

Lady Alyssa Gray of Essex

Formerly of Lyon, France, Lady Alyssa Gray of Essex escaped a lifetime of poverty by running away to join a cancan act on Vaudeville at the age of 12 after the tragic death of her twin brother, Xavier. Although devastated by the loss, her enthusiastic and creative performances were soon discovered by the infamous Madame Labouche. Dancing under the stage name, Bon Bons, and managed by the Madame, Alyssa gained much notoriety and became a popular feature of the underground Parisian nightlife.

After several years, she finally saved enough money to buy herself the fare to London and a year's allowance to stay with her sixth cousin-twice-removed, Miss Juliet Spencer. A quick study, Alyssa soon learned the etiquette and style necessary to create a background of breeding and class. Reverting to her name of birth and wearing the most up-to-date in London fashions, she soon found herself invited to many of the balls of the most famous 17- London season. It was during that year that she was invited to winter in Bath much to the dismay of her cousin, who was not. It was in Bath that she met the Earl of Essex, James Gray the Fourth, who was there to regain his health after the untimely death of his wife, Anna. The Earl, thirty years her senior, and Alyssa became firm friends and married three years later after an uneventful courtship.

After a colourful childhood, Lady Gray now enjoys the peaceful seclusion of the estate she shares with her husband. Although the Earl is now confined to his wheelchair and spends much of his day in his gardens, Lady Gray finds their union most rewarding. Often away visiting friends, she has recently returned from the London Ball Season which she most enjoyed, having stayed in the apartments of her close personal friend, Lord Richard of Canterbury.

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