



# An Unconditional Freedom

*Alyssa Cole*

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## **An Unconditional Freedom** Alyssa Cole

Daniel Cumberland's uneventful life as a freed man in Massachusetts ended the night he was kidnapped and sold into slavery. To then have his freedom restored by the very man who stole his beloved's heart is almost too much to bear. When he's offered entry into the Loyal League, the covert organization of spies who helped free him, Daniel seizes the opportunity to help take down the Confederacy and vent the rage that consumes him.

When the Union Army occupies Janeta Sanchez's small Florida town, her family's goodwill and ties to Cuba fail to protect her father from being unjustly imprisoned for treason. To ensure her father's release, Janeta is made an offer she can't refuse: spy for the Confederacy. Driven by a desire for vengeance and the hope of saving her family, she agrees to infiltrate the Loyal League as a double agent.

Daniel is both aggravated and intrigued by the headstrong recruit. For the first time in months, he feels something other than anger, but a partner means being accountable, and Daniel's secret plan to settle a vendetta and strike a blow for the Union can be entrusted to no one. As Janeta and Daniel track Jefferson Davis on his tour of the South, their dual hidden missions are threatened by the ghosts of their pasts and a growing mutual attraction—that might be their only hope for the future.

## **An Unconditional Freedom Details**

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Author : Alyssa Cole

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# From Reader Review An Unconditional Freedom for online ebook

## Jen Davis says

Review to come.

*\*ARC provided by publisher*

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## Cristy Emmnm says

2019 Read Harder Challenge: An historical romance by an AOC

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2019 Reading Women Challenge: A romance or love story

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## Casey says

What I admire most about Alyssa Cole's Loyal League series is her effortless fusion of action, history, and romance. Each book has all the thrills of a spy novel (which each is), but Cole finds hope, vulnerability, and emotion in the inhumanity of the Civil War. Having read the two novels before this, I was surprised by the slow burn of Daniel and Janeta's connection. Having said that, I was also impressed by it. Cole spends a lot of time establishing Daniel's trauma as a free black man who is captured and sold into slavery as well as Janeta's conflict as a Cuban woman whose father freed and married her enslaved mother. These are complex, traumatized, flawed characters, and their growth throughout the novel felt natural and engaging. Cole is open about how difficult this novel was to write in the political environment of 2018, but the ultimate hope and heart displayed within these pages made it a brilliant book to end the year on.

I received an ARC from NetGalley/Kensington Books in exchange for my honest review.

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## Kelsie says

*An Unconditional Freedom* by Alyssa Cole is book three in The Loyal League series. Cole has re-exposed the ugly side of American history in these historical fiction novels. This series highlights the civil war and the efforts of individuals working to end the institution of slavery and restore a united nation. Though part of a series, this novel is a standalone. However, I do recommend reading the two previous books for connecting details and added depth. This book brings the story full circle.

Daniel Cumberland was born free but was captured and sold into slavery. He is eventually freed and joins the Loyal League, an organization seeking to realize victory for the Union, and thereby the end of slavery. Daniel is consumed with rage and is determined to reap vengeance upon the system that took his freedom and destroyed his soul.

Janeta Sanchez is of mixed heritage but was raised privileged on her father's sugar cane plantation in Cuba.

Her family relocates to Florida, where her father is imprisoned for crimes against the Union. In an effort to free her father, Janeta infiltrates the Loyal League to spy for the Confederacy. She is confused and disturbed by the truths she now faces with regard to the institution of slavery, perhaps she has been lied to by those closest to her.

Daniel and Janeta are partnered together in the Loyal League, though neither is happy about the pairing. A growing attraction complicates the relationship. Can they save themselves and their future, whether together or separately?

Once again, Cole has done her research and gives a realistic depiction of Civil War America. Real people and entities are featured, which makes the story more believable and compelling. The plot held my attention from start to finish.

*An Unconditional Freedom* lives up to the standard Cole set in the first two books and I rate it **5 out of 5** stars. I find this edition of the series reminiscent of Solomon Northup's novel, *Twelve Years a Slave*, recently released as a full-length film. I recommend this book and the entire series to fans of historical romance and American history buffs, especially those interested in the Civil War era.

My thanks to Kensington Books and NetGalley for the opportunity to read an advance copy of this book. However, the opinions expressed in this review are 100% mine and mine alone.

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### **Ashley says**

I want to know what kind of tribute Alyssa Cole had to pay to the book cover gods to get such attractive, plot accurate book covers for this series and her *Reluctant Royals* one. Seriously, romance novel covers are generally terrible and very inaccurate. But these are proof that it can be done! IT CAN BE DONE. THERE ARE NO EXCUSES.

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### **Sophia says**

*An Unconditional Freedom* brought me full circle with book one in this series by telling the story of the man who was rejected by *An Extraordinary Union*'s heroine. Each of these Loyal League stories bring history alive, send the reader into pulse-pounding intrigue and danger, and introduce characters and relationships that tug hard on the emotions. This latest has reached down deeper than any others in the series.

*An Unconditional Freedom* is book three in the Loyal League series. It could be read standalone because it is a separate story arc though there are obvious loose ties to the first two books, but it had a better impact on me by getting it in order.

In *An Unconditional Freedom*, we get the story of the man who once thought to earn his law degree and be a husband only to lose his free black status when kidnapped by slavers and sold making him see just how precarious all his assumptions about freedom really were. Daniel's life journey came at a high price. His work as a Loyal League detective helping his people gain their freedom is good, but it is only a vehicle driven by his deep fury and pain until he encounters a woman set on her own dark path.

Janeta Sanchez is a Cuban black woman who has lived in luxury as the daughter of the Cuban plantation owner who brings his family to his Florida villa. Janeta is naive and her dream to be desired leads her to loving and trusting the wrong man which she doesn't realize until she is in an untenable situation. Now, she must insinuate herself into the Loyal League, using her shared skin color to spy against them and eventually take them down to help her lover and her imprisoned father. Only, she encounters the stone cold eyes of her new partner and knows that gaining secrets from Daniel Cumberland will not be easy and the attempt may well get her killed.

In truth, I would describe this as a historical fiction mashed with romance. Yes, there is a slow burn love growing at the heart of this story and gets to a wonderful sensual and spicy scene, but for most of the tale it is about two people who were on very separate and distinct paths face personal hardship, demons, and a chance at growth and healing before they are ready for anything resembling love and romance.

I was riveted to the storyline as Daniel and Janeta are deeply involved in spy work and intrigue in a constantly volatile situation as they traverse the South during war time. As the previous books showed, the war is fought on many levels and many ways other than soldiers clashing against soldiers. There is a whole other secret war being fought behind the lines as well as some seek to gather intelligence or sabotage while others seek to incite riots and twist people to do their dirty work.

This story was told in a heightened state of danger and I read it in one sitting. My emotions were engaged and I appreciate how the author demonstrated good research and wrote a layered action and character-driven story. It was obvious that she threw her heart into this one and the readers will reap the reward of that.

Those who enjoy US Civil War era historicals, historical romance, and African American history should definitely pick up this book/series.

My thanks to Kensington via Net Galley for the opportunity to read this book in exchange for an honest review.

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## **Natalie says**

God, this book. I say without a doubt it is my fave of the three (i'm sorry Elle!). Daniel stole my heart. Being in his head was so gut wrenching. He feels he's broken. Daniel is a free black man who was then captured and enslaved, and works now as a detective for the Loyal League. so whew...being in his head is pretty hard at times but it's such a powerful read !

Also the heroine Janeta is a Cuban woman whose father freed and married her enslaved mother. Sooo all sorts of internal conflict there. i love them both. I wasn't sure how I'd feel about Janeta considering but of course Alyssa made me love her because she's so complex. They both are ! And they grow so much over the course of the book. In different ways. Janeta had a lot of growing up to do, and finding herself, after being repeatedly told she's not like them (them being the slaves in her father's employ) Even as she learnt once again to question her entire life!

Alyssa blends action, romance and hard truths to make for a stunning book. Truly.

I also loved the glimpse of the Daughters of the Tent and i'm gonna need a whole new series about them thanks! And my now 2nd fave (sorry again Elle) makes a cameo in this and i still love you Elle but Daniel

has just overtaken the number one spot.

Also the author's note at the end may have broken me all over again \*cries\*

and let me just say this. When we say we need ownvoices to tackle topics like this, this is what we mean. The nuance and hard truths within just couldn't have been done right or as impactful otherwise IMO!!

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## **Tqwana says**

This review originally appeared on 80 Books Blog

Romance takes a bit of a back seat in this final installment in Alyssa Cole's Loyal League series.

And that is not a bad thing. It is the slowest of slow burns, focused more on the individuals loving themselves while gradually falling for each other.

The hero and heroine, Daniel and Janeta, go on an intense journey of healing and self-discovery, which worked for me because I had such a hard time sympathizing with sheltered Janeta at first, knowing that her motives were initially harmful to Daniel and the 4L.

But, we should always trust Alyssa Cole. Trust her to know that someone with Daniel's trauma and PTSD needed time to heal before falling in love. And Janeta needed to come clean with him and herself before doing the same. She needed to come to terms with the ramifications of the way her mother raised her. By the end, I was her biggest fan.

So it was fitting that the ending is more happy for now, yet hopeful and optimistic. We never forget that this was one of America's darkest periods, and Daniel and Janeta are in the midst of a war that could end with them both in bondage or dead.

*\*I received this book from NetGalley in exchange for an honest review\**

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## **Frankie Reviews says**

I am ashamed to say it, but this is the first I have read by Ms Cole. Gasps in horror! Have I been living under a rock? Any-how, this is book three in the Loyal League series, I can happily say, this can easily be read as a stand-a-lone.

After being kidnapped and sold into slavery, Daniel is full of anger – not just at himself, but at those who have treated him so maliciously. He has lost the one woman he loved and when he is rescued he is determined to do what ever he can not only to fight against those who wronged him, but the whole confederacy and with it his hopes of proving himself to his love; Elle. Which is why he joins the League, well that is until he meets Janita who is facing her own personal trials. I really don't wish to say too much, as it has so much going on and some wonderfully poignant moments between them.

With it's multi-layered plot which features everything from slavery, spies, resistance and a thrilling romance, it has the makings of brilliant fast action film. It is thrilling, engaging and beautifully written. This isn't the easiest book to read, the subject matter is one which we see very little of in romance. Personally I think it should, after all this is history it happened, there is nothing we can do about the past, only learn from it to create a better future. Which is why stories such as this are so important and need to be read.

You get a real sense that the author has put her heart and soul into this story, overall a hard hitting, powerful story that will stay with the reader long after the last page.

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### **MusicalTati says**

Alyssa Cole has solidified her place as one of my favorite, auto-buy authors. This is the third installation of her *Loyal League* series and brings us to the story of Daniel Cumberland; an easter egg from the first 2 novels. One of the things that Cole does a great job of is taking what would be taboo along the lines of relationships and perceptions, and presenting them in a way that would be more receptive to the reader. The whole idea of the character of Janeta in this novel is wonderful! This story is written very well written and, while there are a couple of places where resolutions are reached without the characters working through them in the novel, I have full confidence that this will be amended in the finished copy of the novel for which I'm currently impatiently waiting. I was a tad bit disappointed with some of the quick resolutions seeing as I have been waiting for Daniel's story for months, BUT, I still enjoyed the story. The eARC would have been 4 stars if the resolutions were more thought out. But there is room for the 4th star with the final, published copy.

My video review is linked below for further insight.

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### **Adele Buck says**

I've read (and recommended many times) all three of Alyssa Cole's *Loyal League* series. Add this one to sit by its sisters on the recommended shelf. As with the other two books, there is a lot of nail-biting, heart-pounding suspense and action as Janeta and Daniel navigate both their own histories and the landscape of the Civil War.

Janeta and Daniel are both smart, complex people who evolve and grow in such a satisfying way. I was really not sure how they would get around certain obstacles (both internal and external) and was practically cheering by the end (especially with the return of a certain character from one of the other books - no spoilers).

I was given an Advance Reader's Copy in exchange for an honest review.

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### **Timitra says**

Rated 4.5 Stars

An Unconditional Freedom is in no way, shape or form an easy book to read. The opening scene of had me pissed to hell off, it only took a few minutes for me to go from zero to angry. It had nothing to do with the

writing which was great as always but everything to do with the subject matter. All the books in this series are difficult to read for that very reason. Although they're set in the past they're in a lot of ways mirror images of present day America and other parts of the world which makes for some very uncomfortable reading but in no way takes away from the fascinating stories this weaves.

These characters didn't have the easiest go of it as every part of their journey was wrought with danger, lies and deceit among so many other things. I loved that despite all of this love was able to sprout under the most inhospitable and unlikely conditions. As difficult as it was to read I loved it and highly recommend it.

ARC provided by publisher through Net Galley

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### **Christina (A Reader of Fictions) says**

There's little doubt that *An Unconditional Freedom* was written post-November 2016, though no doubt planned earlier. This romance novel is jam-packed with rage. It's a good book, but I will caution that, where the two prior books had a nice balance between romance and political/spying action, *An Unconditional Freedom* really does not focus on the romance aspect.

As ever, the political aspects are fascinating and nuanced. The heroine, Janeta, is half-Cuban, half-Black, the wealthy daughter of a Cuban slave owner who recently moved to Florida. There, she was seduced by a white man in the Sons of the Confederacy, and he convinced her to spy for the Confederates, which leads to her going undercover in the Loyal League and partnering with Daniel (aka Elle's bestie from book one). The first half of this book was so hard to read (not because it's bad but because oof) with Daniel's burning rage of vengeance and Janeta's determination to betray the Loyal League to the Confederates. It's a lot.

Janeta's character arc is a powerful one, though, as she sees more of the real world and comes to better understand her life now and in the past. Only now does she really understand that her mom was a slave and that she could easily have been one as well. She realizes that she may have had half-sisters who worked as slaves for her father. Janeta's a fascinating character, who starts out hateful but evolves into this amazing and powerful person, overcoming her upbringing and fighting for what's right.

I didn't find Daniel's journey quite as compelling, a journey from rage and vengeance to a more hopeful sort of attempt to affect change. It's a good one, but not necessarily as emotionally satisfying, even if it is the best course. Compared to Janeta, he had a very expected emotional evolution, and it did feel like he only changed because of love, which seemed a bit simple to me. The plot, too, felt very meandering and lacked the cinematic arc the first two books had.

Also, I didn't really understand the romantic connection between these two. They didn't seem to bond particularly well, and the secrets between them, though handled in an interesting way, do seem like they should have complicated things a bit more. All the books in this series leaned towards instalove to me, but this one most of all. Though ultimately that may have been that this book was so much more focused on the political aspects than the romance. It really didn't get a lot of time.

*An Unconditional Freedom* is a good book, but I struggled some reading it, largely because I went in expecting a historical romance and I feel this book falls more into historical fiction than romance.



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## OutlawPoet says

First kudos to Alyssa Cole for bringing us historical novels in which people of color don't just play supporting roles - they star in it! Janeta's background had some similarity to mine and it was so cool reading about a character who likely looked something like me! Cole has a huge fan base and, though this is my first experience with her books, I get it.

Now, I didn't give this one five stars. When I first started reading it (admittedly out of curiosity), I thought maybe I'd made a mistake. I didn't like the prologue and I really didn't like Daniel. He was kind of a...tool. I tried to ration that he was tool-like because of the whole kidnapped-and-sold-into-slavery thing, but no. He was a tool before that and a tool after that.

But when Janeta comes into the story, he shows heart, humor, and passion. I ended up loving him.

While the storytelling is kind of slavery-lite (this is more romance than historical, after all), the author did a pretty good job of imparting the historical aspect of slavery - for all kinds of brown people. While I occasionally longed for a bit more edge and the realistic horrors of slavery, I understood why she wrote it this way.

And I loved Janeta. I loved her passion and how she grew in the story. And hers is kind of an untold story in all the fiction that deals with this time period. Her background and upbringing were very different and I liked the perspective the author gave us.

I liked this. I think current readers of the series will likely love it.

I'm glad I gave this a try!

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## Geri Reads says

This wasn't an easy read. Heavy themes and such broken characters but it's so worth it. I would say this wasn't a romance though but historical fiction with strong romantic elements, which I think served the book really well.

Full review to come...

*ARC provided by Kensington Press*

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