ¿Qué mejores ingredientes para la relación de sus protagonistas?

Admito que me ha gustado más la primera parte que la segunda, en ésta ya fui algo perdida, y en el fondo agradecí que el libro haya sido bastante cortito, de haber tenido más páginas no sé si me hubiese gustado tanto, pero lo que sí tiene éste libro es un equilibrio muy bien llevado, tanto la historia de trasfondo, el misterio de las cartas y quién más intenta hacer daño a Francesca para hacerse con las cartas, como la historia de amor de los protagonistas.

En conjunto ha sido una bonita historia para leer en un par de tardes, no tardaré en leer el siguiente libro de la serie.

Julie (jjmachshev) says

I'm such a big Loretta Chase fan. I'm always eager to head to the bookstore when I know she has a new book coming out because I know I'll be entertained and amused. "Your Scandalous Ways" is no exception. I don't know how she made me enjoy a book about a courtesan I was sure I wouldn't like and a spy who was willing to use sex to get information from his suspects!! But I ended up liking them both, wanting them to be together, and knowing they were perfect for each other.

Francesca calls herself a 'great whore'. In reality, she's the highest priced courtesan in Venice, maybe the entire continent, but she did it HER way. After her husband, cheated on her, broke her heart, publicly humiliated her, and divorced her, she fled to the continent. She learned her trade from a famous retired courtesan and uses the information she has on her evil ex to torment him with the possibility of exposure for his past. She doesn't realize that with his current political aims, she's become a danger he can no longer ignore.

James just wanted to finish his duties, go home to England, find a quiet biddable wife, get married and raise children and dogs. But, once again, he's now in Venice trying to seduce letters from the continent's most famed courtesan. With all his experience and all his knowledge, he never expected to fall under her spell himself.

Now danger is all around these two and they must learn to love and trust each other...or die.

Loved it!! She's a strong woman who survived the worst life could throw at her and he's a man who was willing to sacrifice his all for his country. They deserved happiness and they deserved each other. You'll laugh and snicker at their 'courtship' and be rooting for their success.

Felicia says

I need to stop reading romances, I'm never ever happy with the endings, because that's just the way romances are. But anyway, this is a good one. It doesn't star a virgin who's complaining she's 20 and an "old maid" (feel good always, haha), this is a courtesan and a thief. Not a deep plot here at all, but whatever, it was a fun read and I think the writing was good for this genre, SO THERE!

Jo says

This was a lot different than the usual HRs I read. I'm not a huge fan of a courtesan being the heroine of a book, but the author managed to make it work in this book.

Francesca Bonnard is a fallen woman, and one of the most famous and beautiful and wanted courtesans. And she's quite happy with her life, as the lifestyle she has chosen has offered her independence and power over her own life, and over men. Never again will she be at the mercy of any man. She is the predator, and not the prey. When she was divorced from her slimeball of a husband, she stole very important letters that would reveal to all the true man he was. But because she is considered a fallen woman, no one would have believed her should she have revealed the truth, so she has kept them hidden. And for the last five years she has worked on gaining the favour of powerful men, on making herself more powerful. She is a master at the games she has learned to play, and never again would any man get the best of her.

James Cordier is a spy for his country. He's a master at disguise, and a brilliant thief. And has at times used his looks and body to get the job done. But he's tired of giving everything for King and Country, and has one final job before retiring to a normal life, hoping to find a sweet and innocent wife. Retrieve incriminating letters from the notorious courtesan Francesca Bonnard. But nothing is simple about his last mission, definitely not the feelings his latest target makes him feel.

But not only James is looking for the letters. There is another, who will use any means, and any ruthless thief, to get the letters from Francesca. Can Francesca and James deny the intense desire between them long

enough to keep Francesca safe? Can James convince her to trust him with the letters and with her heart? And will Francesca be able to forgive James his deceit when she finds out the real reason he has infiltrated her life?

The romance between Francesca and James was unlike any HR romance I've read before. Both are so good at playing games, at being the predator when it comes to pleasure, to power. Their lives has made them very jaded. James has always believed that an innocent and pure woman would be the best wife for him, but being with Francesca made him realise how very wrong he was. She understood his darkness, the things he has done to survive, and made him see the beauty in life again. And James was the only man who has ever tried to save and protect Francesca. He made her feel again, after believing her heart broken forever. I enjoyed the banter between these two, and felt they were perfect for each other.

The plot regarding the letters and the people intent on getting them from Francesca was captivating and quite adventurous. And I enjoyed the friendship between Francesca and her fellow courtesan friend, Giulietta. They were so funny and endearing.

This is my second book by this author, and I'm really impressed with the unconventional heroines she writes: they are definitely no shy wallflowers, and very strong willed. I would definitely recommend this book to anyone who loves a different kind of HR with a fallen and headstrong heroine and a sarcastic and often funny spy.

Erin says

A fun read, although it didn't quite live up to all the glowing reviews for me. I liked the way the novel kind of openly mocks historical romance convention, particularly in having these two depraved souls find each other. But a few things bugged. First, Francesca feels it's necessary to tell us on every page that she's a whore. I get that she's proud of the life she's made for herself, but the constant reminders were not really necessary. I think also that Chase doesn't give her readers enough credit (or doesn't give me enough credit, maybe). The headings telling us where we were ("Meanwhile, across the canal...") were unnecessary. I loved the setting and I loved that the characters spoke Italian to each other, but I will say that the fact that I read Italian pretty well made the constant translating really bothersome. Why even bother with having the characters speak Italian? There are plenty of places where the meaning could be gleaned from context, but my brain also just automatically translated the Italian, so it was like reading a lot of the dialogue twice.

And I think the characters were a little underdeveloped. I would have liked to have known more about them, James in particular, as we only really get glimpses of his backstory.

But otherwise, thumbs up. I liked the story, I thought the climax was suspenseful, and some of the secondary and tertiary characters (Sedgwick, Lurenze, Giulietta) were well drawn and fun to read about.

Aly is so frigging bored says

2nd read 18-20 April 2016
Buddy read with Ange

1st read 15-19th February 2015

Courtesans and spies... Never thought I'd say this: but OMG I love courtesans!!!!

Jacob Proffitt says

I'm still not sure why I found this book so charming. Part of it is the hero, of course. James is that very inviting beast, the wounded hero. A man who has fought the brutal battles in the shadows and paid the price and believes himself to be, nearly, finished (not in the melodramatic way, just in the "I'm done and ready to put myself to pasture" way). He's damaged, but he's (mostly) still morally in tact and (mostly) ready to put a good face on things and fade into obscurity.

Naturally, Francesca pulls him back from all that and her joie ignites his de vivre. Naturally, with the focus of this series what it is, not a little of this is about the pursuit of sexy times.

The reason I'm puzzled by my enjoyment is that I'm not usually much of a fan of the wanton. I don't really get the appeal (probably because I'm not much of one myself). To be fair, Francesca isn't really wanton, she just plays one to make what she can of the hand she has been given. Only that sounds worse (or better) than it is because it's not like she was thrust into the streets so much as it was a recognition that the best way to get revenge was to live high and well and as free as possible.

And that may be why I ended up enjoying her so much. Her motivation was freedom and that's a motivation I understand and can endorse. Let down by the rules that are supposedly there to protect women, she decided to take her own protection in hand and starts off by learning the rules, the skills, and the expectations involved.

Anyway, I liked the back and forth between her and James. I particularly liked how her charm, wit, and just pure energy was so key to his own recovery and return to active involvement in his own life. He was so directionless to start that I enjoyed seeing him wrap himself around her (um, in a healthy way, inviting way).

A note about Steamy: Not as much as I expected, given the premise. Upper mid range for me with two and a half explicit scenes. That doesn't seem like it should be upper-mid, unless you account for both the length and, uh, imaginative nature of those scenes...

LaFleurBleue says

Surprisingly different from a usual historical romance.

The hero is both a spy, a henchman, a thief... all for the sake of England, as well as money. He will use any means to get his ends, even having sex with a woman he despises to repossess emerald jewels that she had stolen. I really liked him, as he seemed very cunning at some times, completely ashamed of himself at some other times, a great actor but overall he remained honest regarding key matters. I also liked that he acknowledged his feelings rather quickly and then went for them, without doubting himself and without identifying reasons not to succumb to them.

The heroine used to be a lady, came on very hard times, after her husband divorced her, because she had had one affair once in a revenge to his plenty; her father had been indicted in a large fraud at the same time and killed himself. After being shunned by the Ton and her former friends, she turned into a high-flying courtesan, never allowing herself to feel any thing for any of her lovers or suitors (would-be lovers as they are).

The overall plot was rather good, with regular little twists, some of them being rather unexpected. The

characters were overall very likable and seemed very human (even the mean villain henchwoman). The dialogues and compromises done between H/h were interesting and some (especially that following the marriage proposal) unique.

A very enjoyable read.

3.5 stars rounded up, as I felt it got better and better
