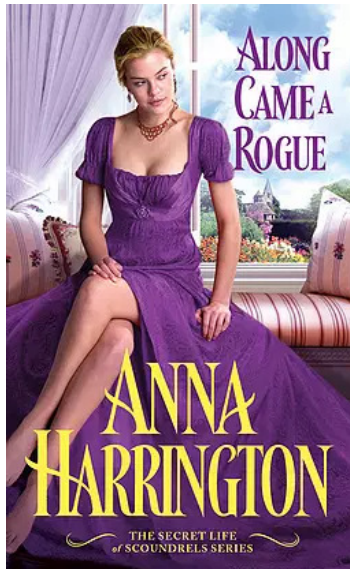




# ANNA HARRINGTON

## *Regency Romance*

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## Bonus Scene:

### *ALONG CAME A ROGUE*



*SPOILER – When HOW I MARRIED A MARQUESS opens, Thomas has already been dismissed from the War Office, where he’s been working as a spy because he was shot and is suffering what we would label today as PTSD. We see him recover throughout ALONG CAME A ROGUE, but we never get to see the scene in which he’s dismissed. Although Thomas never appears in this scene between Nathaniel Grey and Lord Bathurst, the two men discuss Grey’s future in the War Office...and Thomas’s lack of one.*

#### ***The War Office, London November, 1816***

“Colonel Nathaniel Grey.” Lord Bathurst’s bushy white brows drew together sharply as he entered his office inside the War Office building on Pall Mall and saw Grey waiting in front of his mahogany desk, still wearing his black greatcoat, with hat and gloves in hand.

He hadn’t let Bathurst’s assistant take them from him. He might have been summoned by the Secretary of War and the Colonies himself, but he had no intention of staying long, not when Emily and his son were waiting for him at home. A year ago, if anyone had told him he’d let himself become domesticated by a wife and baby, he would have called the man out in a duel. Now, he couldn’t imagine a happier life.

He sketched a shallow bow. “Lord Secretary.”

Dressed in solid black, which only made the white brows and large moustache even more pronounced, the Secretary carried himself with a manner that led anyone glimpsing him know he had purpose, in every motion and thought. And that same grim purpose and determination hung heavy around him as he strode past Grey to sit behind his desk.

He waved an irritated hand at one of the chairs, and Grey sat as silently ordered, an impatient sigh leaving his lips.

“You’d gone missing, Colonel. For the past three weeks, you haven’t reported nor have you appeared here for your next assignment.” The Secretary opened the leather portfolio he’d carried with him. “I was about to declare that you’d become a rogue

agent.”

The comment grated at Grey, but then, he'd never found Bathurst's acerbic humor amusing. Still, he forced a dark smile. “I've always been a rogue agent.”

“More so recently, however.”

Keeping his face carefully blank, he answered seriously, “I had personal business that needed my attention, sir.”

“So I'd heard.” He leveled his gaze on Grey. “No one honeymoons in Shropshire in winter, Colonel.” Bathurst's brows knitted together. “No one normal, I should say.”

He should have known Bathurst would have them watched, given all that had occurred in the past year, but the verification of it only confirmed he was making the right decision in resigning from the War Office. “My wife wanted a quiet stay in the country, away from everything.”

“Away from everything. That would certainly be Shropshire.” A faint grimace darkened his face. “Perfectly understandable after the ordeal she went through. And so quickly on the heels of that messy business with Chesney.” His face took on a softer but solemn expression as he leaned back in his chair. “The shooting shocked everyone in England. Made everyone feel terribly unsafe, even on their own streets.”

Grey said nothing.

“And how is Chesney faring now?”

“He has fully recovered.”

“Glad to hear that. I heard you arrested the footpad who shot him,” Bathurst said simply, as if there could not have been any other outcome, and truly, there could not have been, not with Grey unwilling to stop until he'd found the man. “Glad to hear that, too. After all, we can't have rabble thinking they can get away with harming members of the aristocracy, or soon they'll be erecting a guillotine in Vauxhall Gardens and making Wellington emperor.”

Grey bit back the temptation to tell him that Wellington already was emperor. “With due respect, sir, I don't think you summoned me to discuss the politics of social class. Or Lord Chesney's health.”

“No, I did not.” Bathurst's eyes hardened for just a moment, then he flipped open the portfolio, withdrew a piece of paper, and slid it across the desk toward Grey. “Your resignation letter, Colonel. I will not accept it.”

Slowly, Grey pushed it back. Spies did not have wives. Or families. They posed too great a risk, too much of a target for the enemy. He would never endanger Emily and Stephen, even if he had to give up his career to ensure it. “You have no choice.”

Ignoring the letter, the Secretary leaned back in his chair. “Agents at your level rarely walk away alive. You know too much. The risk of losing you to the other side is too great.”

“Is that why you summoned me here, then?” Grey's face was fearless. “To warn me that you plan on having me assassinated?”

Bathurst scowled disapprovingly at his sarcasm. “I summoned you here to tell you that you are too valuable an asset for us to let go. The Prince Regent has considered your situation and authorized me to make you an offer of an administrative position in London. No more field assignments. A respectable public position for you after all.”

Grey's chest lightened, but he kept the emotion carefully hidden. This was unbelievable. Fate had given him everything he'd ever dreamed of having in his life, and more, in Emily for a wife, Stephen for a son, and Thomas for a brother. Now, he was being given the chance to continue his work. And to think he'd once been terrified of domestication. “To what do I owe His Royal Highness's consideration?”

Bathurst's brows knit tightly together. “Apparently, your grandmother is quite formidable.”

Grandmother. Grey doubted he would ever grow accustomed to thinking of Lady Henley as his blood relation. Another aspect of his life he'd never imagined possible. “You have no idea, sir.”

“The terms for the position.” He withdrew a second sheet of paper and slid it across the desk. “Sign that contract and return it by tomorrow morning.”

“Thank you, sir.” Grey folded the contract and slipped it into his inside breast pocket, then pushed himself out of the chair and strode toward the door.

“A moment, Colonel.”

He faced the secretary.

“Please tell Lord Chesney that we were all very saddened to hear what happened to him last spring and wish him a speedy recuperation in all aspects of his life.”

Grey nodded. “I'm certain he'll be happy to hear it, sir. He's eager to get back to his work here.”

Bathurst's attention dropped to the papers on his desk. “Well, there's no hurry with that.”

Grey stared at him, feeling the hairs on the back of his neck stand on end. And then he knew. He knew—

The War Office had no intention of reinstating Thomas as an agent.

He'd been wounded, and in the spy game they played, wounded men were useless. Worse, Thomas had been publicly shot, and as the center of London gossip, there was little that could be done to salvage either his cover or his French connections. He was going to be cut loose, the purpose he'd found in being a spy stripped away from him, and for Thomas, the news was going to be as devastating as being shot all over again.

“You will give him the message, won't you, Colonel?” Bathurst never looked up from his desk.

“Yes, sir,” Grey mumbled, forcibly rolling his shoulders to compose himself and bite back the urge to call Bathurst a coward. “Of course.”

“Good. That will be all, then.”

“Yes, sir.” Taking a steadying breath, he walked out of the room.

As Grey strode down the hallway, his steps faltered, and he stopped to lean his shoulder against the wall, his gut clenching hard. Christ.

Thomas was being thrown away. And that bastard Bathurst expected Grey to tell him. He would do it—of course he would, because he didn't trust anyone else to deliver the news, and so he could be there to offer whatever solace possible.

Because Grey knew the news would destroy him.

Thomas would be alive, but his life would never be the same. And this time, there would be nothing they could do to save him.

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