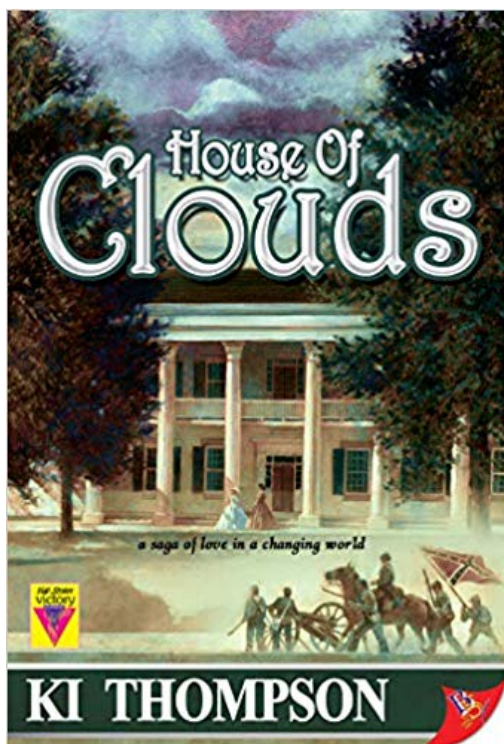


## House of Clouds (Bold Strokes Victory Editions) by KI Thompson



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**Author:** KI Thompson

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A sweeping saga of an impassioned romance set amidst the upheaval of a nation under siege and a way of life threatened with destruction. The American Civil War creates enemies of lifelong friends and allies of strangers, but no relationship is more unlikely than that of a passionate Northern Unionist and a loyal Virginia sympathizer. Actress and Northerner Jordan Colfax is hired by Allan Pinkerton to spy on behalf of the Union. When she meets Confederate sympathizer, Laura St. Clair, whose father is military aide to Jefferson Davis, the perfect opportunity presents itself. But when the truth about Jordan's real intentions are discovered, their growing love is put to the ultimate test - the result of which could mean the difference between life and death. Can a Southern belle and a Yankee spy overcome their differences or will divided loyalties keep them apart? From Tidewater Virginia to Washington, D.C., passion and betrayal converge in Civil War Richmond.



## Reviews of the **House of Clouds (Bold Strokes Victory Editions)** by KI Thompson

Kalv

I finally decided to give this book a try. I read "Heart of the Matter" before and since I liked it I was optimistic I would like this book too. I read romance novels so this book seemed perfect because it's a historical romance. (spoilers ahead). The author obviously did her research because the events and individual people match up with that time frame. I loved seeing America's 1st female detective (Kate Warne) as part of the story. Having said all that I was actually pretty disappointed by this book especially with all the 5 star reviews. The romance portion is not a big party of the story until you're about 80% done. The book was basically about how the American Civil War affected the two main characters with a little romance thrown in. There was ONE sex scene in the book (and it was pretty short) but of course you're not going to get that until you're about 94% done. I also thought this author ended this too soon. The book ends and you are left with no idea of what actually happens to the couple. It was just odd because the book is very detailed when it comes to the historical sections but then just leaves you hanging on the romance part. So basically I say it depends on what you're looking for in a book that determines if this is a good book or just an okay book. If you like books with lots of historical data especially about The American Civil War then you will like this book. If you're looking more for a romance then the book is just okay and you can find better ones out there. This book is more historical fiction than historical romance.

Modred

There was a lot to like about this book. It was definitely above average on the strength of the writing and editing. The historical details and authenticity it creates, and the sympathy you feel for both sides of the conflict are strong arguments in favor of reading this book. The author is able to establish characterizations, even of historical characters, that the reader can grasp at once. I have some strong criticisms, but I expect that they won't take away from the enjoyment most people will get from this book.

For one thing, the point of the book, since it was framed as a romance, was the relationship between Jordan and Laura, but the scenes they are actually in together take up maybe half of the book, with the rest being devoted to getting people from place to place, or describing the historical context. I understand the need to establish the setting, and it seems that part of the author's intention was to portray the tragedy the Civil War perpetrated on all sides. These goals were accomplished.

But ultimately a lot of the detail was too general to really have a bite anyway. The Civil War and its issues are just so big that they can't be delved into in details in one novel, so the real drama existed in the characters, and too often I felt that these interactions were diluted to leave space for scenes that could have been shortened in order to sharpen the focus on Jordan and Laura.

For instance, when Kate gives Jordan her initial briefing on being a spy, as a whole the conversation was lacking a lot of the real information and instruction that Jordan would actually need to carry out her assignment, and despite her very real hesitations, Jordan's questions seemed too few to be realistic. Yet the scene itself seemed to take up an inordinate amount of page-space and reading time to accomplish basically nothing, when perhaps a few sentences followed by Jordan's internal stress as she tried to digest it all, referring to the amount of detailed information given to her, would have been sufficient in establishing the premise.

For all that, I liked the plot twists. The interactions and reactions of the characters were believable. Their opposing points of view were well-presented and supported with their various family lives and history. And I enjoyed the confusion on the parts of the main characters as they struggled to understand their feelings when they really had little context for them in a romantic light in the society they inhabited.

It was a touch frustrating in the end to have all this page space taken up with logistics, and less taken up with their emotions and their establishment of a new life together, so much so that I found myself skimming. We knew that Laura would survive due to the Prologue (sometimes flashbacks are a pet peeve of mine...was this one really necessary in this instance, or did it lessen the tension in the book in the end? perhaps an epilogue would have satisfied the reader more), and we know how things turn out historically. The only real drama that was left was whether/how Laura and Jordan would end up together, and I wished that could have had a bit more focus.

Deorro

I love historical fiction, particularly when it's set during the American Civil War. Most recently I read and enjoyed 'Words in Silence' by T. Novan and Taylor Rickard. I was hoping this first novel by KI Thompson would be of the same caliber, and I was not disappointed. She shows great promise as an author and I'm glad to have this book in my collection.

It's the typical story of North versus South with a lot of imagination thrown in. First, there is Laura St. Clair - a young woman who is being marketed by her mother for marriage to the first lucky sop to propose. Although she knows it's her destiny, Laura avoids this like the plague. However, she believes strongly in the Southern way of life and sees nothing wrong with slavery. In fact, her father is called to work with Jefferson Davis just before Virginia secedes from the nation. Her brother Ransom leaves school to fight and is killed in his first battle.

Through her brother, she meets actress Jordan Colfax. Jordan is the sister of Ransom's best friend at school. The women are immediately turned off from each other - primarily due to their loyalties to North and South, but also because of their conservative versus liberal views. Laura has been convinced that actresses - a new commodity in this time period - are akin to harlots. She is determined not to sully the St. Clair family name with such an association, but is unable to define or deny her growing interest in Jordan. As they grow closer, the country is torn further apart. Jordan's secret occupation as a spy ultimately comes between them. The question is, is either woman willing to change?

Except for a few facts the author admits to 'adjusting,' the story seems to be historically accurate and is a good depiction of the time period. This is an emotionally-charged time period for the American people - for example, many still don't agree on the true causes of the war - so this unbiased and factual telling is welcome. Combine that with a tantalizing romance (although, not heavy in the 'physical' aspect) and you've got a must-read winner.

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