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ROMANCE

In both fact and fiction, the pursuit of the ideal romance is a rocky road, as Jane Bussmann and others describe



I was trapped in the wretched kingdom of Hollywood, a journalist dealing with Britney, Paris and their gatekeepers. I'd tell you about their behaviour, but several movie producers have already rejected it as 'too far-fetched'.

'Romance comes when you least expect it.' Crap. It's summoned with every fibre of your brain to fix your miserable life. I saw John Prendergast in a magazine: a maverick American hero who saved kids from war. He was on his way to Africa to bait a trap for Joseph Kony, a black-magic-practising warlord who'd kidnapped 20,000 children.

Suddenly it was obvious: to fix my life, all I had to do was follow John to the fairytale land of Uganda, home to Idi Amin, famine and the Ebola virus. I'd studied *Out of Africa*, and knew if you simply plant coffee you'll have Robert Redford shampooing your hair.

I think Streep could have warned me about the trustafarians. About the man selling his own wee. About the sarcastic remark that led me to standing in a freshly dug grave. About the night I had my laptop stolen, and the CID officer who, instead of helping me, asked me to find an agent for his novel, *The Burgles of Mortal Dignity*.

But romance is irresistible and the date took place, in an exotic hotel, in a foreign country – before another man stepped into the frame. I won't tell you what happened. Suffice it to say, it's the last time I try to uncover a war crime to impress someone.



The Worst Date Ever
by Jane Bussmann
PAPERBACK MACMILLAN
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Fine romances



Rumour Has It
by Jill Mansell
PAPERBACK HEADLINE REVIEW
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Jill Mansell strings out the tantalising 'will they, won't they?' question to delicious effect, after sparky Londoner Tilly accepts a job at a Cotswolds country house and struggles to resist dashing local lothario, Jack.



What Happens in London
by Julia Quinn
PAPERBACK PIATKUS £7.99 JULY
Just ten feet of 19th-century London air separate Lady Olivia Bevelstoke from

new neighbour Sir Harry Valentine, in this thrilling historical romance. Whispers of a murdered fiancée and espionage all conspire to make the heart race, as the pair begin spying on each other.