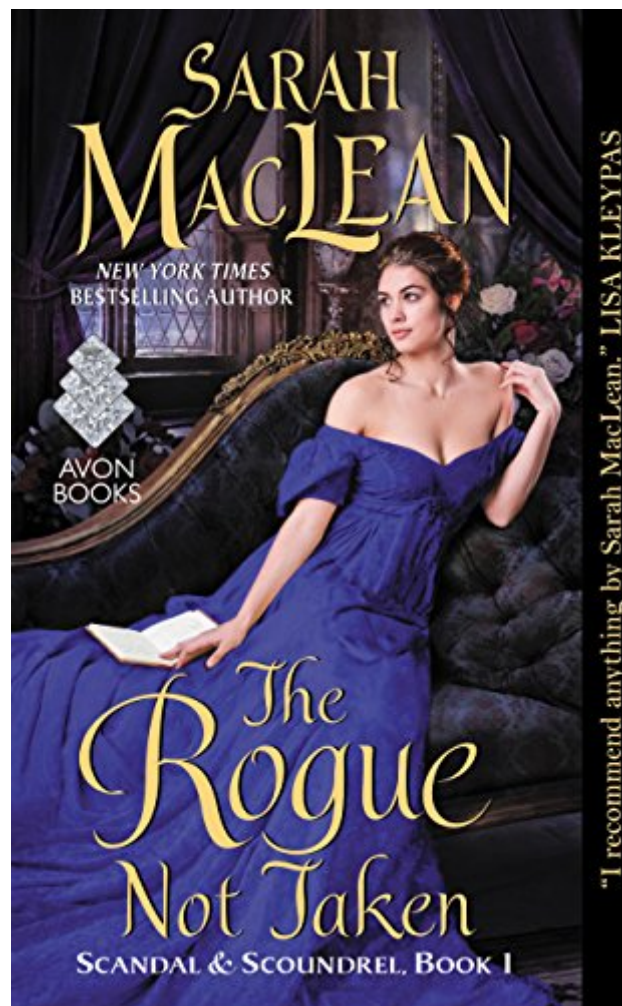




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The Rogue Not Taken: Scandal & Scoundrel, Book I



Synopsis

Lady Sophie's Society Splash When Sophie, the least interesting of the Talbot sisters, lands her philandering brother-in-law backside-first in a goldfish pond in front of all society, she becomes the target of very public aristocratic scorn. Her only choice is to flee London, vowing to start a new life far from the aristocracy. Unfortunately, the carriage in which she stows away isn't saving her from ruin . . . it's filled with it. Rogue's Reign of Ravishment! Kingscote, King, the Marquess of Eversley, has never met a woman he couldn't charm, resulting in a reputation far worse than the truth, a general sense that he's more pretty face than proper gentleman, and an irate summons home to the Scottish border. When King discovers stowaway Sophie, however, the journey becomes anything but boring. War? Or More? He thinks she's trying to trick him into marriage. She wouldn't have him if he were the last man on earth. But carriages bring close quarters, dark secrets, and unbearable temptation, making opposites altogether too attractive . . .

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Customer Reviews

The story that began with a splash - literally - would have continued swimmingly if the heroine hadn't lost her mind at the end of chapter two, and her courage at the end of chapter thirteen. But, even if her naivete at times bordered on self-destruction, she didn't deserve the kind of treatment she got from the hero. Instead of devotion, she should have given him a pair of stinkers to remember her by and went off in search of a guy, who deserved her affection more than this conceited, immature, and amoral numbskull. Put another way, the hero was a jerk of the first order. He repeatedly insulted the heroine: he mocked her opinions and morals, her appearance and intelligence, disparaged her family and her origins, all the while he lusted after her body. And when her harebrained stunt landed her in hot water, instead of offering his assistance - befitting the hero - he left her to fend for herself. Arguably, most, if not all, of the heroine's troubles could have been avoided if he'd acted like a gentleman ought to have done. If this weren't enough, when she was most vulnerable, he used her to further the conflict with his father and took every opportunity to seduce her, stopping short of the sexual act only because he didn't intend to marry her. I wasn't surprised he made a nasty scene and humiliated her when they finally went "all the way," got caught, and were forced to marry. But, I was disappointed she forgave him as quickly as she did when he realized his mistake and apologized. She should have made him grovel. I realize such an ending is realistic for the historical period - a wife had little recourse against an emotionally abusive husband - but it's not what I would call a happy or fitting conclusion for a romance novel.

Sophie Talbot is on an inadvertent adventure after dunking her brother-in-law in a fish pond. She chooses to hide as the Marquess of Eversley's (known as King) footman. King tries to get rid of Sophie, though not very hard as his protective nature seems to take over. I just finished the third book in the series, *The Day of the Duchess*, and realized that I hadn't read the first book so I grabbed a copy to get some back story for the protagonists in that book (The Duke of Haven is the brother-in-law who got dunked) and also because I love Sarah MacLean's writing. This was a good story though I didn't enjoy it as much as *The Day of the Duchess* which I loved. This was mostly due to Eversley; it was just spoiled and obnoxious throughout most of the book. I get he was traumatized by an event in his past, but he's a grown man. And while protective of Sophie, he was also very rude and mean to her for most of the book. The gambit that worked for Sera in landing Haven in the third book didn't work nearly as well here; I didn't buy Eversley's rage at being caught as I did Haven's. Still, it was a good book and I definitely recommend the series.

I loved every minute spent reading this book, and I've already bought the Kindle and Audible

versions of the next book. Sophie is my favorite main character in a long time. She is fiercely loyal, sure of who she is (and who she isn't), and willing to stand up for her beliefs. I loved her creativity, her bravery, and her caring soul. The love scenes were just right, in my opinion, though some readers might think they're too graphic. To those who prefer "clean reads", I say this story is worth reading anyway-you can always skip a paragraph(or page) or two. The story itself is worth the risk. This is a love story with a little sex to spice it up, rather than a sex story masquerading as romance. The Rogue Not Taken is full of emotion, but what made it truly special was the irreverent, cheeky humor woven throughout. I recommend this for anyone who loves a story filled with passion, damaged heroes, strong women, and a touch of humor.

For the beginning of her new series, Scandal and Scoundrels, Sarah MacLean started off with a bang. The novel is written in the style of scandal sheets, each chapter title styled as a headline (e.g. Sophie's Frock Found! Foul Play Feared!). As someone who can obsessively read over a copy of US Weekly from cover to cover, I found it charming. Our heroine, Sophie, is a member of the "Soiled S's", a family of young women who are upstarts and climbers in the aristocracy. However, wanting nothing to do with the world her sisters are so entranced by, Sophie tells society to, essentially, take a hike by shoving a duke into their hostess's prize fish pond. Desperate to escape, she hitches a ride on the back of the Marquess of Eversley's (AKA "King"'s) carriage. King is unwittingly drawn into the adventures that follow as Sophie seeks her freedom, from a mail coach being held up at gunpoint, to a pretend engagement. And along the way, he is forced to confront the demons that he has carried for years, and return to the home that holds so many haunting memories. Sophie is a strong, independent character, who is not afraid to say exactly what she thinks about King and his actions.... and he is certainly the same towards her. While King may not be the most witty, respectful, or charming hero I've ever read, he certainly has a sense of duty and is drawn to the light that Sophie brings into his life. He can be dark and even cruel at times, but there is growth in his character as the story progresses. When Sophie seems lost, King is the one who offers her an answer. In return, Sophie offers him redemption, a second chance at the life he never thought he'd have - and the real tension here, is will King be bold enough to see the truth that's right in front of him, and reach out to take it? Or will he let his past color everything in his present? Along their journey there are plenty of twists, some bordering on the ridiculous (I mean, how many things can happen to one couple in the span of a week?!?) - but they just add a sense of fun and whimsy to a story that could otherwise be too melodramatic. All in all, a good read and I'm excited to see what the second installment will bring.

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