



Let Me Be The One

Jo Goodman

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In bestselling author Jo Goodman's captivating new quartet, you'll meet the four intriguing gentlemen of the Compass Club -- North, South, East, and West -- as they find adventure, excitement, and, of course, romance. Now, in book one of this sweeping and sensual series set in Regency England, join Brendan David Hampton, Earl of Northam, as he unravels a mystery and the secrets of a woman's heart.

None of the four friends are yet wed, though the wagers are on North -- captivated by a most unique lady. Libby Penrose is wise, witty, beautiful, and quite determined to remain alone. But when the intrigues of a notorious jewel thief find them plotting together, a stolen kiss seals their fate as lovers -- yet leaves North with more questions about Libby than answers.

Despite her vow to deny her deep attraction to this powerful, sensual man, Libby surrenders to the breathless desire he awakens. She could not have imagined the whirlwind events that would find North accused of a crime nor her own confession that would save him -- and compromise them both into matrimony. But sweet words of love remain unspoken and elusive. For Libby harbors a dark secret, one that threatens the untested bonds of her marriage. And soon fate will force her to make a harrowing choice: trust her husband or lose him forever.

Let Me Be The One Details

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From Reader Review Let Me Be The One for online ebook

K. says

England, 1818

Brendon ("North") and Elizabeth

Okay, I have quite a few books that I can't write really "formal" reviews on lately because I'm too busy, so I'll just write my "informal thoughts" on because I don't want them to go by "forgotten."

"Let me be the One" by Jo Goodman was my very first book by her and I have to say it was a mixed bag, but mostly wonderful. I liked it (obviously because I gave it 4 stars).

From the beginning, the Heroine's "guardians" were very suspicious in whatever they held over her head. It was unnatural when compared to how sweet and loving Elizabeth's character REALLY came off as, so of course, I wanted to keep reading. The whole story would bring everything to light.

Providing a few facts, Elizabeth is wealthy, yet has a pronounced limp and is 26 and "on the shelf." The limp is the result of a fall from a library ladder, and although Elizabeth has overcome many obstacles with regard to the disability, her handicap is seen as part of her list of faults that make her less than the perfect match for a titled gentlemen by the ton.

Elizabeth once having been in love, is desperate to avoid another relationship, to the point where she begins to avoid North (our hero) after a kiss in the woods during a fox hunt leaves her breathless.

While North is exploring the feelings he has for Elizabeth, after their kiss and believing himself to be falling in love, after he enters Elizabeth's room in the night on the pretense of a "search" of the estate (North is really just a detective/spy) for stolen property by the "Gentleman Thief," the suspect) after the Baroness (Elizabeth's

benefactris") wakes up screaming, Elizabeth accuses North of entering her bedroom looking for more than just the missing goods. She point blank labels herself as a "whore" (What?) and accuses North of being in her room for the specific purpose of pursuing that line of action. I feel as shocked for her stating it so bluntly as North does in the novel (part of the intrigue of the entire story)! Seems pretty harsh, even though I'm not certain why Elizabeth labels herself so as of yet.

A lot of issues seem to be written in innuendo, trying to impart mystery. Unfortunately, the author either doesn't provide enough straight forward clues to build the mystery one by one and just ends up confusing the mystery instead of building suspense with regard to it's solution. It's a very broken up feeling to the reader as the story progresses as regard to where the hero and heroine will eventually come together.

Elizabeth took a LOT of actions that really tore my emotions in both directions. She manipulates North in ways that I both agreed with, yet let me feeling emotionally torn for him as a male during the times and what he would commit to her. Weirdly, she was quite independent and solid in the end for the year and what she was confronted with.

Overall this book was actually quite surprising for the times, and I totally recommend it to readers who love both historical romance and those who just like a bit of suspense and non-predictability with their reads. I've read beyond this one and they just continue to enchant and get better. I recommend Jo Goodman and this series without reservation. It's great "historical suspense" that's a difficult genre to achieve. I'm pleasantly

surprised. Read this series!

K.

SidneyKay says

We have another super hero - ta ta dah - Cryptic Girl.

There be spoilers ahead. What's that old saying by Henry Wadsworth? "Into each life some rain must fall." Well, my little Petunia's, the same runs true of books - "Into an author glom project a stinker must appear." Doesn't have quite the gentleness on the ear as Wadsworth, does it? Oh well, I gave it a try. So I must face the facts, sad as they may be: I finally have tripped over a Jo Goodman book which leaves me nonplussed. This books begs for a punch line like, "What's the difference between a DNF and perseverance?" I don't know, time, money, headaches, yawns - you take your pick.

In case you haven't guessed by now, *Let Me Be the One* was not my favorite Jo Goodman book... dare I say - book. *Let Me Be the One* is the first in the Compass Club series and was published in 2002. It seemed that it took for-ev-er to finish this story and there were times I almost put it down, but being the first in a series I decided to drudge on. It all boils down to a few words, which I can string out. Those words would be: no chemistry between the heroine, Libby Penrose and the hero, Brendan, the Earl of Northam (North to his friends). On top of that we have one of the most self-loathing-I-don't-deserve-love-guess-I'll-go-eat-worms heroine I've ever come across. I'm-a-bad-person Libby was very tiring, very depressing and excruciating to read. Can you tell I didn't like her? Not only was she constantly beating herself up, but she was also constantly leaving cryptic messages around. Dire predictions of what might happen if our hero would fall in love with her. "You would do so much better to leave me in peace - I cannot be a virgin for you no matter how you make me bleed - don't trust me - don't love me - I will not allow you to save me." There were waaay to many self-loathing cryptic remarks out of Libby's mouth; this book almost hit the wall. Then we have our hero - Brendan.

Poooooor Brendan. He seems to be a Beta hero, but it's hard to tell. I know he falls in love with Cryptic Girl and goes around making excuses for her and trying to understand why she is the way she is, especially since she's nott telllling himmm. See, I'm getting mad at Libby again. Back to Brendan. Brendan is kind of - looking for a word - looking for a word - I have it! Boring! Yes, I said it! Boring! He's not interesting! He has no sense of humor - well who could with Libby around? But this guy wouldn't know a joke even if W.C. Fields was standing next to him. When it comes to the sex scenes in this book, (and let me tell you there are tons of them), they are mostly skimmable. Two people, one self-loathing and one boring having whankee-roo is just not readable - especially when Cryptic Girl says depressing things while humping and bumping. If anyone could deflate a Timothy Toad it would be her.

Even as much as I found Brendan and Libby to be really really annoying, I thought the plot could have been interesting - if only there had been two different leads. Libby's past, the mysteries of her past, the villains, the Gentleman Thief, her father, her friend, his friends - all of that could have made for some good reading. But, the story failed. The villains are easy to spot and the solution to the various problems is done in a rush - leaving for me some glaring questions. What about Libby's son? What about her father? What about Isobel, her friend? Those ends were not tied, they just faded away - forgotten.

For me this book was a huge disappointment. The writing was choppy and hard to follow. The hero was weak, flat, boring. There wasn't any spark between the main couple. The biggest problem though was with the horribly depressing self-derisive heroine. If this were a standalone book, I'd say pass on it - but it's the first in the series. So, enter at your own risk, just be prepared for Cryptic Girl.

KaysBlog

Pepa says

A partir de la mitad el libro mejora considerablemente, no así su ritmo. Me tuvo atrapada las ganas de conocer el pasado de la protagonista, y aunque no es para tanto, la autora juega bien sus cartas para que mantengas el interés. La pareja no mejora, me sigue pareciendo fría desde el principio hasta el final, muy comedida y con falta de pasión.

A pesar de que el argumento se anima y empieza la acción, no logra contrarestar el lento comienzo... de todas formas, leeré al menos otro más, que lo tengo por aquí cogiendo polvo

Zoe says

This is the first Jo Goodman character that I disliked. This Elizabeth Penrose, daughter of Earl of Rosemont.

This book is the first book in the series The Compass Club, featuring 4 men with titles conveniently fit into a small compass: East, West, North and South. The first book of the series has Lord Northam, aka North as the hero and Elizabeth Penrose as his love interest. I thought the idea of 4 noble men with such said titles befriending each other and liking each other too much of a coincidence. But what the hell, it is fiction. If Jo Goodman wants to have a go at wordplay, I suppose I shall be able to go along with it.

Honestly I do not know how to rate this book. I know I did not like it very much. But at the same time the obvious thought that had been put into writing this book earned my respect. I cannot easily dismiss this book as one of those "ugh why did I read it?" books. As often is my practice, I find it easier to list my likes and dislikes:

What I liked about this book:

1. Jo Goodman's writing. I really love her style. Hers is one of subtlety. You must read her words carefully or you would run the risk of missing something major. She hints, she implies, she depicts. She never tells. She shows. One does not just "read" a Jo Goodman book. One interprets, one digests, and one absorbs. She requires your full attention. Any half-heart attempt will not do. This book is written that way too.
2. The complexity of the story. Elizabeth's secret and all people who had a hand in said secret. I have already said that I did not like this book. But I marched on like a good solider because I needed to find out what her secret was. Why did she feel the way she did? Why did she act the way she did? I had to find out. And to find out means to read on. I kept guessing: could it be this? could it be that? I had my guesses, but I was never sure. I needed to finish the book to find out what. I was right about some things and wrong about others. It didn't matter. I finally knew.

These 2 points alone, made me give my 3 stars rating. For my true sentiments, which I will list below, this book would have gotten a 1.5 stars from me.

What I did not like about this book:

1. Elizabeth Penrose. I cannot say that I hate this character, but I sure did dislike her. Other reviews have touched on this: Elizabeth was self-loathing. And it got old. Yeah yeah I know, you are very very bad. Is there anything new you want to tell me about yourself, Elizabeth? I was tired of her self-deprecating comments. I found her very very hard to like. As for what happened, I will only disclose it with a spoiler alert. (view spoiler) Suffice it to say, that Elizabeth did not win my affection or sympathy. I also am not crazy about the secret. It probably happened more often than not, but I found the idea unappetizing.

What bothered me about Elizabeth is how coarse she was when she was describing herself. I understand that she felt awful about herself. But she was hardly a whore, as she had referred to herself. And I do not know why she was so.....vulgar about her non-virgin state. Like I said, what happened was unfortunate, but it hardly made her a whore. I know her character had pains and was supposed to be quietly suffering. But somehow her plight did not win my sympathy. I did not like her a character. Once that was established, my relationship with the book had been set on the path to doom.

2. The relationship between Northam and Elizabeth: I do not know why Northam liked Elizabeth. It seemed more like a whim than anything else. So he met her and all of a sudden, he wanted to pursue her. I mean it is common enough that people feel attraction right away, but something has to happen between them to convince me that they hold true affection for each other. I did not see that between Northam and Elizabeth. From where I see, it, Elizabeth did not deserve Northam's affection. I do not know what he saw in her. But that is hardly a surprise, considering how unimpressed I was with Elizabeth.

3. The use of their titles and their nicknames (members of the Compass Club) was very confusing for me. All 4 of them seemed like the same guy. They did not have any distinctive characteristics about them so I had to remind myself all the time ok this is South now, and no that was East. They are practically the same person, all 4 of them. This worries me. I don't know how I would feel about their own books if they appear to be all just like copies of each other.

4. The mystery over-shadowing the romance. The romance between Elizabeth and Northam, was weak to begin with. It is Jo Goodman's usual practice to place an equal, if not more emphasis on developing the mystery bit in the story. Sometimes it works, when the lead couple has better chemistry. In this case, Northam and Elizabeth were just downright boring, bordering on annoying (to me). It made the process very very tiring. I really had to push myself to finish the book. my curiosity bested me. Or it would have become a DNF.

Jo Goodman is still a great writer in my eyes and I usually love her characters. Elizabeth was too much of a tragedy queen for me to relate to her. Her character did not respect herself and that made it difficult for me to respect her. Though I must say, I understand why she did not feel great about herself. It was understandable, but I did not like it.

Lea's Audiobooks Hensley says

Unabridged audiobook review from Speaking of Audiobooks column 3/08/10:

Narrated by Virginia Leishman

Discovering that the entire Compass Club series was available in audio format, I listened to this, the first of four in the series and found I was quite pleased with the experience. The story contains a few too many coincidences or plot twists to be a favorite but narrator Virginia Leishman's performance was such that I enjoyed nearly every moment. Leishman differentiates the characters more with accent and cadence than change of pitch. Serving its duty as first book, the three future heroes are introduced and given sufficient substance to make this listener eager for their stories as well.

Wollstonecraftomegirl says

Quite at a loss for how to grade this. Objectively worse books have had four stars from me, but there's a lot about this that was frustrating. So I guess I'll settle on 3 stars.

I'll start here. I will read the next in the series because, on any measure, Goodman can write, and for a woman usually focused on the Wild West, she turned her hand to the usual Regency fare with aplomb. There's enough good in this book to get me to come back and not enough bad to stop me.

The problem with this book is the heroine. Or, more precisely, her Big Secret, and the fact that it is kept from the hero *and the reader* for the duration of the book [there's a term for this – not dramatic irony, but something else]. This is always a problem in romance. Characterisation is hindered and a reader's relationship to the character is hindered if you want to keep a massive part of their backstory and thus their psyche and their motivation etc etc a secret in order to have a Big Reveal. In this case it makes the heroine irritating and confusing. I guess it worked, because I kept reading (although I did guess at about 65%) wanting to know what the hell was going on with her. So, annoying for the reader. It also means the whole romance is based on a lack of communication. And by the time the reveal happened I thought: you really should have just told him.

The hero is better. Kind and solid. Some of his interactions with the heroine were funny and/or charming. But he felt underdone compared to the heroine. I also found some of his reactions to her situation to be assholic [what? It's a word] and his frequent mental consideration of hitting or slapping her to be a. incongruous and b. disturbing.

The plotting was cumbersome and linked to the heroine's Big Secret such that when it came out some of it didn't make sense. (view spoiler)

I've been very critical about this. The romance was, by and large, fairly well done. Sex was good. But if Goodman had taken a step back and reignited it all in, trusted her readers to want to read for the characters rather than for the reveal, it would have been so much better.

Zel Polev says

I'm halfway through the book and nothing really substantial happens. The author keeps hinting at something

darker but I just don't buy it. I'm alright with terrible characters as long as they redeem themselves in the end. The writing doesn't really inspire confidence. Much of what happens between the two characters seem stilted. Both are flat characters with no life to them. He is assigned to guard her and finds a way to call her a whore in every way but aloud. She doesn't really garner my sympathy as she accepts that label. How she manages to think so lowly of herself and still feel superior to others only makes me think that she is narcissistic. The scene where she watched him sleep and how she used that to think she is more mature than he is made me dislike her character. Just because you suffered some hardship doesn't invalidate others lives. She belittled him without even knowing him. I think people should just mind their own business and not act patronizing towards others. I think her attitude is a bit immature because any further dealings with those she considers immature will carry that judgment. But the worst offense of this book is really droning on and on about nothing. I have read half of it and I can sum it up to an English house party. Nothing really developed between the two. They just went about their house party and nothing really interesting happens. The author keeps pushing this idea of mystery beneath the characters and I was willing to go along with it. I stopped after it went on forever. Unless something amazing that is mind blowing in the latter half of this book, I doubt this book is worth reading. Judging from the first half, it really isn't.

I would rather spend my time re-reading something that I like even if I already know the story.

Story Brief:

A fortune teller predicts the second son's inheritance of the title. While it is a good fortune, it is one that comes with a loved one's death. North lives with this prediction and dread its passing. It comes to pass and he is now titled. He is tasked by his commanding officer to look after Libby, the self-hating woman. Something happened in her past. She is no longer a virgin. She is supposed to be this great conversationalist. Both are attracted to each other. She feels guilty over it and eats up the guilt when they do have sex with each other. The same fortune teller comes over the house party. She tells South's fortune which is really about his friend's fortune. She hints at trouble ahead and I give up. If you wanted something to happen, it would have happened by now.

Terrible.

Elgyn says

Příběh je chatrný. Elizabeth na potkání vypadá, že je dívka. Vtěšina lidí, většinou jejího otce, na potkání vykládá, že už není panna a loudí postelové detaily.

Hrdina tomu samozřejmě nevěří, navzdory tomu, že spolu skončili v pelíšku dívky, než se dozvídala celé jeho jméno. A navzdory tomu, že je v posteli vynáležavá, což zjevně nevěřila z gotických románů.

Hrdina podle striče poznal, že hrdinka již rodila. Ale až na s. 301, což je s podivem, protože předtím ji již mnohokrát prozkoumal ze všech stran. Nicméně to je hodně chatrná zápletka.

A zápletka se Zlodějem gentlemanem nestojí ani za komentářem.

Voják, zvyklý plnit rozkazy, který pátrá po zloději. Dojde k loupeži a hrdina místo vyšetřování náhodou vlezí do ložnice hrdinky, chvíli šmíruje, jak spí a pak dojde na techtle? To je teda disciplína.

Nepochopila jsem, proč se hrdina na s. 72 jmenuje najednou „Nathan“.

Mila jsem trochu hokej v postavách.

s. 15 do nebyla
s. 33 sním [s ním]
s. 44 královniny muži
s. 49 toto [toho]
s. 63 ji [si]
s. 76 nep?íjemní [nep?íjemné]
s. 110 B?že [B?žte]
s. 258 a já jsem mu za p?esto vd??ná
s. 298 všech [vše]
s. 300 aby k mohl
s. 333 že jsme m?l

uvozovky - s. 19
ji/jí - s. 299 (2x)
m?/mn? - s. 341

Twiggy says

Well written and engaging.

3.5 - 4 stars

Brendan, Earl of Northam, commonly known as North, attends at a house party held by Lord + Lady Battenburn. Here we are introduced to his 3 school chums, South, East and West, who make up the Compass Club (yes this is the first in a quintet).

North is on a double mission: discover the identity of the Gentleman Thief, who has been robbing the Ton and also to befriend his patron Colonol Blackwood's relative Lady Elizabeth Penrose and ascertain the nature of her friendship with the Battenburns.

From the outset the apparent friendship between Libby and the Battenburns jars and the reader is suspicious as to what is actually going on, as they appear o have a hold over her.

An attraction blossoms between Libby and North but she is afraid of the consequences and withdraws. Following the theft of a necklace, and during his search of the house, North enters her room and they have words. Libby refers to her self in derogatory terms, calling herself a whore and North is beyond shocked.

Libby de lines to explain herself and North struggles to work out what is going on. Following a treasure hunt with imput from the Gentleman Thief, there is a further confrontation and one thing leads to another...

When North is accused of being the thief, Libby announces that he was with her and a hasty wedding ceremony ensues.

The pair gradually fall in love but the relationship is undermined by all the secrets Libby is hiding, which start to give North a disgust of her.

When North discovers that not only was there a lover but also a child, he tells Libby to get out and she runs

away to seek sanctuary with his grandfather.

Eventually North finds her and they reconcile with the truth setting them free.

There is a denouement where the villains get their comeuppance and the leads all live happily ever after.

Like other Goodman books I have read there was a sinister undertone to the book. The heroine is betrayed by many of the significant people in her life and finds it hard to trust again. That said, I found some of her actions incomprehensible and in many ways she came across as a victim with a split personality. I was not entirely certain that I liked her.

North came across well: as a decent and honourable man who loves his wife but there was something missing in the relationship -it just didn't quite spark for me.

Nonetheless I am keen to read the rest of the series.

Jill Dunlop says

Let Me Be the One is the first book in Jo Goodman's Compass Club. Brendan David Hampton, Earl of Northam finds himself intrigued by Libby Pinrose, who is superior Officer, has tasked him with checking up on her. Her quiet and composed demeanor compels him to dig deeper because he is certain she is hiding something. Northam's instincts are correct because she certainly is hiding a dark secret.

I really enjoy Jo Goodman's writing but I have never listened to one of her books before and wondered how it would compare. I needn't have worried because Virginia Leishman did a wonderful job of narrating the story. She speaks with an English accent and her voice brings the Regency period alive. Goodman excels at setting up a scene and painting a picture for the reader. Hearing her words read aloud really let the reader imagine the scene unfolding.

I found *Let Me Be the One* a very engrossing book, but be forewarned it is all very internal. The book is a subtle one, yet with many layers that are slowly peeled away. I found the writing and plot to be very crafty and clever, yet manipulative. Those who are familiar with Goodman's writing will recognize her signature style. The action is slow and plodding, and the character's themselves take center stage.

I really enjoyed both Libby's and Brandon's personalities. Libby almost feels as if she is not worthy of Brandon, but can't seem to say no to him. Brandon feels that Libby is such a gem and can't fathom what has left her so unhappy. To him she is almost like a fragile egg that could easily be broken. The way the story unfolds and how they reach their happy ever after certainly is a wonderful, endearing story. I highly recommend Jo Goodman and *Let Me Be the One* is certainly a good place to start.

Mel says

I read this years ago and loved it. This time around I liked it.

Dabney says

Loved this book. I'd read it years ago and forgotten about it. Ms. Goodman is so good. Now I have to reread the other three!

Keri says

This was an absolute phenomenal read to me. LOVED IT!! This is the first book in the Compass series, four friends who weren't good enough to make the "a" list in school when they were young, so they formed their own club. It just so happens that each of their last names have the 4 directions...ergo the Compass Club. First up is North's book. Brendan does different secret duties for the Crown. He has arrived at a house party with several jobs that he has been given. One of those jobs is to meet and greet Libby Penrose, sedate pretty in her own wren of a woman. But the longer he gets to know Libby the more he wants to know and pretty soon he wants to touch.

Libby's mystery is what captures your attention in this book. She is trying so hard to convince Brendan that she is a bad, horrible person and he shouldn't trust her in any way. You know that whatever secret she has is serious and I was correct it was huge. The mystery of the story was just as big. Your heart hurt once you got Libby's story and knew that Brendon was the man for her and had the ability to protect her heart. Now if she could find the courage to risk her heart into his keeping. The only niggle that I had, was that I wish that we could have seen Libby's reunion with her dad that last time. I felt that he wanted to reach out to Libby and we didn't get to see that. Other than that one thing, this was a lovely, emotional read.

Serena says

Goodman is always reliably good. I enjoyed the story although it was pretty predictable.

The audible narrator wasn't very consistent with her voices.

Denise says

3 1/2 stars. Its hard to rate this one. I liked the story very much, I have no fault with the writing, but it just seemed so slooooow... I found this also with If His Kiss Is Wicked

Also there are 4 books to this series. They are each based on one of the 4 friends that make up the compass club. This one was about the Earl of **Northam**. Book 2: Earl of **Southerton**

Book 3: Marquess of **Eastlyn** and Book 4: Duke of **Westphal**. A bit silly eh? But I assure you, there is no silly substance to this book. No fluff and ruffles here. Plenty of steam, drama a bit dark even. But too slow moving for my taste.
