



A Rogue by Any Other Name

Sarah MacLean

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What a scoundrel wants, a scoundrel gets...

A decade ago, the Marquess of Bourne was cast from society with nothing but his title. Now a partner in London's most exclusive gaming hell, the cold, ruthless Bourne will do whatever it takes to regain his inheritance—including marrying perfect, proper Lady Penelope Marbury.

A broken engagement and years of disappointing courtships have left Penelope with little interest in a quiet, comfortable marriage, and a longing for something more. How lucky that her new husband has access to such unexplored pleasures.

Bourne may be a prince of London's underworld, but he vows to keep Penelope untouched by its wickedness—a challenge indeed as the lady discovers her own desires, and her willingness to wager anything for them... even her heart.

A Rogue by Any Other Name Details

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From Reader Review A Rogue by Any Other Name for online ebook

Susan Elizabeth Phillips says

The perfect place to start reading Sarah MacLean is with the first of her Rule of Scoundrels series. One of the very best of today's historical romance authors.

Yolanda says

#RetoÍntimo1

4,5

4ª vez que lo leo y....ME ENCANTA!!!!

#RetoRita

Es la 3ª vez que leo este libro y me dan ganas de leer toda la serie otra vez.

Me gusta mucho como escribe Sarah MacLean y los personajes que crea. Aquí tenemos a Bourne, que lleva 10 años viviendo para vengarse, duro, frío y al que no le importa nada con tal de llevar a cabo su venganza. Es un canalla de esos que me gustan, me encanta.

Penélope, qué delicia. A sus 28 años, considerada una solterona, sobrevive al escándalo de verse abandonada por su prometido (la conocimos en la serie Love by numbers). Con ganas de vivir aventuras, se ve envuelta, sin querer (o queriendo) en otro escándalo. Conoce a Bourne desde siempre y sus cartas a Michael son una delicia.

No es una historia de esas novedosas, fuera de clichés, pero la manera en la que Sarah MacLean las escribe, esa manera dulce, con diálogos entretenidos y protagonistas femeninas inteligentes y fuertes, me encanta. Me atrapan desde el primer momento.

Nos da a conocer a los protagonistas de los próximos libros de la serie. Es una serie que me encanta y que volveré a leer.

Khanh, first of her name, mother of bunnies says

After having read so many insipid, good, but uncomplicated Regency romances lately, this book was a breath of fresh air for me.

The Marquess of Bourne had a dissolute youth, and lost his family estate to of at through a game of cards, and decides to make it his mission in life to get his estate back as well as get revenge on the man who won it from him (Viscount Langford and his innocent son, Tommy). Frankly, I think that Langford did him a favor, since that was the kick in the ass that got him off his ass and doing something with his life. 10 years later, Bourne finds out that Langford lost the estate to his childhood friend, Lady Penelope's father, and the estate is tied to her dowry. Penelope has survived a scandal of being jilted by her fiancée, a duke, years ago, and her reputation has suffered since. Her father is determined to marry her off, and the addition of the Falconwell estate is designed to attract a bevy of suitors.

Bourne, determined as hell to get his estate back, all but kidnaps and compromises Penelope, and all but forces her to marry him. The marriage is off to a bad start, filled with negotiations and threats, more of a

business deal than anything resembling love. Penelope misses her childhood friend, who is now an unrecognizable shadow of himself, hell-bent on revenge and nothing else. They pretend to be in love in the eyes of the Ton, but the early days of marriage is fraught with Bourne ignoring her and his own heart, and a fair bit of misunderstanding.

Halfway through the book, to my delight, Bourne realizes he has been an asshole, and starts trying to make it up to her; Penelope is suspicious, a leopard doesn't change his stripes, after all. Their reconciliation is sweet, but Bourne's need for revenge consumes him and threatens to tear them apart.

I really liked this book, I liked the other members of the Fallen Angels Club, and look forward to reading their stories. I especially disliked Olivia, Penelope's sister, who is a frilly, fluffy, empty-headed girl, and hope she will get her own book later on when she matures.

Sarah MacLean says

I mean, if I don't like it, what hope do you have?!

Blacky *Romance Addict* says

“I am too imperfect for you,” he whispered at her temple.

“You are perfectly imperfect for me.”

I just... I love this book. I love the cover. I love the writing; every single sentence. I enjoyed reading it. I love the plot, oh yes, no better plot than revenge. I love the characters, both of them. But most of all; I love you Sarah MacLean Gimme more books like these

“You have my land, Penelope,” he whispered at her ear, the sound low and liquid and altogether too distracting even as it sent tremors of anxiety spiraling through her, “and I want it back.”

She shook her head, eyes closed as he wreaked havoc on her senses. “I can’t give it to you.” He stroked one hand down her arm in a long, lovely caress, taking her wrist in his firm, warm clasp. “No, but I can take it.”

The story

Michael, Marquess of Bourne, lost all he ever had one night in a game of cards. And that night his life made

a turn, toward one goal: Revenge.

Now a powerful man, co-owner of London's most famous gaming hell, he's prepared to do anything to accomplish his goal, even marry his childhood friend, Lady Penelope Marbury.

To up her chance in getting married, Penelope's father increased her dowry, with Michael's lost estate. She doesn't really want to get married, well, she does, but out of love. After learning about the dowry, she goes for a walk in the old estate, and comes across Michael. But soon her happiness evaporates when said man abducts her and decides to ruin her reputation enough so that she'd have no other choice but to marry him.

“You’re thinking again.”

She was. She was thinking he was magnificent. “I can’t help it.” She shook her head, reaching for him.

“Then I am not doing it correctly.”

Oh dear. If he kissed her any more correctly, her sanity would be threatened.

Bourne

I still like the name Michael better <3 Anyway, he was very young when he lost it all, and it was a very hard lesson in life. Having lost his parents too, he had no one to turn to, not for affection, not for support. Years later, he is a ruthless man, knows no compassion, and is willing to do absolutely anything to carry out his revenge. He compromises Penelope and marries her, swearing to give her anything she would ever want, aside from his affection. What troubles him the most is that he WANTS to give her his affection.

Ah I just loved him. Tortured hero, afraid to love, afraid to get close to anyone, thinking he'll corrupt anything he touches. My heart just broke for him. Even though, I wanted to hit him a few times, stubborn man!

But essentially, he had to choose; revenge or Penelope.

“The worst part is that if I don’t send you back, I’m going to want to keep you here.

And you’ll hate me for it.” He closed his eyes and whispered, “You deserve better.”

So much better than me.

“Michael,” she said softly, “there’s no one better. Not for me.”

“She was falling in love with the part of him that ice-skated, played charades, teased her with wordplay, and smiled at her as though she were the only woman in the world. She was falling in love with the kindness that lurked beneath his exterior.

And there was a part of her, dark and quiet, that was falling in love with the rest of him. She did not know how she could manage being in love with all of him. He was too much.”

Penelope

Having no choice but to marry Michael, she asks him to show her passion, excitement, life. Although he is nothing like the youth she once knew and loved, she still can't help but be intrigued by him. Attracted by him. And she wants more. More than just a marriage of convenience, she wants to be more to him than a means to an end. BUT, that's exactly what Michael doesn't want. And so he hurts her to keep her away. Boy my heart broke for her too. I understood them both, but the constant suffering, NOT a big fan but it was so worth it

And one more thing I adored; the letters! Oh those were so sweet, their correspondence when they were children, and later only on her side Just loved!

The ending! Simply PERFECT! The best way for the story and I'm so glad it turned out the way it did! I'd give the book 10 more stars just for that bit

This is my favorite quote, and it goes perfectly with the theme of the book (gambling)

“I can’t take small tastes of you, love. I can only gorge on you. You’re irresistible.” He pressed a kiss to her shoulder, his tongue coming out to lace the skin there. “You’re like the rattle of dice. The shuffle of cards. You call to me until I ache with desire for you.” The words were a whisper of breath at the base of her neck. “I could easily become addicted to you.”

To Sarah MacLean:

Susanne says

She realized how little she wanted a quiet life of pastel colors and quadrilles and tepid lemonade. She wanted more.

Happy sigh What a wonderful book! Sometime you stumble on these HR gems that makes you smile, gush and wish you lived in a different time. Sarah McLean is a wonderful author!

"Sirrah! Do not come any closer! I...", she flailed for a decent threat. "I am armed!"

His response was unmoved. "Do you plan to smother me with your muff?"

"You, sir, are not a gentleman."

"Ah. Truth at last."

I loved the writing and I loved the story! Set in 1831, we meet Penelope and Bourne. They were childhood friends but they have been estranged since Bourne lost everything in a card game ten years ago. He has rebuilt his wealth through a gaming hell and when his former lands are attached to Penelope's dowry he returns.

I loved Penelope! She is sound and she is funny. She takes the whole kidnapped to marriage in stride and I just adored her. Often the hero is the book, but in this one Penelope is just as important. She wants adventure.

Some books are too good for words! It is a marriage-of-convenience fake-betrothal friends-to-lovers story. And it is set in beautiful winter. I could feel the setting. **It is alive and colorful!** I loved the ice skating on the lake, the roasted chestnuts and the roulette. Every character is fabulous and I cannot wait for the next one!

Baba says

FULL REVIEW NOW POSTED

5+++ VERY SHINY STARS!

"I want to lay you down in the light of The Angel and make love to you."

Wow, wow, wow! What a fabulous read! *hugging my Kindle* Prepare yourself to be gushed upon.

From revenge to love. Michael intends to corrupt Penelope. He wants to turn her from light to dark, from good to bad. His goal is to totally ruin her. And it will feel so splendid. *A Rogue by Any Other Name* is such a great example why I love to read HR. *does the happy dance*

Despite my minor issues--a *jerk-ish* hero and his opinion of being not worthy enough for our lovable heroine and the ending that felt a bit corny and a heroine who was a bit too weepy for my liking--I totally **devoured** this book. Yeah, seconds and minutes passed. Hours...but it didn't matter. All that mattered was this book and these characters. I want more!

"Do you? Do you see how much I value you? Do you feel it? (...) "I adore you," he whispered. "I wish I could be the man you deserve." She lifted her own hand to capture his at her cheek. "Michael...you can be

that man."

Darn, Michael, you deserve Penelope! Just open your mind and your heart and look thoroughly.

London 1831

Michael wants Falconwell back. The land he had lost ten years ago while gambling and vowed to regain. At any cost--even if he had to marry an aging spinster. Their "first" encounter was very entertaining.

"Sirrah! Do not come any closer! I..." she flailed for a decent threat. "I am armed!"

His response was unmoved. "Do you plan to smother me with your muff?"

"You, sir, are not a gentleman."

"Ah. Truth at last."

She took another step back. "I am going home."

"I don't think so, Penelope."

Penelope was a means to an end--the path to Michael's revenge. Every time he touched her or showed her the slightest interest, it was for *his* benefit and *his* goals. Naturally, Penelope didn't want to be a part of his revenge though. Well, Michael is rather surprised to discover that this woman, this marriage means so much more to him. It scared him.

Yes, I love it! Yes, I totally dig the characters, the witty, richly-textured and wonderful dialogue and most of all...the love scenes...they left me gloriously breathless. My oh my, this woman knows how to write utterly sensual and erotic love scenes. *A Rogue by Any Other Name* displays **romance at its best**. I adored the kissing and touching. It was so well-written. Kudos, Ms. MacLean! Boy, I was consumed with excitement, with breathlessness while reading *A Rogue by Any Other Name*. Even though there are not a lot of love scenes, they were so well-placed. That said, they were there because the path of anticipation has been exhausted and I was on the brink of being combusted.

He wanted her that moment. Immediately. Without hesitation. So he lifted her in his arms and carried her up the stairs. Up to decadence. Up to pleasure.

Oh, yes, Michael's adventuresome beauty will discover how utterly sensual and erotic love-making can be. And even though Penelope is not a beauty in the common sense, we all know that beauty lies in the eye of the beholder. Michael believes that Penelope is a beauty and love makes you feel beautiful and cherished, after all.

The characters are splendid. Michael and Penelope are complex and very interesting. Penelope knows how to speak tartly and I relished her smart mouth. Michael. The jerk. Most of the time a jerk makes a good hero, and the dark and brooding Michael was a great hero. Furthermore, it didn't hurt at all that he was so handsome and he was perfect with his hands and mouth. I can't deny that his sexual prowess was fabulous and I loved his deadpan humor. Overall it was such a pleasure to witness their evolving relationship.

Guess what? The author portrayed many intriguing secondary characters in this book and I'm utterly convinced that Cross and Lady Philippa's story will be another winner when I was reading this:

"Well, since you came all the way here...how may I be of service, Lady Philippa?" She took a deep breath. Released it. "I require ruination. And I hear you are an expert in the subject."

I can't wait to read their story. Patience, Baba...

A Rogue by Any Other Name is a wonderfully penned and witty HR. I am so glad that I discovered another great HR author. I'm off reading *Nine Rules to Break When Romancing a Rake*.

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED!

Stacia (the 2010 club) says

I choose you. I choose love.

And the world says, "aww..."

I think my weeks-long book slump finally ended when I decided to go back and finish the second half of this. It's really too bad that I seem to have a roadblock every single time I try out a new Historical Romance author. No other genre works me over in such a way, to where I'm stuck in an exact idea of what I want to be reading (a.k.a. Kleypas type of wit), and if my ideals are not met right away, I tend to balk and kick my feet until someone slaps me on the back of the head and tells me to snap out of it.

Thankfully, I snapped out of it. After knocking back a couple of PNR's, I finally put my big girl pants on and buckled down to read *A Rogue by Any Other Name*. I'm so happy that I continued on! Once I got used to the author's style of writing, I was able to sink into the story. Even though wit was not very prominent in the execution, MacLean still delivered with a not-too-formal flow, which made my read even more palatable the further I progressed.

This really was an 'aww' type of tale. There's something about childhood friends-turned enemies-turned lovers which appeals to me. Chemistry is not easily developed in many stories, but I fell in love with this couple who conversed over the years of separation through letters. **And one day, those letters stopped.** A revenge plan set in motion started a path of ruin in what could have been a long and lovely friendship.

If there was one thing of which she was certain, it was that Bourne would never allow her to be hurt.

Unless, of course, he was doing the hurting.

But oh yes...the best passion can come from immense conflict.

"I'm going to make love to you on this fur. You're going to feel it against every inch of you, and the pleasure I give you will be more than you've ever imagined."

I'm sure that PETA will not approve of the above statement. Ah well.

Speaking of PETA, this phrase made me think of the phrase 'tastes like chicken.'

She tasted like innocence.

So of course, I can't just keep in the sweet romance frame of mind...oh no...my mind immediately goes to an image best used for a horror book.

Image hidden inside, click only if you dare!

(view spoiler)

But anyway...my mind goes to strange places. You all know that about me by now.

I ended up enjoying this for what it was - a lovely little historical romance. I'll be checking out book 2 in the near future.

KatLynne says

Sarah MacLean has become one of my favorite HR authors. I enjoy her writing style and I find myself highlighting nearly every three or four pages. It's like, "Oh my, I just love how she said that," and I have to stop and do the Kindle highlight thing:) I crave dialogue in my novels and this one doesn't disappoint! It is sexy, witty, poignant and refreshing! While there are a few places that could be referred to as "cheesy," it still worked for me and I loved it!

The young Michael, Marquess of Bourne, has lost EVERYTHING with the turn of a card! He'd been fleeced! He walks away with little more than his disgraced title. At the age of twenty one, Bourne's entire life becomes full of hatred and he vows revenge and restitution. For the next nine years, that is what fuels his every decision. He is now one of four partners in London's most exclusive Gaming Hells and is richer by far than most. Still, it is not enough. The only thing he wants more than his former home, Falconwell, is to destroy the one who took it from him.

Penelope Marbury was first introduced in the third installment of SM's *Love By Numbers Trilogy*. The scandal that led up to her father breaking her engagement to the Duke of Leighton has ruined her chances of a good match. Even though she is innocent of any wrongdoing, broken engagements were always blamed on the woman. Once considered the most darling of darlings of the ton, now, years later, she finds herself a spinster with a family desperate to see her wed. But Penelope wants MORE! This compassionate and smart young woman yearns to be wanted and loved. But it seems an impossible goal. Her father insists she must marry. Recently winning Falconwell in a card game, he places this property as part of her dowry, hoping this will attract more suitors.

And so begins the journey of Penny and Michael. They were childhood friends until the loss of his estates. She hasn't seen or heard from him since his defeat. Obtaining Falconwell is the only thing that gives him purpose and he doesn't care who gets hurt in the process. He ruthlessly pursues Penny ensuring their marriage. Penny quickly learns the boy she once knew is gone and doesn't recognize this hard and bitter man. And once again her choices are taken from her ...by a man.

Penny's life as well as most women of the day has been ruled by the demands and whims of men; first her father, then as Leighton's fiancé, and now Michael. Now, she is trapped by a man once again.

I liked this woman. She transforms into a beautiful, smart young lady who stands up for herself. She desires adventure and is no longer satisfied to settle for pastels! Michael, "wicked as sin and twice as handsome" has her heart yearning for so much more! And he soon finds himself no longer able to resist his desire for Penny.

"I am going to explore you...to discover your heat and softness, every bit of your decadence.""You

make my mouth water.” He loved the taste of her, a “drug of which he could never have enough.”

I loved this book - The sensual pull, the banter between these two, the laugh out loud moments, and the heartbreak of unrequited love and a heart that cannot get past feelings of unworthiness. And still, so, so much more than I've stated! Sarah MacLean had me so invested I didn't want to stop until the end! And with the teaser added for the next installment, I can hardly wait!

Jilly says

Back in ye old days, marriage was a business transaction - all about what would look good on paper. So, many of these Regency Era books have the formula of a marriage first, then a love story where the husband and wife fall in love. This is one of those tales.

and he was kind of a dick...

This is your typical bad boy tricks girl into marrying him, treats her like crap, she falls for him anyway, he realizes he loves her back stories. And, yet, it is cute, funny, and I find that I am a sucker for these kind of books.

Why do we fall for the "misunderstood" bad-boy who treats us like crap, girls? Why? Are we just gluttons for punishment?

stop hitting yourself

Or, is it perhaps that all of these romance novels give us a false idea that if we could change them, they would be the best husband/boyfriend ever?

Here's the thing, though. These books are fiction. Men don't really change. Sure, they can grow-up and become better husbands and fathers than their younger self would have been. But, if a guy is a raging asshole with major anger-management problems - he's going to stay a raging asshole with anger-management problems.

*ok, ok, **most** guys don't change!!*

And, that's my lesson for today.

Oh, and by the way, this book is cute and funny.

UniquelyMoi ~ BlithelyBookish says

A Rogue by Any Other Name is the first book in Sarah MacLean's *The Rules of Scoundrels* series and from the first page to the last is filled with emotion – happiness, heartbreak, passion, romance – a truly fabulous story!

I often find, with historical romances, that the rules society has placed on the women can make them seem mousey and pathetic, so I love it when an author takes those women and makes them strong enough to laugh at their peers – or at least not care enough to conform to what's expected of them. That always makes for some funny, sexy stories, and that's what Ms. MacLean has done with *A Rogue by Any Other Name*.

What a scoundrel wants, a scoundrel gets...

A decade ago, the Marquess of Bourne was cast from society with nothing but his title. Now a partner in London's most exclusive gaming hell, the cold, ruthless Bourne will do whatever it takes to regain his inheritance—including marrying perfect, proper Lady Penelope Marbury.

A broken engagement and years of disappointing courtships have left Penelope with little interest in a quiet, comfortable marriage, and a longing for something more. How lucky that her new husband has access to such unexplored pleasures.

Bourne may be a prince of London's underworld, but he vows to keep Penelope untouched by its wickedness—a challenge indeed as the lady discovers her own desires, and her willingness to wager anything for them... even her heart.

I thoroughly enjoyed the *Love By Numbers* series – in fact, I've often said that if I could choose to be any heroine from a historical romance novel, it would be Lady Calpurnia Hartwell from *Nine Rules to Break When Romancing A Rake*. She's strong, independent, feisty, funny... I'd be her in a heartbeat, but to be honest, I feel that way about most of Sarah MacLean's heroines. Rarely do I get as attached to the heroine of a story as I do to the hero, but with this author's books, I always do. But I digress....

Our hero, Michael, Marquess of Bourne, is horrible! He's not just an ass, he's a *pain in the ass!* And I adored every single bit of him! You just know that in the end, he's going to get his, and watching it come about is just so much fun! We go from him devising his plan for revenge, then watching him carry it out, knowing that he never considers - not even for a moment - that it won't go as flawlessly as he expected. Then we see, bit by bit, the transformation; the shock when he starts to question his motives, his feelings, his true wants and desires. I absolutely love watching this transformation!

Our heroine, Lady Penelope Marbury, truly is my kind of woman. As I said above, Sarah MacLean is one of the few authors who can write heroines who are as perfect as her heroes. Penelope is, in some ways, a victim of her times, but she doesn't let those suffocating rules of society keep her from having an "adventure". I LOVE this about her! She reminds me somewhat of Lady Calpurnia, and perhaps that's why I adore her so much. She didn't sit about whimpering or simpering as she did her needlework, waiting for something exciting to happen. Nope! She found ways to create her own excitement. I love how she took life by the horns and didn't let go!

And the story! Oh, my goodness! Take a rake – or in this case, a rogue – and give him a truly compelling, believable need for revenge, then toss in an innocent, but not naïve, heroine, and you have the makings of an incredible story, and that's what this one is. Twists, turns, heartache and happiness – never a dull moment and I adored every word!

The bottom line: It probably goes without saying, but I can't say it enough – I love this story! It was filled

with emotion and had me laughing, sighing and fanning myself, start to finish. Sarah MacLean is one of the few “auto-buy” authors on my list, and books like *A Rogue by Any Other Name* is why.

I am soooo looking forward to the next book in the series, *One Good Earl Deserves a Lover* and cannot wait to watch Penelope’s sister, Lady Philippa Marbury, match wits with the man known only as Cross, the bookkeeper of the The Fallen Angel gaming hell. That is a story guaranteed to deliver everything I crave in historical romance, and a story *not to be missed!*

Laura the Highland Hussy says

<http://www.demonloversbooksandmore.co...>

My very first thought as I started this book, perhaps two chapters in, was “The hero is such a bastard!” followed by, “Good. They always fall the hardest.” I wasn’t wrong.

Bourne is playing a game of cards with Viscount Langford, his best friend’s father, and his guardian, when he loses. Not just loses, but loses big. Bourne loses everything. Langford purposely goaded Bourne and pushed him into wagering his holdings. Langford’s reasoning was that he’d been the one tending the lands and properties, he didn’t want to give it up to the young Marquess after all his hard work. Langford got greedy. So he pushed Bourne. And Bourne lost.

With nothing more than a shilling and the clothes on his back, Bourne becomes a self-made businessman, and one of the owners of the gaming hell Fallen Angel. Bourne is now worth easily triple what he lost, but he wants his property, his history, his legacy back. He’s spent a decade trying to buy, cheat or steal it all back. Then it is finally within his grasp.

Penelope, fondly referred to in Eleven Scandals as “the Grape,” was ruined after Leighton let her break their engagement. Not in that way, oh no. Her reputation may be pristine, but no one wants the girl who couldn’t keep Leighton, the Duke of Disdain. It forced two of her sisters’ marriages and has cast a shameful pall over her other sisters. In an ironic twist of fate, her father gains Bourne’s old lands, and adds it to her dowry. Bourne goes after his lands, and if Penelope, is in his way, so be it.

the letters at the beginning of each chapter are surprisingly well done and achingly bittersweet. Penelope and Bourne were childhood friends, borderline sweethearts, and I think that is the main reason this romance worked so well for me. Each letter is a glimpse into their relationship, and into how much he’s changed, until he no longer responds to her, then finally she no longer sends them.

Bourne purposely compromises Penelope, flaunts it in front of her father to force the marriage, because all he wants is his property. But one thing Penelope makes him realize is that he has never looked beyond getting his land and ruining Langford. What happens once he’s reached that goal? Will he be happy?

My favorite part of this book is when Bourne decides to court his wife. It’s a scene where Penelope is going ice skating with her sisters, and Bourne...changes. I felt that was his critical moment, the moment where if he didn’t do something he would lose her, and that was unacceptable, no matter what he’d said before.

I love Sarah MacLean’s voice and the characters she’s created. I rather liked the jerk of a hero, even though he was ridiculously rude to the heroine. But Bourne is *supposed* to be an ass. It makes it that much sweeter

when he falls. When he falls for his wife, he doesn't know how to keep her, he knows only that he'll never let her go.

eARC courtesy of Avon via edelwiess

Mo says

"I'm going to corrupt you"

Again, I ask myself why do I only dip into Historicals a few times a year? This was a great book. Loved the heroine. Loved the hero. Love stories where he vows to himself that he will not be lured by a woman and fall in love.... But of course it does happen!

"You're like the rattle of dice. The shuffle of cards. You call to me until I ache with desire for you"

A decade ago, the Marquess of Bourne was cast from society with nothing but his title. Now a partner in London's most exclusive gaming hell, the cold, ruthless Bourne will do whatever it takes to regain his inheritance—including marrying perfect, proper Lady Penelope Marbury.

**"I am too imperfect for you," he whispered at her temple.
"You are perfectly imperfect for me."**

"First, I thought we'd already established that I am not a gentleman. That ship sailed long ago. And second, you'd be surprised what gentlemen do...and what ladies enjoy."

“He was struck dumb at the words though he should not be surprised; his wife kept him in a perpetual state of speechlessness.”

Ilona Andrews says

I promised I would let you know how *A Rogue By Any Other Name* went. I really enjoyed it.

In early eighteen hundreds, Michael Lawler, Marquess of Bourne, freshly in control of his family's estate at the ripe age of twenty one, is playing cards with his late father's friend, Viscount of Langford. Viscount of Langford is a trusted ally, father to Michael's best friend. Until recently Langford oversaw Michael's fortune and had just turned it over to him.

Michael trusts Langford and when the viscount deliberately goads him, Michael doesn't see the danger until he makes a wrong bet and loses everything. As the reality sinks in, Michael has that moment we all have had before - the instant when the childhood screeches to a halt and you realize that safety net is gone, adults are bastards, and your decisions have real consequences.

Losing the estate hurts, humiliation hurts, but betrayal sends Michael over the edge. He is forced to reinvent himself to survive. He cuts all ties with society, severs relationship with his childhood friends - after all his best friend's father is the one who took advantage of him - and he even gives up his name. From now on he is Bourne.

Fast-forward ten years. Bourne is one of the four partners in the most lucrative gaming hell of London. He rebuilt his fortune, but regaining his estate and getting his revenge so far eluded him. He learns that Langford has gambled away his estate. It's within Bourne reach. All he has to do to get it is to marry lady Penelope Marbury. The same Penelope who used to be his other best friend.

Lady Penelope Marbury is a tarnished flower in the eyes of society. A few years ago she had been betrothed to a duke, who abruptly ended their engagement in a dramatic fashion and instead married the woman he actually loved. This led to all sorts of speculation about what was wrong with Penelope and why couldn't she hold on to the Duke and nearly gave Penelope's mother an aneurism. Two of Penelope's four sisters hurriedly jumped on the first proposals they could get just to avoid being crippled by Penelope's misfortune. Penelope herself had received a few proposals over the years and she turned them down. Now she is firmly on the shelf. Her father, who recently came into possession of Bourne's estate, adds it to her dowry in a desperate hope to get her married off.

Penelope is smart. She is smart and independent, but above all she is patient and very sincere. She had caught a glimpse of what love was when her fiance abandoned her and she wants to experience it. She wants it so much, that she waits despite society's scorn and her mother's pressure. She wants it for her two remaining sisters as well.

Fate crashes Penelope and Michael into each other and he forces her into marriage.

This is a interesting book. First, the writing.

He stood in the darkness, silhouetted by the painted window overlooking the main room of London's most exclusive gaming hell. From the club floor, the window appeared as nothing but a stunning work of art—a massive piece of stained glass depicting the fall of Lucifer. In brilliant hues, the enormous angel—four times the size of the average man—tumbled toward the pit floor, cast into London's dark corners by Heaven's Army.

Isn't it elegant? I enjoyed reading it just for the language alone. But there is more.

Michael is an ass. He built an icy cage around himself and he wears it like armor. Anything that made him weak - like for example, having compassion or trusting people - is gone. He is hard, ruthless, and vicious. And now he is married to Penelope. Remember how I mentioned that Penelope is sincere? When Michael is being an ass, it hurts her feelings and she tells him and shows him that her feelings are hurt. That in turns makes Michael feel like an ass, and he doesn't like it.

I found the whole process hilarious, although it isn't deliberately written as humorous. I'm a mother to two teenagers. Teenagers, like toddlers, occasionally suffer from complete lack of empathy. So there are times when I have to be very open and say things like, "You really hurt my feelings. I'm mad at you and I don't want to talk to you right now." That's what Penelope ends up doing and watching Michael who sees himself as Bourne, uncompromising and merciless, struggle with it is amusing.

She thaws him out, piece by piece, and he resists it so hard, that even his friends and co-owners in the gaming hell rub his nose in the fact that he is screwed up. Michael does have a change of heart in the middle of the book.

I saw several reviews that mentioned that Michael's coldness was off-putting. Well, yes. It's meant to be off-putting. This is a redemption story, and he starts in a dark place. But he isn't a chic with a dick that we sometimes see in the historical fiction. He doesn't brood in his own head about how his father was unloving and the boys at Eton were mean to him and oh, if only there was a woman, with whom he could share his feelings for ten pages while crying, telling her how beautiful she is, and simultaneously praising her lady parts that taste like peaches. Bleh. I found Michael to be refreshing. He is a guy, he is an ass, and he has to work at being human.

Penelope was awesome. She had backbone and adventurous spirit, and she didn't put up with any of Michael's crap. It goes somewhat like this.

Michael: I am angry you did this. I'm furious.

Penelope: Whatever.

Michael: But, but, but...

Penelope: Remember how you hurt my feelings by doing this mean thing? There you go.

Michael: Well, well then, I will go to the gaming hell and be badass there.

Michael's friends at the gaming hell: What are you doing here? Don't you have a beautiful wife?

If you take into account that Michael is actually kind of scary and Penelope is really endearing, you can see how I found this book deeply funny.

In the end, Michael never turns into a girl, but he does love Penelope, completely and absolutely, and she deserves every bit of it. Like all books, this one has a few flaws, but I liked it. As always, your mileage may vary.

Sarah McLean's website: <http://macleanspace.com/romance/a-rog...>

Elizabeth (Liz) says

- The Story (taken from back-cover blurb) -

A decade ago, the Marquess of Bourne was cast from society with nothing but his title. Now a partner in London's most exclusive gaming hell, the cold, ruthless Bourne will do whatever it takes to regain his inheritance—including marrying perfect, proper Lady Penelope Marbury.

A broken engagement and years of disappointing courtships have left Penelope with little interest in a quiet, comfortable marriage, and a longing for something more. How lucky that her new husband has access to such unexplored pleasures.

Bourne may be a prince of London's underworld, but he vows to keep Penelope untouched by its wickedness—a challenge indeed as the lady discovers her own desires, and her willingness to wager anything for them . . . even her heart.

- My Thoughts -

Love, love, love this book! It's a good choice for those who enjoy a 'jerky hero', to borrow a phrase from GR pal Alyssa;-)

Bourne is dark, and working hard to be somewhat awesomely, unrepentantly villainous. He's my kind of hero, that's for sure:) Think Anne Stuart-lite (*very* lite, but, still...). Little does Bourne know that it will be impossible to keep his distance, physically and emotionally, from his lady wife. Ahhh, they ALL believe they can succeed at that, don't they? It's a be-a-u-tiful thing to watch them fail:)

Lady Penelope is 29, and 'on the shelf', as they say. However, she has never stopped thinking of and, maybe somewhat secretly, pining for her childhood friend, now the Marquess of Bourne. This one's a girl after my own heart! By God, she's tired of being proper and doing what her family demands of her. And, once she marries Bourne, all bets are off! She's going to have adventures and a life of her own regardless of what her husband thinks. Yet, still, with an innate kindness and strong sense of responsibility, she does this in her own quiet, charming way.

Bourne and Penelope are electric together! One can't help but enjoy them immensely!! This story has everything one could want: emotion, a reluctant hero, a kind but adventurous heroine, and some yummy,

steamy scenes! I am SO looking forward to the next book!! The men of The Fallen Angel are sexy and fascinating!

- My Favorite Quote -

"I'm going to corrupt you," he promised her skin, one hand sliding down the swell of her stomach, feeling the way the muscles there tensed and quivered at his touch. "I'm going to turn you from light to dark, from good to bad. I'm going to ruin you."

Don't be a major dolt like Bourne had an occasional tendency to be;) Grab this book, read, and ENJOY!

5 Big Stars!
