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BOOKMONGER

## No good rhyme nor reason for this romance

Prolific Seattle romance writer Elizabeth Boyle is back with the newest installment in her latest series: "Six Impossible Things" is the sixth book in the Rhymes With Love cycle.

While some of the previous titles ("Along Came a Duke," "If Wishes Were Earls," "And the Miss Ran Away With the Rake") do reference familiar nursery rhymes, "Six Impossible Things" seems to stray from Mother Goose and instead borrows from Lewis Carroll. (Readers who remember "Alice Through the Looking Glass" will recall the White Queen's daily practice of believing "as many as six

impossible things before breakfast.")

Perhaps others will be clever enough to discern some connection between the title and the story. This reader could not, but, instead, was distracted by the notion that a Regency romance would make this reference to a book whose author was born considerably after the Regency era.

With that apparent mismatch already niggling at back of mind, it was difficult to settle into the story's early chapters, which do their own bit of jumping back and forth in time.

In this tale, Roselie Stratton is a young woman who debuted in London Society

four years earlier, yet still remains single. This would be considered a problem by most ladies of her era, but it is an advantage for Roselie, who leads a double life as an undercover operative for the Home Office.

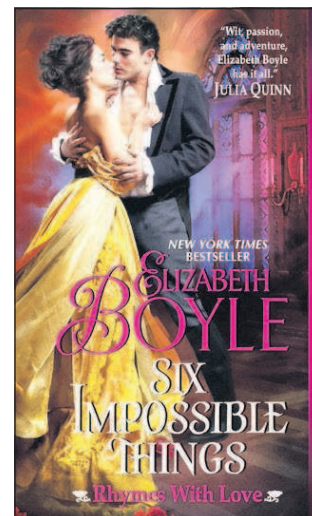
When she dons a wig and an attitude considerably more brazen than befits a lady of the ton, Roselie becomes Asteria, a spy who roams through some of London's seediest neighborhoods seeking evidence about turncoats who would betray England on Napoleon's behalf.

In spite of the dangers she confronts in this double life, the person Roselie is most concerned about is Baron Rimswell – Brody – a childhood friend who has

grown up to become a very dashing eligible bachelor. He also – unknown to most – is an agent for the Home Office.

As Asteria, Roselie has had some – ahem – unnervingly close encounters, shall we say, with Brody, but he has not yet figured out her true identity. She fears that if he does, he will want to forbid her from participating in any more of this dangerous but critically important work.

The first two-thirds of this book is a slog through proper tea parties and dances on the one hand, and louche bacchanals on the other. Roselie is involved in some skulduggery that is hard to follow, and whenever she and Brody encounter one an-



**Six Impossible Things**  
– Elizabeth Boyle  
Avon – 378 pp - \$7.99

The real action – and I'm talking about the plot here, not the sex – doesn't really gain momentum until the final third of the book, and then it becomes quite entertaining.

But in the meantime, you'll have to put up with a lot of pages that are ... repetitive. Tedious. Overdone.

*The Bookmonger is Barbara Lloyd McMichael, who writes this weekly column focusing on the books, authors and publishers of the Pacific Northwest. Contact her at [bkmonger@nwlinc.com](mailto:bkmonger@nwlinc.com)*

other sparks fly and, invariably, his mouth "crashe[s] down on hers."

For Roselie, having him so close leaves her feeling "... tangled. Furious. Delirious." Whereas from Brody's point of view, Roselie is ever "Toying with him. Tempting him. Pushing him."



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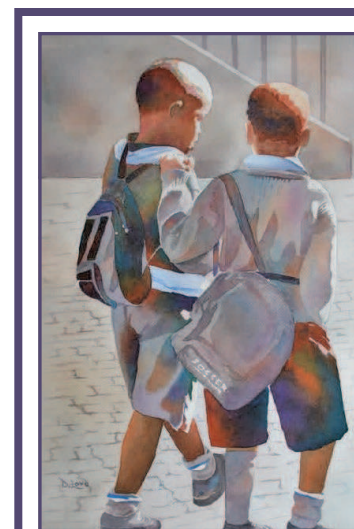
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