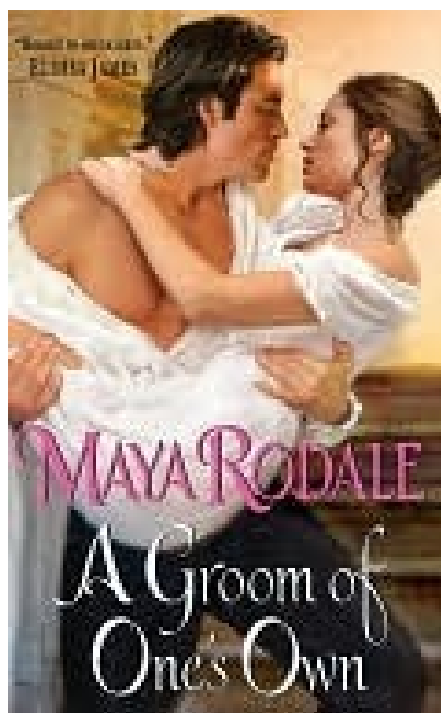




A Groom of One's Own

Maya Rodale

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A Groom of One's Own Maya Rodale

Miss Harlow's marriage in high life

London, 1823

A handsome duke. His beautiful soon-to-be duchess. A whirlwind courtship. It is this author's privilege to report on the event all of London is talking about: the upcoming wedding of the Duke of Hamilton and Brandon to the only daughter of the Duke of Richmond. Every detail of the "Wedding of the Year" will be reported in these pages as a London Weekly exclusive.

But I, Miss Sophie Harlow, must confess to a secret infatuation with this "double duke" that can only lead to trouble. It is impossible that this notoriously upstanding gentleman would ever jilt his bride for a scandalous female newspaper writer. And yet . . . the arrival of a foreign prince, the discovery of a shocking secret, and one passionate kiss could change everything. Will this perfect duke risk the scandal of the year to marry the woman his heart desires?

A Groom of One's Own Details

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Author : Maya Rodale

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From Reader Review A Groom of One's Own for online ebook

Caz says

I've given this a B for narration and a C- for content at AudioGals, so I'm leaving it at 3 stars here.

A Groom of One's Own is the first book in Ms Rodale's Writing Girls series in which each of the four heroines are just that – young women who write for a living, in this case, for London's favourite newssheet, the London Weekly.

Miss Sophie Harlow was devastated when her fiancé jilted her very publicly on their wedding day. To avoid the scorn and pity of the locals, Sophie took herself off to London to reside with her widowed friend, Lady Juliana Somerset, and secured herself a position at the Weekly. For a woman to embark on any profession at the time the book is set was a scandalous thing indeed, but the paper's editor is not averse to scandal – particularly when it boosts circulation!

Sophie enjoys her new life, for the most part. Apart from the bit where she has to spend most of her time watching other people getting happily married and reporting on the weddings for her weekly column, "Miss Sophie Harlow's Marriage in High Life".

Sophie has had little interest in romantic entanglements since her ill-fated not-wedding day, until she is meets a man one afternoon and finds all of her senses clamouring, "This One". The very handsome and charming Mr Brandon escorts her home and they part, Sophie full of hope that she will meet him again and they will live happily ever after.

Still occupied by thoughts of the man of her dreams, Sophie is assigned the task of covering what is sure to be "The Wedding of the Year" between the very upstanding, proper Duke of Hamilton and Brandon and Lady Clarissa Richmond, only daughter of the Duke and Duchess of Richmond.

Imagine Sophie's shock at discovering the true identity of her Mr Brandon. And at discovering that he's engaged to be married in less than a month.

(And imagine mine! :P)

The story that follows has considerable charm and humour, but I can't help feeling that there really wasn't enough material here to sustain a full-length novel. There are 46 Chapters (plus an epilogue), and by around chapter 30, I was wishing that things would just get a move on and wrap up already. Sophie wants Brandon. Brandon wants Sophie. He has a fiancée and, being the kind of dutiful, honourable, responsible man he is, insists that he has to go through with the marriage. He's also got a bit of a bee in his bonnet about having a calm, sensible wife who won't upset his equilibrium, or distract him from his important work running the country and his many estates; whereas Sophie is, as he frequently says, "trouble". The problem, however, is that trouble is hard to resist when it comes in as attractive a package as Miss Harlow.

You can read the rest of this review at AudioGals

♥?elody says

Reader experience:

Hmmm. What to say. I liked this...at times. This is my 3rd Rodale book, and while her stories/ideas are there her writing is very very rough. The POVs and characters are not fully developed, the world building is an afterthought and so flat. The POV shifts are hard to follow where sometimes you aren't even sure whose POV you are reading about. And the internal dialogue is confusing at times because you aren't sure if the characters are speaking in hypothetical or describing something that is actually happening in real time. And that annoyed me to no end. #petpeeve The number of times this happened while reading was countless. Everything just blurs and blends together. There seems to be a whole lot of telling rather than showing. The long winded repetitive inner monologues just dragged everything down especially in the second half with all the repetitive info dumping. How many times do I need to be reminded that the marriage contract has been signed? Or what good honorable gentlemen do? I mean... *enough*.

Similar to her other books, there were weird grammar choices and typos and use of modern language. I felt there wasn't much thought put into the world building and correct language for a Regency era. There was a very good attempt at it, but it came off very very forced and thin. I think a big part of that had to do with the limited range of expressions and words used. Dear Rodale: if you want to make the dialogue sound formal and somewhat historically accurate, there are plenty of other words besides 'upon' to describe action. The number of times the word *upon* is used in here is insane and most of the time very clunky. This kinda drove me crazy because it kept popping up everywhere and used so awkwardly. Also the dramatic dialogue almost straddles to juvenile and hammy in some areas. But the most distracting and annoying thing are the endless repetitive lists and giving titles to the most absurd & silly things. Ex: *The One, a Good Man, a Serious Discussion, a Civilized Gentleman, a Noble Sacrifice, Writing Girl Sophie* ...etc. so on and so on. What was the point of this? Add a dramatic flare? Not necessary. By far probably the weirdest writing quirk I've seen so far. It just didn't add anything or make sense in the context it's used.

I guess if it wasn't for the writing I would have enjoyed it more. No that's a lie. The bullheaded stubborn stiff-lipped hero Brandon got on my nerves too. This guy really needed to unclench and stop talking in circles. I found some of the reasons why nobody wanted to put an end to the 'Wedding of the Year' too much and could easily have been resolved. Brandon played dramatic martyr too much for my liking, at one point even saying his decision would effect his decision making in parliament and England will fall apart if he makes one selfish decision in following his heart.

Good grief. I liked him enough in the beginning and he has great chemistry with the heroine but he really tested my patience with how long it took him to actually accept and admit he is marrying the wrong girl and in love with Sophie. I needed him or at least his shy, dutiful fiance Clarissa to SPEAK UP and say something. I actually liked the triangle here and the difficult situation all parties involved deal with. Sure Sophie is falling for an unavailable guy but she took into consideration Clarissa's feelings or I should say non feelings so it didn't bother me. I saw some readers were conflicted over her actions/feelings given her own history with being cheated on and jilted, but in this case the hero's fiance has no feelings for the hero and falls in love with someone else herself and Clarissa is very aware of what's going on and doesn't seem to care and befriends Sophie in the process so I can't really be angry with Sophie. *shrug* But the endless sighing and 'oh isn't he the BEST' mooning did get to be too much but the MCs had chemistry, I just wish the intimate moments were shown more rather than told.

Denise says

Sophie Harlow, to her extreme mortification, embarrassment and hurt was jilted at the altar. This left her with little options so she sold her wedding dress and took off to join her friend Julianna in London. Here she gained employment with a newspaper which she writes a column about weddings taking place within London society. While at a wedding where one of the wedding party was left at the altar, Sophie panics and

blindly roams the streets. She is nearly run down by a carriage but was saved the last minute by a man. He walks her home and they instantly connect. She thinks he is a Mr Brandon, but he is actually a duke, a double duke at that.

She is asked to interview and follow the couple and family of this double Duke in what will be the wedding of the year.. the Dukes wedding. In the following month, we watch Sophie and Brandon fall in love while trying to deny their feelings and avoid at all costs scandal.

This was a very sweet entertaining read and I loved how honorable the Duke was and how hard he tried to do what was right.

Gemma says

Good writing, but I had a hard time liking the heroine in this one. From almost the first attraction she has for the hero (who is engaged to another women), she openly flirts with him (in front of his fiance, no less), and constantly thinks about how she wishes he'd jilt his fiance for her. She doesn't even seem to feel a twinge of guilt that such an action would humiliate the fiance, who was a nice person. Considering that a year before, the heroine had herself been jilted, you'd think she'd be reluctant for another innocent woman to have to experience that same humiliation. But she doesn't really seem to care. It's all about what she wants.

If the author had shown some more pangs of conscience on the part of the heroine, I would have liked this book better. Instead, her only sad thoughts were about how the hero would never elope with her because he's a duke and she's so far beneath him socially. Or how hurt she was when she herself was jilted, never considering that she wants the hero to do the exact same thing to someone else who doesn't deserve to be treated badly.

I gave this two stars because the writing itself was good. The dialogue was engaging, the words flowed, and the story grabbed my attention, so I might give this author another try.

W. says

This book started off well, but started to take a nosedive around the middle.

Ms. Sophie Harlow was jilted on her wedding day. Instead of taking things sitting down, she goes to London and become a well known columnist for a popular newspaper (how this happened was never quite explained. How Sophie met the other Writing Girls weren't really touched either). Sophie hates weddings, but now writes about the biggest society weddings for her column.

Henry, the Duke of Brandon and Hamilton, is a double duke engaged to Clarissa, Lady Richmond. He's honorable (not really, but more on that later), responsible, not impulsive, and always does what he's supposed to. He lost his father at a young age and has sworn off love forever. He wants to marry Clarissa because he could never love her (he also has a list of qualities he wants, which he brings up multiple times). When he and Sophie meets quite by accident, he becomes besotted with her but did not want to break things off with Clarissa because the marriage contract was ironclad, Sophie was a danger to his heart, and he feels some sort of Duty to Clarissa.

Clarissa, Lady Richmond, is the all too obedient fiance. She always does what her parents want and doesn't have the guts to do what she wants. While engaged to Brandon, she meets Lord Von Vennigan, the Prince of

Bavaria, with whom she falls in love and in the process, grows a spine.

Lord Von Vennigan loves Clarissa, but since the Duke won't release her (i.e. jilt her) he could only try to convince her to act.

Maya Rodale's writing was charming, but I gave this book a terrible rating because there were several major issues.

Issues with this book:

1. Sophie was jilted and suffered greatly because of it. Yet she barely even slows down pursuing Brandon once she realized he is engaged. Her excuse is that she love him, he does not love Clarissa, and that Brandon and her "love" is too great to pass up. (view spoiler) The entire time Sophie is a home-wrecker (sure, perhaps with a valid reason). However, the ramifications of being in such a position is not addressed. It's like as long as she's doing it because of love, everything's ok. She also has no sense of self-preservation or worth. Sure, lay down everything for love. But don't give everything to someone who doesn't appreciate it (which Brandon really doesn't - he pretty much says he doesn't want her love). Really, that's romantic?

2. Brandon is a coward. He thinks he's honorable, but really, he couldn't make up his mind about anything. On one hand he wants the obedient girl who would never be a danger to his heart. On the other hand, he doesn't want to not have Sophie. If he had decided upon meeting Sophie that he wanted to be with her (but had trouble getting out of the betrothal with Clarissa), that would have made him sympathetic. But nope, for 90% of the book, he is engaged to Clarissa, fully expecting to marry her, lusting after Sophie, playing tonsil hockey with Sophie, fighting with the man who loves Clarissa, all while saying love is for idiots. He was also like a kid with a toy. He wouldn't let Von Vennigan have Clarissa out of some twisted sense of possession and paternalism (she needs him and he has to protect her), but he gets jealous if Sophie so much as laugh with another man. Sure, men who are a little too good/honorable/stuffy can be sexy (i.e. Mr. Darcy), but nothing Brandon does in the book is honorable. As well, he becomes besotted with Sophie in a way that really seems like he's having cold feet, not as if he really loves her...

3. The Brandon/Sophie dynamic was bizarre. He has all the power in their relationship and the entire book was about him resolving his issues. Sophie spends the entire book pining, hoping he'll wake up and realize he's in love with her. Brandon doesn't want to love her, but keeps stringing her along. Neither of them were sympathetic characters.

4. The Brandon/Clarissa dynamic was even stranger. Both were in love with different people. Clarissa's motivations were very clear. She wouldn't cry off because a) she's grown up being super obedient b) her family has a whole bunch of debts Brandon's agreed to pay off c) her mother is scary as heck and d) she'd be ruined after. I still don't understand Brandon's motivations (something about being honorable and doing right by his fiance - although she wanted to marry someone else - and how that would affect her little sister's coming out). Gah.

5. The wedding at the end was a farce. Basically two (or three?) groups of people were planning on how to get Sophie/Brandon and Clarissa/Von Vennigan together. But of course, they don't talk to each other and everybody thinks they know what's best for someone else. Brandon blindly listens to Sophie, Sophie thinks she can hijack the wedding, Brandon's mother, who appeared like 4 times throughout the novel (very short appearances) suddenly was on Sophie's side...

The relationships, romantic or otherwise, in this novel are complete messes. Few people are sympathetic (especially not the main hero/heroine) and I keep thinking "why would they do that? How could they do that? What are they thinking?" I am not convinced Brandon and Sophie loved each other, but I'm glad they ended up together because it allowed Clarissa and Von Vennigan to be together.

The only silver lining is Clarissa. It starts off with her being a total doormat, but she grows and comes into her own. She isn't perfect, but she seemed the only main character who actually has good reason for her actions. Her dilemmas aren't trivial (unlike Brandon). In fact, I pretty much finished the book because I wanted to see her happy ending (at this point, I couldn't give a d*mn for Sophie and Brandon).

Read this if you want a silly heroine and an indecisive hero (or if you want to see a supporting character completely hijacking the story and outshining the hero and heroine).

Victoria Cavill says

1 utter-crap Stars...!

I rarely give a book one star. The number of books I have given one stars can be counted on one hand. But this book deserves not even this one. I was a decent enough fan of Ms. Rodale until I picked up this horrid book. God..! My eyes... My 3 hours of time... My delicate sensibilities have all been tainted by this one horribly crafted novel.

Caution : Lot of bitching will be entailed. People who have an aversion for negative reviews... Don't read further.

I don't even know where to begin from all the crappiness this book contained. There is a stupid, weak heroine, and coward fickle hero, one very overbearing Duchess, a shy wallflower, and a prince. This concoction is a definite recipe for disaster.

The author tries to portray the heroine as strong willed and independent, but she is nothing but a stupid little ninny.. !

The whole book her inner monologue goes like...

He loves me.

He loves me not.

Oh, I feel soo guilty...

Ah, but anyway it's true love...

I mean are you writing this book for senile romantics who have iq in single digits...?? We have a brain which we use... We don't like 300 pages of same repetitive conversation of "does he.. does he not?" Or "will he.. will he not?"

And then there is our hero. I frankly think the two dukedoms are utter waste on this guy. There are more manly, strong and not coward fictional Barons and Viscounts who can make him look like a monkey with a title. If I hear the word Honour and Duty one more time I'll go psychotic. I've never(not exaggerating) hated a hero before.. heroine maybe.. but not a hero.. but this guy a just a wuss, a sap, a dandy... He basically sucks.

If not for my rule to never leave a book unfinished I would have closed this one in the first 40 pages. And that's being generous.

It's actually an utter shame for an author with such a talented writing to choose such a boring stupid and worthless story.

It will take a lot of determined persuasion to pick up a Ms Rodale book again. You know what they say once bitten forever shy. And this one was a pain in my arse...!!!!

Usually I advise people to form their own opinions.... But I'll make an exception this time and say.. If you are not interested in a silly heroine and a coward hero and a perfectly stupid story... then don't waste your time on this one...

Sarah says

I'm having a hard time finding something I didn't like about this book, and for me, that is the best review I can give an author. You would think that a few hundred pages of angst and longing would get tiresome, but Ms. Rodale makes you as eager and torn as the four, yes four!, characters in this book. I believe the two things I loved the most was: 1) how, without actual physical contact, she managed to make the encounters between the duke and Sophie so incredibly erotic; & 2) how the thoughts and actions of the characters were exactly in line with their personalities. The duke's longing for Sophie is believable as is his decision to not act upon that longing. It's not a wishy-washy "I will, I won't that I've been seeing so much of lately. It seems as real as any major decision I've faced in my own life. And isn't that the true test of a book? Can you see these events happening in real life? Yes. Yes, I can. I can only hope that Charlotte and Lord Roxbury are featured in books of their own.

Lisa says

Miss Sophie Harlow got the shock of her life when she was jilted at the alter and it forces her to leave her home and head to London to find a job...which she does as a newspaper writer and is part of a quartet of women known as The Writer Girls. She writes a column about all the society weddings but she is always nervous as she waits for the bride, as she can not bear to see anyone else get jilted and when at one such wedding it is looking like a jilt is in process she flees from the ceremony and bumps into a most handsome man who escorts her home and whom she believes is just Mr. Brandon. Imagine her surprise when she is asked to cover the Wedding of the Year and she meets the groom...her Mr. Brandon who is actually a double duke, the Duke of Hamilton and Brandon and he is set to marry the perfect Lady Clarissa.

As Sophie and the ladies confer over numerous wedding arrangements, Brandon keeps making appearances and the heated glances between them are noticed by all. By his mother with some delight (who believes true love conquers all), by Clarissa's mother with horror (as the family desperately needs the infusion of cash that the marriage will secure) and some form of disinterest from Clarissa (as she is not truly in love with the duke). I wasn't quite sure how this story was going to play out, after all, I did not want Clarissa to end up jilted and alone but Clarissa gets her own prince charming and stands her ground with her overbearing mother.

This was my first Maya Rodale book and it was enjoyable. Her writing was fun and kept the story moving along nicely. There is no big misunderstanding and the focus on the two couples was done well...I just wanted to keep going and going to see how it was all going to end for our couples! I enjoyed how you could just feel the passion between Sophie and Brandon, and except for a few stolen kisses, not much happened until the end. It is truly a story of love growing from mutual attraction and laughter and companionship. Overall, a fun sweet read with a mad cap ending and I am looking forward to the other three writer girls stories! 3 1/2 stars

Heather K (dentist in my spare time) says

Price drop to \$1.99 at Amazon US and get the audio for only \$2.99 more!

Amanda says

I liked the concept of this story, but I thought it was confused and poorly written. There were too many characters' perspectives and the story wasn't focused on a single romance. In fact, I couldn't see why I should believe in the romance at all for either couple. There was precious little romance here. Besides that, the dialogue and characters' behavior were inappropriate for the setting, and there were a few times that the author seemed to forget whether she was writing in first person or third in the same sentence (starting with "I" and switching to "her", for example). Overall I found this book to be disappointing.

Wench says

Inspid heroine. Plenty of telling, not showing. Insta-lust, which I don't actually find a sin, as it's happened to me, but we aren't SHOWN it we're TOLD IT. REPEATEDLY. AND IF I READ ONE MORE TIME ABOUT HOW THE HEROINE WAS JILTED AND HER WEDDING WAS AWFUL BUT NOW IT IS HER JOB TO WRITE ABOUT WEDDINGS BOO HOO I WILL SET THIS BOOK ON FIRE.

Alexis says

A Groom of One's Own is the first of the *Writing Girls* series by Maya Rodale, a refreshing take on the regency romance genre. The heroines are women with jobs, which automatically makes them different from most regency romance heroines and provides a fresh outlook to the narrative. Instead of being scandalous, the Writing Girls are minor celebrities.

After being jilted by the country boy she was going to marry, Sophie Harlow moves to London with her best friend. She gets a job writing a weekly newspaper column that covers weddings, despite the extreme anxiety that plagues her at each one. When she receives the opportunity to report on the planning for the wedding of the year, she has no way of knowing that the groom is the one man who has caught her eye since moving to London, the Duke of Hamilton and Brandon.

Brandon is a double duke, which means he's got superpowers or something like that. He's kind of a stick-in-the-mud, and he's chosen a bride who won't distract him from the Immense Responsibilities of running his many estates, working in Parliament, etc etc. Clarissa is pretty and well-bred, and he's not attracted to her in the least. Therefore, she'll make a perfect duchess.

When Sophie shows up in Brandon's life, she's a monumental distraction. She makes him laugh, which is just so distracting. He can come up with lots of reasons why Sophie is totally unsuitable, and then more external reasons come up, but the fact of the matter is that he likes her, is insanely attracted to her, and even his mother thinks he should marry Sophie.

Add to all that an overbearing mother, a romantic Bavarian prince, and buried family secrets. With a healthy

dose of humor and playful language, *A Groom of One's Own* is a fun, light read with a sweet romance at its core. I'm not a huge fan of the love at first sight scenario, or the fact that the groom is engaged to someone else for most of the story (I don't like cheating), but I'm really excited to read the second book, *A Tale of Two Lovers*, which has a marriage of convenience between a widow and a reformed rake.

Victoria Vane says

Great Regency romance with a very spunky and persistent heroine, who has taken some hard knocks, but refuses to become embittered. The somewhat self-centered (but really aren't they all?) male protagonist comes to annoy me at times, when he plays with her feelings, but all is made right in the end.

Well-written with excellent pacing that keeps one turning the pages. 3.5 rounded up to 4.

Lover of Romance says

Sophie was once engaged, but her fiancée broke their engagement as she was walking down the aisle. So she ended up in London, as one of the four writing girls, who all write for London's Weekly, the city's most popular newspaper. Sophie's main focus is to work on weddings and report on them. She is then to report on the wedding of the year of the Duke of Brandon and the daughter of the Duke of Richmond. Normally Sophie would be thrilled with the opportunity, however she is half way in love with the Duke who is to be married in three weeks. Sophie doesn't know how she is suppose to separate her feelings from her job. Sophie is around Brandon more and more, and before she realizes it, she finds it hard not to give into the feelings about Brandon that tend to flare up the more she sees him. Brandon, has responsibilities, ever since his father died when he was eighteen, and even though his parents loved each other, he has known he could never have love for himself. He is engaged to the jewel of the ton, more beautiful than ever, and has all the qualities in a upstanding duchess. When he meets Sophie, his world gets turned upside down. He finds himself falling in love with a woman he can never have, his hands are tied, and as the wedding date draws closer, more than anything he wishes he didn't have his honor to uphold. This is the first chance I have had to read from this author, and I am so relieved that I liked this one. I did borrow from my public library all four of this series, so I crossed my fingers as I started to read. When reading the blurb I wasn't sure if I would enjoy the story line much, but after reading a couple of chapters, I was totally engrossed into the story, and I found it hard to put down much. There was such a strong feeling to this story, it was very provoking emotionally. It had me tied up in knots for most of the book. Its one of those forbidden love type stories, and up until the very last chapter I was curious how these two would end up together. Brandon is the honorable man type. He is not your usual rake type at all. He is very responsible and takes his duties seriously however he wants adventure in his life, knowing he will never have it. I found Brandon to be sexy and gorgeous and I love a honorable hero, but sometimes I felt like he was way too stubborn for his own good. He tended to be a bit over the top with it all. Sophie is the bluestocking type: independent, clever, but she also has vulnerabilities that made her seem more human and easier to relate with. I found the interactions between Brandon and Sophie to be wickedly fun and silly at times. There was also a side story of Brandon's fiancée with a prince that is new to town---lets just say I loved both couples immensely. There was something so sweet yet passionate about the two. Their love stories fiercely intense at times, and I almost felt like I needed a stress ball to squeeze, the story was so pulling at times. There were moments that had me laughing one moment, and curling my toes the next. I found the story to be well detailed and developed in a way that will win any one's romantic heart over. An ENTHRALLING and uniquely written read that will win you over in a heartbeat! You don't want to miss out on this treasure of a story! WELL DONE!!

Rachel (BAVR) says

Trying out a new romance author is very similar to trying a new hair style. Sometimes the cut works and sometimes it makes the world seem like it will come to an end. Fortunately for me, Maya Rodale ended up being a good decision.

A Groom of One's Own tells the story of once-jilted at the altar Miss Sophie Harlow. Humiliated, Sophie flees to London, where she somehow gets a respectable job writing a column about weddings for a newspaper. But Sophie hates weddings. Hers was such a disaster, and every time she attends one for her job, she ends up having a panic attack. If Sophie were alive today, there would be drugs for that. Unfortunately, this is a story and a Regency one at that, so Sophie has to suck up her distress and keep cranking out wedding articles. Poor dear. The hero of the story is the Duke of Hamilton and Brandon, who gave me constant flashbacks of 90210 episodes by insisting on being called Brandon. He's a respectable guy with a respectable family and a respectable fiancée who has an equally respectable aversion to romance. Hmmm ... I wonder what will happen when the lively Miss Harlow ends up covering the duke's wedding?

Rodale trods on dangerous territory with this book. I personally can't enjoy a book about unfaithful people. It makes it so difficult to cheer for their happiness. Fortunately, the characters are all very open about their feelings. It's a bit creepy how open they are, actually. Brandon's fiancée is very aware of his feelings for Sophie. He, in turn, is very open about his feelings for Sophie with Sophie. At times, I felt like these kids were stuck in some sort of Masochism Tango: Cravats and Pelisse Edition. Brandon is too honorable to ditch his prospective bride before the wedding day, but his relationship with Sophie is at times heart-wrenching in its sweetness. He's such a good guy that even when I wanted to smack his figurative head through the book for being a nimwit, I couldn't. Kudos to Rodale for creating an indecisive character who I didn't hate.

YE OLDE GOOD STUFF:

Sophie is a very fun character to read. She has a good sense of humor and tries to do the right thing. Granted, I felt like she was maybe a little too eager to hook up with a man she couldn't have. In that time, Sophie wouldn't have been accepted in the vaunted circles she frequented, and she likely wouldn't have had a chance to break up the wedding of the year. Fortunately, this was a romance novel, so happy ending trumps realism. (Thank God!)

Brandon, even though he suffers from Chronic Can't Love 'Cause It Makes Me FEEL Syndrome, is a refreshing take on a Regency hero. He isn't a rake (so overdone these days) and doesn't want to play fast-and-loose with the feelings of the women in his life. It takes a long time for him to even kiss Sophie, creating a generous heaping of sexual tension.

YE OLDE BAD STUFF:

Sophie writes for a newspaper. In eighteen-hundred-and-something-early. Female writers did exist back then (thank you, Jane Austen), but I really don't think that they enjoyed the measure of freedom that Sophie did. Single young women from good families (even seemingly invisible families stowed away in the country) simply didn't walk about London alone or work in an office with countless males. I'm not much of a stickler for historical accuracy in fiction, but it did bother me that Sophie's family kind of disappeared when she moved to London. Wouldn't they have been concerned about her? Why did she have to work to live? Was Sophie just too annoying for them to care?

Brandon's Chronic Can't Love 'Cause It Makes Me FEEL Syndrome gets annoying at times. (view spoiler) which is a really lame excuse. Other romance heroes have come up with much more creative reasons for

their stunted emotional behavior. Try harder, Brandon.

THE SEX:

Not too graphic. Rodale focuses more on the emotional connections between the characters than the physical. Don't get me wrong. There was definitely some sexin'. It just packed more of an emotional punch than an erotic one.
