



A Kiss For Midwinter

Courtney Milan

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Miss Lydia Charingford is always cheerful, and never more so than at Christmas time. But no matter how hard she smiles, she can't forget the youthful mistake that could have ruined her reputation. Even though the worst of her indiscretion was kept secret, one other person knows the truth of those dark days: the sarcastic Doctor Jonas Grantham. She wants nothing to do with him...or the butterflies that take flight in her stomach every time he looks her way.

Jonas Grantham has a secret, too: He's been in love with Lydia for more than a year. This winter, he's determined to conquer her dislike and win her for his own. It all starts with a wager and a kiss...

A Kiss for Midwinter is a novella (38,000 words) in the Brothers Sinister series. It follows The Duchess War. Each book stands on its own, but those who prefer to read in order might want to read that book first.

A Kiss For Midwinter Details

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From Reader Review A Kiss For Midwinter for online ebook

Carol *Young at Heart Oldie* says

****5/5 Captivating Stars****

As with all Courtney Milan's books, I loved this delightful novella!

Doctor Jonas Grantham knows his faults. He is outspoken with a dreadful sense of humour and a propensity to always look on the gloomy side of life. This is, however, what makes him such a good doctor...where others might see a touch of indigestion, he would consider poisoning and heart attacks. It is time he took a wife and only one woman will do...Lydia Charingford, but there is a rather big obstacle to overcome. She hates him!

Despite everything that happened to her at the tender age of fifteen, Lydia Charingford survived and has managed to build a life for herself. She is vibrant and always looking on the bright side. She has put the past behind her or so she believes until Doctor Jonas Grantham reappears in her life.

The scene is set for a bumpy journey for these two. At times, it doesn't seem possible that Jonas and Lydia can ever have a future together. Poor Jonas says all the wrong things and Lydia bristles. I love how Ms Milan subtly moves their relationship forward and makes their happy ending so believable.

"I think, Doctor Grantham, that I've been unfair to you."

He shut his eyes. It wasn't love, but by God, he'd take it. It was hope, one little ray of hope, that there was a chance for him. That she might know the worst of him and want him anyway.

It was the kind of kiss a man might give a princess whose enchantment had been shattered years in the past, a woman who was struggling to understand a world without ensorcellment. His fingers against her cheek acknowledged her deepest hurts, and that made his kiss the subtlest kind of magic.

Her voice faltered. "How do I let him know that I want nobody but him?"

"Show up in the middle of the night with a French letter," he advised, setting a finger under her chin, "and he'll likely get the message."

The scenes between Jonas and his father were so moving, particularly the one where Jonas has to persuade his father to come and stay with him. This was so touching and heart-breaking that I was blinking back the tears. I love Lydia's family for the way in which they stood by her.

Ms Milan also provides a fascinating insight into Victorian medicine and the tentative advancements being made.

Once again, Ms Milan lives up to all expectations with this captivating love story.

REVIEW RATING: 5/5 STARS

The Brothers Sinister series to date (click on cover for more details):

- 1 May 2014

Heather K (dentist in my spare time) says

4.5 stars

Another awesome audiobook by Courtney Milan, narrated by the wildly talented Rosalyn Landor. This series is like my crack and I have no intention of quitting any time soon!

For all of those who doubt that they could like historical romance, I implore you to try this series. **It is a smart, funny, interesting romance in a really well conceived historical setting.**

I loved that the main character was a doctor in this one. I have a weakness for books with factual medical content, and I have an even bigger weakness for plainspoken, somewhat geeky, sex-positive, feminist, beta heroes. Doctor Jonas Grantham is SO my type. I picture him with glasses and sort of curly hair (neither of which were in the book, but a woman can dream). **sigh**

What is awesome about Courtney Milan is that she makes me also love the female characters. No simpletons or annoying ladies here, folks. Lydia Charingford is determined, strong, and very easy to relate to. I loved her and I loved the slow relationship development between her and Jonas.

For a novella, this book is impressive in the slow burn aspect of the romance. It felt like a book of hundreds of pages, that is how well developed everything was. Though I don't know much about historical details, everything seemed right, which is all that matters to me.

The narration... I could have a hallelujah moment from that alone. I ADORE this narrator, and I'm obsessed with her ability to do a husky male voice.

I'm going to keep buying all of the books in this series because I have yet to experience a misstep from this author.

Ingie says

Written August 19, 2014

4 Stars - Delightful refreshing reading!!!
...as grandma would have said

Book #1.5

I really liked the prequel novella and the first novel in this Brother Sinister series by Courtney Milan.

- #0.5 - The Governess Affair (4.5 stars)
London 1835, Serena (Barton) & Hugo Marshall (the wolf...)

• #1 - The Duchess War (4.5 stars)

Leicester 1863, Minnie (Wilhelmina Pursling / Minerva Lane) & Robert Alan Graydon Blaisdell, the ninth Duke of Clermont

This is a shortie before book #2 and I got it as an audiobook.

Still as enthusiastic Ingela?

Well yeah, this series is so surprisingly good. Perfect for a slightly demanding more mature girl (a dedicated and tireless romance reader) who want the very best in every romantic book genre. (view spoiler)

Leicester December 1863...

A Kiss For Midwinter is a sweet tender story about a goodlooking honorable young doctor and **Miss Lydia Charingford**, the young *factory owner's daughter*. Lydia is the girl with a very sad and disastrous (for young girls then long ago...) event behind her. She is also Minnie's (book #1) best friend.

Long ago, when Doctor Jonas Grantham was still a young ambitious *scrap dealer's son* and was to begin his medical studies, he got a chance to practice for an elderly colleague during a period. He then witnessed something that felt so wrong, a cynical medical assessment that he could not possibly stop, or never forget.

‘When Lydia Charingford was around, though, he felt like a *smiling* dark little raincloud.’

Several years later meets Dr. Jonas the beautiful cheerful Miss Lydia and since then she's his big life-challenge. His number 1 future chosen woman, even if she just is the twelfth most beautiful young lady in Leicester. ~ But Lydia will not know about this sarcastic, but smart looking, admirer. She so much dislikes him and is always trying to avoid the young, so very outspoken, doctor. His intense dark dangerous eyes doesn't make it better.

Like in the previous books in this series, is this very much **the male characters —the hero's— book and own story**. We are also, for the most parts, follow his feelings and thoughts.

There are the disease old senile father, the deep poverty among his many patients, thoughts about contraception, cleanliness and infection risks and of course how he should find a wife in order to satisfy his own strong lust.

‘It was a kiss like chocolate, a heady mix of cacao and sugar, each ingredient imperfect on its own, but breathtaking when mixed together.

And when he tasted her, when he nipped at her lips and she opened up to him, she was sweet and tart, like cherries in brandy.’

It was strong and wonderful. I loved these two.

As an quite short audio novella...?

As I said before Ms. Rosalyn Landor is undoubtedly a very skilled narrator. She is reading these stories for us, even this lovely (100 pages) novella, with so much seriousness and empathy that these tender and thoughtful dialogues, their emotions and and her voices for all characters never gets funny cheezy or feels too ridiculous. ~ Well done!

I feel even this third time that Courtney Milan not is a writer who makes giggling modest characters.

It is always openly and straight on here. 'Things & happenings' are pronounced in clear text. That way of writing makes these historical romances so charmingly irresistible.

The novella *A Kiss For Midwinter* is just not another sugary sweet princess story. This thoughtful, slow burning novella about inner strong needs, historical realities and restrained feelings, was a great one to listening to. (view spoiler)

I can't but recommend these lovely books for all you romantic readers who still need some wellmade and tasteful HR spice in your romance-reading-life now and then.

Next up book #2 - *The Heiress Effect*, about *Jane Fairfield* and *Oliver Marshall*.

I LIKE - irresistibly charming and heartwarming, again...

The Brother Sinister series by Courtney Milan. Four novels and three short novellas.

Next...

Joanna Loves Reading says

4.5 Stars, one of my favorite novellas out there.

On second thought, I bumped this up to a 5. This was a reread and I remembered it fairly clearly, even though it had been many years. Still loved it this time so that makes it worthy of 5 stars in my book.

?Karlyn P? says

4.5 stars. Oh, this was such a sweet, heart-tugging, holiday historical romance. In a genre thick with Dukes

and Earls and wealthy business men, I loved how this hero was just a 'mere' Doctor. There were a lot of laugh out loud moments too, including his father who was a 'hoarder' living neck deep in scrap metal and other desirable items he couldn't bear to part with.

Doctor Jonas Grantham was a practical no-nonsense man, and you might even say he was a bit anal-retentive in terms of his personal rules and social decorum. So when he spots Lydia and declares her the 11th prettiest girl around, we get a real taste of the kind of hero we are going to meet in this story. He had a one-of-a-kind look on life that was often shocking and also quite enjoyable, and I fell for it hook, line and sinker along with Lydia.

Five year prior, and when Lydia was only 15 years old, she was unfortunately overly trusting and ignorant in the ways between men and women. A quick doctor visit confirmed the worse, and thus began her life of not trusting men nor herself again. That terrible day was one she would never forget, including the young intern working with the doctor - Jonas Grantham.

Jonas soon realizes Lydia was that young girl who got terrible medical advice from a quack doctor he interned with years earlier, a day he wished desperately he could do over. He also realizes Lydia is the one for him, and sets out to make her his wife.

But the feelings weren't exactly mutual, and 18 months later he was no closer to making her his wife. So he finagles an agreement from her to help him on his medical errands, while also making her a wager that he believes he can't possibly lose.

If you enjoy historical holiday romances, then you should definitely add this one to your list. And while Lydia was a small character in book one 'The Duchess Wars' of this series, this novella can easily be read stand-alone with zero problems.

This story was pure fun, a lot of heart, and a good dose of heat. Jonas is a hero that I won't soon forget. I highly recommend it.

Juliana Philippa says

He wanted her to lift her head at this moment. He wanted her to look him in the eyes and realize that he loved her. He wanted her to love him back.

Wow. Just ... wow. Loved it!!! It's rare to be able to pull out a great story with well-drawn characters in a novella, but Ms. Milan managed to do that beautifully.

HERO: Jonas (26)

Fantastic hero - very unusual, don't think I've ever read a hero like him. There's nothing cookie cutter here - no rake/rogue, no stuffy aristocrat, none of the usual figures that we see so often (and love! Not bashing them, by any means). Jonas is a doctor; he is very straightforward, blunt, to the point, almost/often to a fault. I don't want to say he's socially awkward, because he's not, but he has the unfortunate habit of sometimes saying the wrong thing (ex: when he tries to explain to Lydia that he wants to talk to her not because of the secret he knows, but because she's the 11th prettiest girl in Leicester,). A lot of these slip-ups make for some great laughs though and make him all the more endearing. Despite his clinical manner, he is also a very sensitive and caring person and we do get to see that side of him quite early on.

A friend had once told him that he was like bitter coffee---positively habit-forming, once one acquired a taste for the beverage, but off-putting on the first few sips.

HEROINE: Lydia (20)

Lydia was a wonderful heroine; also unusual, though not *AS unusual* as Jonas. I liked how Milan dealt with the heroine getting pregnant at 15, in the sense that I liked how she had all the characters in the book deal with it (that's essentially the prologue, so I'm not ruining any spoilers). In most romance books, when something like that happens the heroine is then shunned, kicked out of the house, constantly made to feel guilty, etc. None of that here, Lydia's parents were actually wonderful, the father especially. Milan also manages to capture the complexity of emotions that Lydia feels about what happened and the circumstances, which would be a challenge in even a regular-length book, let alone a novella. She doesn't have Lydia's character swing to an extreme because of what happened, but instead really shows us the complexity and layers of emotions and effects that experience had.

For so long, she hadn't let herself feel anything at all. She'd smiled and laughed and ignored the harm that had been done. But deep inside, she hadn't stopped wanting, and no matter how she'd tried, no matter what lies she told herself, she had still hurt.

THE ROMANCE

Finally, even the relationship - the dynamic at the beginning, how it develops, how their feelings evolve, etc. - was unusual and did not at all feel like an overdone romance book recipe. It was such a treat to read their interactions, see how their feelings and opinions changed, and watch the beautiful romance unfold. ::sigh:: Jonas was really great, I gotta tell ya! Anyway. Milan was able to deliver a believable and lovely relationship in a novella, which is no small feat, as well as wonderful and interesting secondary characters, who only added to the story and didn't get in the way or steal any scenes - she was smart enough to add secondary plots or distractions along the way.

BOTTOM LINE

Overall, a FANTASTIC read that I just adored. Left a huge, dopey grin on my face in the end and I was so sad that it was over. Can't wait for time to pass so I can read it again :-D.

EXCERPT

"I don't know why you're doing this," she sniffed as he dabbed at her cheeks. "You're being kind, but you always make fun of me."

He ran his hand down her shoulder. "I never make fun of you."

"You say such horrid things about me."

"I never say horrid things about you," he contradicted. "I tell you exactly what I think of you, and you never believe me."

"You're sarcastic and contradictory."

He sighed and breathed in the smell of her, sweet and uncomplicated. "Well, yes. That, I must admit to. But half the things I say to you in sarcasm, Lydia, I really mean. I just can't bear to leave them unsaid."

"But if you don't think badly of me ..."

He didn't answer.

Ally says

These two. Their fathers. I. Just. Can't.

Like I do not even have words to express how amazingly beautiful this story is. I once mentioned that I thought I was dead inside or that I had no soul. Why you ask (or not)? Because I read Archer's Voice and didn't cry, didn't waver, didn't bat an eye. One hitch. That was it. A little itty bitty breath of Oh My and nothing. Dead. No woman no cry.

But perhaps it's not that my soul is dead. It's just confused. The tenderness in this book, the angst of caring for a father in the throws of dementia and the absolute love and sweetness of our hero. F*(k. I was done. Full on cry. Go figure.

Anyhoo

Setting / Time / Genre: Regency

Series: Yes

Sexy times: Once. Easy peasy. Nothing shocking. Just lovely.

Plan on reading more by the author: Please, I have the rest of the series to love on. Courtney Milan fangirl, see me.

Synopsis: Look, just read the book for it. I have to be quick. Gotta ton to do. It's a romance. Tension. Happy ending. F%89ing amazing. OK. Take my word for it. Possibly the most perfect novella I have read in some time.

Hero: Jonas. The most amazing man in the entire world of Milan's. Ok, I know I have said this about her other heroes. Damn, this woman writes the perfect man nearly every time. At least for me. Lemme own that. He's so sweet.

Heroine: Lydia. Oh, Lydia. Smile and the world smiles with you. Hide your hurt behind your smile and the world keeps on smiling totally unaware of your inner turmoil. Except the one man who was present for some of it. This is a beautiful woman. This is woman who has the unwavering support of family. And that's huge.

Why it did or didn't work for me: I loved this book. Boom, drop the mike. It's heartstoppingly good. The prose, crimeny. WTH?

...breathing in her old hurts, and exhaling the emotions he had not yet managed to voice.

Her kiss didn't sweep away the dark anguish he felt in his heart. Instead, it embraced it. It acknowledged it.

Add to that the relationship these two have with their fathers. A more unconditional beautiful love between child and parent, I cannot even conceive of. This possibly could become one of my top all time books.

As I said, before: **Boom, drop the mike.**

Kathleen says

4.5 stars, because it's GOOD, and it's hard to write a shorter story well. Milan pulled it off neatly. This is the third book in *The Brothers Sinister* series, and just brimming with STORY. Loved it!! And it's sexy, too, with one scalding love scene -- Lydia and Jonas know what they want and neither are shy about going for it.

He let out a shaky breath and looked over at her. Her eyes were dark, dark. She reached up and pulled two pins from her hair, and her curls tumbled over her shoulders. Ever so slowly, he held out his hand to her.

A Kiss for Midwinteris set in Leicester, England, in December, 1863. The prologue is set in 1857.

So far, I've enjoyed all three books in the series. Even when the romance is going in a frustrating direction I stay tuned, because Milan offers so much more than a love story. In this book, in addition to the sexy and straightforward Jonas -- I want a doctor like him!! -- we get a peek into social strictures and medical history, especially pertaining to birth control and germ control. (I shudder at those earlier practices.) Jonas is totally frank with Lydia about all these matters. The first scene where he just gave her the straight dope -- the look on her face -- hysterical!

We also get a beautiful portrayal of a father's love. Actually, two fathers. These "fatherly love stories" made the book, transforming a good story into something more.

Jonas's father made his money as a scrap metal dealer, selling his small business so Jonas could go to the

best medical school in the country. Now he is poor and dying slowly of a failing heart. Even worse, his mind is starting to go. (It's sad, but actually heartwarming). Afraid that he will be a burden to Jonas in his old age, he collects metal madly, planning to some day sell it -- as soon as he can get out of bed again. (But how does he acquire the metal, stuck in bed? Does his servant handle the transactions?) Anyhow, his home is BURSTING with metallic junk -- from nails to bed stands and cooking pans. Yup. He's become a hoarder. It's dangerous, it's dirty, and it's making Jonas crazy, but his dad won't let him help him. It's a matter of pride.

I loved it. I was caught up in this side-story of unconditional love, told through the realistic arguments and appeals between Jonas and his father. Jonas, who values truth above all virtues, has to lie to his father for his own good.

Then there was Lydia's father. Wow. Like, I'm almost weeping at some of the scenes. More unconditional love! With "show and not tell" methods, Milan portrays this man's devotion to his daughter at ages 3, 15, and now, at 21. (Lydia is his only child, I assume, since siblings were never mentioned -- unless I missed it? Would have been good to know whether he had any other children).

High marks for the romance! Jonas gave Lydia complete acceptance. He gave her the gift of TRUTH -- freeing her from shame and allowing her to get good and mad. True, he fell in love with her instantly, but what a fun scene that was, plus he had 16 months to come to his senses, while she did her best to ignore and disdain him, but he was "constant in his affections" and always felt happier in her presence. Milan convinced me that Jonas truly loved Lydia, despite the insta-luv.

Lydia is likable, and I sympathized with her initial feelings of discomfort around Jonas. I also appreciated her interactions with Jonas's father, but she felt secondary almost. Jonas carried the tale. However, Lydia takes center stage in one scene. At the end, she brought Jonas a Christmas gift, placed inside a small drawstring bag made of gold velvet and green ribbon. (Brilliant!! Loved it! Even if improbable!)

The epilogue was disappointing. Milan teased me with the notion of having breakfast with Robert and Minnie from the previous book, and then she didn't deliver! Also, I wanted to know if Jonas's dad was living with them, and whether he was settled in comfortably.

Other books in this series: I read this shorter work right after I finished the full-length and gut-wrenching prequel, *The Duchess War*, hoping to see more of Robert and Minnie. No such luck. Also, there was no mention of Hugo and Serena from the thoroughly satisfying series opener, *The Governess Affair* (but I was not expecting them to appear).

Nonfiction connection: Jonas's unwillingness to wear gloves and his hand-washing practice reminded me of a biography I read last summer, depicting the assassination of President James Garfield in 1881. He was shot, but he died about three months later, not by bullet -- by horrendous infection. In searching, probing, feeling for the bullet in his side, American doctors refused to buy into the new European trend in medicine -- sterilizing tools and washing hands thoroughly, inspired by Dr. Lister (of Listerine) and by Dr. Snow, according to Milan. I found it interesting. See *Destiny of the Republic: A Tale of Madness, Medicine and the Murder of a President*.

Mely says

Expanded review at <http://coffeeandink.dreamwidth.org/11...>

I seem to be at odds with the general internet take on Milan's recent work, because I was disappointed by this romance between a doctor and an allegedly cheerful woman whom the doctor knows to have had a teen pregnancy years before. Lydia Charingford distrusts all of Jonas Grantham's declarations of affection because he's brusque and sarcastic and she believes he's just trying to get into her pants. There are some genuinely moving bits, particularly in Lydia's realization that she has not recovered from her traumatic history, only repressed it, and in Jonas' relationship with his aging and increasingly senile father. These are, however, outweighed for me by the dissonance between what we are told by the characters and what we are actually shown. Yes, the characters may be unreliable -- but both Jonas and Lydia agree that he is blunt to the point of rudeness, and everyone Lydia knows seems to agree that she is cheerful and optimistic.

Jonas is direct and straightforward (frequently to the point of rudeness) in everything except telling Lydia that he didn't initially recognize her as the pregnant teen, and that he would like to court her -- or even simply increase his acquaintance with her -- without having any nefarious intent. Yes, he's defensive and it's difficult to admit an attraction to someone who seems to despise you, but he doesn't have to admit to love at first sight, he just has to respond to her understandable concerns. The entire plot depends on this contrivance and all of Jonas and Lydia's interactions are shaped by it, and it jars me with every single reference.

We are told that Lydia generally presents a cheerful and optimistic face to the world, but we do not actually see any evidence of this before page 40 of a 120-page novella. For the first third of the story, we see her distressed, frustrated, angry, and often openly antagonistic -- and yes, this is because we see her interacting with Jonas, who is marked out as an exception to her usual attitude, but there is no evidence it is an exception because we don't actually see her usual behavior in action.

What I find most frustrating about this story, though, is the way it fits into a larger pattern in Milan's work, which is the way it addresses sexism. She frequently depicts men who have a feminist agenda, by which I mean not just that they object to individual cases of sexism but that they do in some way recognize that there is a systemic social disadvantage to women which must be addressed. In this case, Jonas advocates birth control for women and is particularly concerned with the way medical "science" has actually endangered women; in *Unclaimed*, Mark Turner promotes male chastity as a way to prevent abuse of women. Notably, these "feminists" are always men. In neither of these stories do we hear of or see the women who actually founded and dominated the social movements of the time which were in fact concerned with women's health, including sexual and reproductive issues. In both of these stories, women are able to recognize the injuries done to them -- and to conceptualize them as unjust injuries, rather than random events -- only because of the intervention of men.

Additionally, "A Kiss in Midwinter" depends on Jonas perpetually ignoring and disregarding Lydia's repeated indications that she doesn't wish to associate with him -- that is, it depends on his harassment of her. Because he is the hero and because we know that Lydia misinterprets his intentions, the narrative pushes us to favor his desires and to ignore that he is consistently disregarding her expressed desires in favor of satisfying his own. He *knows better*. He obeys her command not to speak to her only when she satisfies *his* requirements for base knowledge, and even that he undercuts by physically approaching her -- just without verbal communication. And of course he is right. Of course he wins over Lydia. Of course she recognizes that he knows her history, her psychology, and her desires better than she does herself, and his harassment is justified by her unacknowledged attraction; his behavior is excused by the narrative to the point that Lydia ultimately regrets telling him not to speak to her as much because *it hurts his feelings* as because it does not reflect her final desires.

The surface narrative endorses a woman's right to express her own desires and control her own fate, but the subtext consistently subordinates Lydia's desires (both sexual and otherwise) to Jonas's.

Carole (Carole's Random Life in Books) says

My rating is probably closer to 4.5 stars. I really liked this one and it left me with a big old happy grin in the end. At the start of the story, we see Lydia at her low point which Jonas witnessed. Jonas was socially inept which I think added to his charm. Lydia couldn't see past the things that he knew about her. They make a silly bet but Jonas really just wants to spend more time with Lydia to try to win her over. The first time they see each other after that bet was over really got to me. My heart melted into a big puddle over here and I couldn't wait to see this pair together. I am definitely going to have to read more from Courtney Milan.

Book source: Kindle freebie

Jill says

4.5 stars

Lydia Charingford first met Dr Jonas Grantham when she was fifteen and he was a twenty-one year-old preparing to undertake medical studies at King's College. She was a patient. He was as yet untrained, the physician allowing him to observe quietly in the background, as he tended his patients. After graduating Jonas has an agreement with the physician to take over his medical practice when he retires.

Five years later returning to Leicester to take up his practice, Jonas is in need of a wife. For all the usual reasons, not the least of which is regular sexual intercourse without the risk of sexually transmitted diseases. Though Jonas has no recollection of Lydia, she remembers him all too well.

Once again Courtney Milan provides readers with much more than just a romance, albeit in a historical setting with all the set pieces for the era. As in *The Duchess War* this is a layered story dealing with social issues of the time with a rather forthright doctor who calls a spade a spade. Or in medical parlance (view spoiler).

She also parallels the relationships both the hero and heroine have with their respective fathers. And at the same time manages to deliver the expected seasonal Christmas novella, but without all the overdone sentimentality and sweetness. In a genre literally bursting with talent, Ms Milan is almost without equal. *A Kiss for Midwinter* is highly recommended.

Steam: 2.5

UniquelyMoi ~ BlithelyBookish says

Dr. Jonas Grantham

A Kiss for Midwinter is Miss Lydia Charingford's story, a sometimes sweet, sometimes heartbreaking novella from the *Brothers Sinister* series.

Miss Lydia Charingford is always cheerful, and never more so than at Christmas time. But no matter how hard she smiles, she can't forget the youthful mistake that could have ruined her reputation. Even though the worst of her indiscretion was kept secret, one other person knows the truth of those dark days: the sarcastic Doctor Jonas Grantham. She wants nothing to do with him...or the butterflies that take flight in her stomach every time he looks her way.

Jonas Grantham has a secret, too: He's been in love with Lydia for more than a year. This winter, he's determined to conquer her dislike and win her for his own. It all starts with a wager and a kiss...

Well, I guess honesty is the best policy, right? Then I have to admit that I wasn't a fan of Lydia's when we met her in *The Duchess War*, but I also have to admit that she won me over, totally, in this story. Her heartbreaking tale is... well... heartbreaking, and so her treatment of Minnie in *The Duchess War* was, in my opinion, forgivable. Part of her problem is that she's a woman who believes she has no chance for a happy life - especially when Jonas Grantham, the most annoying man she's ever met, decides that it's time for him to take a wife, and Lydia is the one he wants.

Now, he just has to convince her to have him!

Honestly, I laughed and cried and came away loving both Jonas and Lydia, not just for who they are, but also for who they are not. Both tortured souls striving to live with their "demons" and to do the right thing, always. Apart they were splendid people, but together - they are *perfect!*

The bottom line: This is, as are all Courtney Milan's stories, a delightful, witty, heartfelt, romantic and sexy tale. If you're looking for a short holiday story sure to leave you with a smile on your face, then look no further. *A Kiss For Midwinter* is a story I'll be reading again and again, and I'm sure you will, too.

For those interested, this works extremely well as a standalone.

My thanks to Ms. Milan for providing me with a copy of this novella! It was such a wonderful holiday treat!

Jilly says

Usually I love a character who is described as having a sarcastic, dark sense of humor, but Jonas didn't really do it for me. I just didn't see the humor. He seemed pretty serious to me. And, persnickety. I'm not a fan of persnickety men. If they are going to take the time to hang up my gown and smooth out the wrinkles while they are undressing me for sex, I'm going to re-think the whole sex idea in that time.

He seems like a barrel of laughs. :/

Jonas' main reason for wanting to get married is to have regular sex without getting syphilis. He makes a list

of the ten prettiest girls in town to see which one he will marry. Lydia is number 11. And, he tells her so. That's the way to win a girl's heart. Tell her she's the 11th prettiest girl you know.

Go on, you sweet talker, you!

The best part of this book, to me, wasn't the romance at all. It was the relationship the couple each had with their fathers. There was a conversation between Jonas and his father towards the end that almost got a tear or two from my eyes. That's saying a lot, since my tear ducts have basically shrunk away from disuse. It was a very touching moment.

Overall, the romance was okay, but it's worth the read for the father stuff.

D.G. says

This novella gets 5 stars because of the very original hero and the amazing fathers of both main characters.

In romance, bad parents are a dime a dozen so I was so glad to see two fathers that were so devoted to their children. I cried both when I learned about the Christmas gift Jonas' father gave him as well as what Jonas said to solve the conflict with his father.

Jonas was very sui generis to say the least with his jokes about gonorrhoea and his penchant for calling a spade a spade. Even I was mildly shocked of his talk of penises and vaginas (mostly because you never hear those words in historical romance.) I would have loved to see the heroine's face when she heard that!

A great, great novella to read during the Christmas season because it reminds you of what's really valuable!

Lexxi Kitty says

Another one I forgot to review. So just a few thoughts.

I loathe the doctor character. LOATHE. For many reasons. One of which is the part wherein a woman lost her baby because he didn't open his mouth – there were reasons why he didn't do so right then and there (when she was being examined) but he suspected that what the doctor he was shadowing was telling her to do would cause her and/or her baby to die, and later asked another doctor – a teaching doctor – and learned his instincts were correct . . . and he still didn't say anything to the woman (would be hard, sure, he's way over there *points vaguely* while she's . . . somewhere else, but still...).

Then there's the part wherein they both meet again long after their first encounter and he is instantly . . . not attracted to her – she's something like 11th or 13th on his list of women to talk to (he wants a wife, he ordered women by looks on a list). He talked to her first because he wanted to see if he'd expand the list beyond ten names. Whereupon he finds her . . . still not attractive. She finds him horrible. He begins to become aroused by her reactions to him. She more forcibly lets him know she hates everything about him

and wants him dead – by this point Doctor Jonas might have a full on erection.

More time passes. Eventually he bluntly tells her something like "I'm madly in love with you and have been for a year!" Fucker doesn't even know her. Didn't find her attractive until after she rejected him. He even admitted to himself and the reader that her rejection of him is why he finds himself in love with her. I mean . . .fuck.

Then . . . Doc Jonas to Lydia: But I have long believed that underneath that lovely, overly cheerful façade, you are actually a worthwhile individual.

Plus – Jonas mission in life, after noting how 'cheerful' Lydia is, is to 'prove' to her how horrible life can be and to make her sad. Seriously, his mission in life . . . is to make his 'love of his life' . . . sad. As I put in my status updates: it is not a good sign that I wish to punch the main male character in the dick every time he opens his mouth, right?

Personality quark, etc. etc., but . . . the reason he can't stand Lydia being cheerful? Two reasons really: he himself is super depressing type of guy and . . . 'she deserves to be super sad all the fucking time because of the events he was personally witness to'. She lost her fucking baby, which you could have prevented you fucking monster, and you are pissed at her for . . . somehow having a cheerful outer shell? SHE'S FUCKING MESSED UP INSIDE YOU FUCKBALL! DROP DEAD after biting off your own dick and eating it.

60% into the book I reminded myself, via status update, that I didn't actually like Lydia either. She has imaginary reasons to loath the doctor. And that I loathe him for his actual actions (the – prove life is shit and Lydia shouldn't be cheerful, etc. actions).

So . . . I did not like either main character, though only loathed the doctor one.

Rating; 2.67

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