



A Tale of Two Lovers

Maya Rodale

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He is notorious.

Lord Simon Roxbury is a godsend to gossip columnists everywhere. This notorious rake has recently been caught in an extremely compromising position by none other than *The London Weekly's* Lady of Distinction. Rumor also has it that Lord R received an ultimatum: be wed or be penniless.

She is scandalous.

As A Lady of Distinction, Lady Julianna Somerset typically reports on other people's scandals, but soon she finds herself embroiled in a very public battle with an irate Lord Roxbury—one that leaves her reputation in tatters and her position at *The Weekly* on the line.

Together they're... respectable?

With no other choice available, these two enemies unite in a marriage of convenience to rescue both their reputations and secure his fortune. With their rivals intent on revealing the charade, Lady Julianna and Lord Simon inevitably surrender to temptation. It may just be a love match after all...

A Tale of Two Lovers Details

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Author : Maya Rodale

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From Reader Review A Tale of Two Lovers for online ebook

Fangirl Musings says

Pages Survived: 290

This book is a great big ball of NOPE. Seriously, literally, and honestly, I'm a tad baffled at the utter oh-humanity-why failings Maya Rodale achieved in the entirety of A Tale Of Two Lovers. And, I can say, with absolute certainty, confidence, and "Bitch, I ain't lying!" this book was a bomb-face; when one is only 80 pages away from completing a book, and it's a Wall Banger, you can trust that it sucks.

So, here's the low-down; there's this chick, there's this dude, shenanigans and misunderstandings pop out all over themselves, they get married...and some other crap happens. That, in one very specific nutshell, is the entirety of the frakkin' plot. Abso-friggin-lutely, I'm not lying. I'm roughly sixty seven percent sure Rodale did zip-zap-zero outlining with this story, because if she had then she'd have quickly realized there is truly no driving element to the novel. Instead, Julianna and What's His Face are constantly thrown together like atoms in a large Hadron Collider, and stuff "subsequently" ensues.

If abhorrently terrible scene progression with no story drive isn't enough to prompt immediate throat-slitting via dead-tree-book paper cuts, then surely to Yoda's chin-hair the unbelievably dry-dead-dead-dead characters must be, they must! Julianna literally has zero personality, while So Unimpressive Hero I Can't Even Recall His Name-guy barely registered as sawdust. While I found Julianna to be weak as a character (her motivations are told, not shown, she has zero focus on other life activities outside her article, and she comes off as raw Salmon even in the presence of her supposed close friends!) in comparison to the Hero Dude, she's practically Heidi Fleiss or Mother Teresa. Male Lead never once demonstrates identity, personality, or even effing character expression!

Breathes Okay, sorry for that rant; I know it was painful. Alas, I digress; let's recap. No plot, bad characters...what else we got? Well, those issues are Mommy and Daddy, with their offspring quickly being bored, boredom, Boredom City, boring, and kill-me-now bore! The book's pacing moves like a decapitated snail recovering from an Opium addiction, but that's not even the worst part, oh no! The bad story progression, lackluster characters, and absent plot, I could handle...if the romance was hot. Alas, ladies and ladies...here exists a romance novel with no romance!

No, no, you read that correctly, rest assured; A Tale of Two Lovers should be retitled to A Meandering Collection Of Words With No Lovers. Julianna and Him were the most painfully awkward, painfully painful couple I've ever read about, and that's saying something since I'm a card-carrying Edward-Bella hater. Stalin and Hitler had a more passionate love-nest reality than these two leads. I never once felt a spark of intimacy,

a suggestion of interest, even a flare of "Hey, you with the face!" Julianna and her dude had no chemistry whatsoever of which to speak, and what supposed fire they did have, I wasn't buying. When Male Hero was all, "Hey, I love her!" by page 200-something, I was done; they knew virtually nothing about each other, and thus his realization was rushed, and without reason. I had to physically restrain myself from punching the words on page.

(You're telling me!)

Rachel (BAVR) says

A Tale of Two Lovers was a bit of a wall banger for me. Rodale's a good writer, so the prose flowed well and kept me invested in the story. Sadly, the main characters in this story are HORRIBLE PEOPLE (TM). I don't mind abrasive characters. I don't even mind characters with problematic personalities. But I do mind characters who intentionally inflict pain (physical or emotional) on others and never embark on a redemption arc. And on that note, meet our heroine, Julianna!

SUMMARY:

Julianna, Lady Somerset, is a widowed gossip columnist trying to break the next big story by besting her nemesis, The Man About Time, a gossip columnist from another paper. In order to do this, Julianna writes a damning story about notorious rake Lord Roxbury that ends up getting the man all but shunned by the Ton. In turn, Lord Roxbury ruins Julianna, and the two crazy kids are left with no other option than to marry (naturally). Is it a spoiler to say that they end up being meant for each other?

YE OLDE DELIGHTS:

Rodale's writing is the real star in this book. She kept me reading even when I was angry. The mystery surrounding The Man About Town was a fun diversion from the angst between the two main characters. I never guessed the identity of the man, and that's rare.

YE OLDE GARBAGE:

Julianna. Julianna, Julianna, Julianna, why doth thou hateth me so-eth? (view spoiler) What she did was horrible, and she never took responsibility for it. While Roxbury wasn't much better, at least he stopped being a nincompoop halfway through the book when he was "redeemed by love." (view spoiler)

I thought that the focus on the gossip columns would lead to some type of moral awakening - like, oh I don't know, gossip can be really MEAN and DAMAGING. But no. Julianna loves her work, which is nice, I guess ... if I considered dragging peoples' names through the mud for money NICE. I just couldn't relate. It especially irked me when (view spoiler)

I wanted to like the characters. I really did. They even grew on me a few times, almost redeemed themselves by being charming. But in the end, I felt like they didn't learn anything other than how to love each other. That's great and all, but how am I supposed to believe that their love will last when they have so little respect for other people?

Deniz says

3.5 Stars

Cute, very enjoyable, with a good dose of swoony & some great humor.
Just what I expected and felt for

Alissa says

Ok. So. I "finished" the book. I skipped ahead and read the ending just to say I had.

I liked the ending much better than the start.

Alexis says

Lord Simon Roxbury is a Rake with a capital R. The man loves women and can't see the point in settling down with just one, until his father issues him an ultimatum: marriage or poverty? His father's decree coincides with a piece of gossip that suddenly ruins all of his prospects...and makes him very, very desperate.

Lady Julianna Somerset fell for a rake, once. She married him, and he did her the favor of dying soon. Now she's an independent woman, and secretly one of the Writing Girls at *The London Weekly* newspaper. As "A Lady of Distinction," Julianna uses her status as a respectable widow to gather juicy bits of gossip for her column. As an infamous rake, Roxbury's exploits help sell papers. When Julianna hints that Lord Roxbury might actually prefer the company of men, the ton takes the rumor and runs with it, with hilarious results.

Roxbury and Julianna spend the first half of the story trading barbs, fighting their attraction for each other, and trying to avoid Julianna's nemesis, the other gossip columnist in London, "A Man About Town." With both of their reputations on the line, they do the only thing a widow and a rake can do in this situation: they enter into a marriage of convenience that will make both of them respectable again.

I really enjoyed *A Tale of Two Lovers*, the second installment in the "Writing Girls" series by Maya Rodale. There's plenty of witty banter between the MCs, and Rodale's characteristic clever wordplay. The romance is built up well, and it contains all of my favorite tropes: a marriage of convenience, a reformed rake, a savvy widow, and a lady in breeches. Quite a fun read.

Tammy Walton Grant says

My GR stats tell me I've read 27 books so far this year. Of those, I've given 5 stars to only 6 of them. *A Tale of Two Lovers* was one of those books.

Maya Rodale is a new-to-me author, but damned if she isn't going to become an autobuy. She is seriously good.

There are a number of really good reviews already on GR, so I'm not going to outline the plot (which was a novel spin on the gossipy ways of the *ton* and the strictures of 1820s England) or gush about the Hero (although he was extremely gush-worthy) or prattle on about the strength and wit of the heroine (what else can I say about a woman who shoots at drunken Hero when he won't quit singing dirty limericks outside of her house?).

I won't go into the pages of verbal sparring (which was fast-paced and entertaining), or how enjoyable it was to watch the Hero and heroine sharpening their wits on each other and falling in love in the process.

Did I mention the chemistry? It's not just their wits they are sharpening on each other -- they strike sparks from their first meeting. Delicious.

The author handles the switch from dislike and distrust to attraction, to passion, then love with a deft hand. I genuinely liked both characters. When they quit trying to ruin each other and started working together they were a force to be reckoned with.

This book is second in a series, but can be read as a stand alone - the characters from the first book appear here, but only peripherally.

A rollicking, entertaining battle of wits with just enough angst to add some depth, a little mystery to keep me guessing and enough steam to hold me in my chair for the better part of a Sunday.

5 stars -- and thanks to my GR friend Eastofoz for the recommendation!

Shannon Gallagher says

I absolutely loved everything about this book. Even the constant reminder of this rakish hero's past behavior. It was done in such a lighthearted manor that it didn't come off as swinish. I enjoyed his journey into love and the way he fought to prove it to his wife of convenience.

As an independent woman writer for the gossip columns, she's managed to ruin our hero's infamous reputation and he in turn ruins hers by serenading her home in the middle of the night, drunk as a wheelbarrow and singing bawdy songs.

They save each other's reputations. And then they save the institution of marriage by truly falling in love. I was completely charmed by them both.

Jacob Proffitt says

A romance where the main characters get married in the middle (instead of the end)?!? Tell me more, my friend. This is the second in a series and I highly recommend reading these in order. Not so much because you'll miss anything as that the first is a touch better book and will give you everything you need to know about how this author handles the near-Regency period.

This book is more of the same, and I mean that in a good way. Consistent, well-fleshed-out characters. A consistent, if not exactly historically accurate, setting. A good story. And a romance with characters who fit well with both their differences and similarities.

I do want to register one rant, however. Feel free to skip to the next paragraph. There is/was no such place as "Gentleman Jack's". The actual person was Gentleman Jackson and his establishment was Jackson's Saloon, so it's not like I didn't know what the author meant (and since that was the only boxing studio that serviced the gentry in that day, it pretty much has to be what Rodale was aiming for). Calling it Gentleman Jack's is just sloppy. Seriously, an editor should have picked up on this if the author didn't know any better. And who doesn't know you can look things like this up in Wikipedia?

Anyway, I liked Julianna and her tussles with Roxbury were highly entertaining. She has a rocky journey in this book and it was great fun to ride along.

A note about Steamy: I forget if there were two explicit scenes or just one. At any rate, I'd put the steam level at my personal "medium".

Eastofoz says

Strong heroine, alpha hero and they hate each other right off the bat because she's spreading a nice tidbit of gossip about him ---something I haven't seen yet in a straight up historical so I was VERY surprised at how well the scene that fuels the rumor was done.

Lady Julianna Somerset is a gossip columnist who was burned big time by her rake of a husband (now dead) so when she gets set to take down Lord Simon Roxbury (a charming love 'em and leave 'em rake and a nice piece of eye candy to boot) she's in for quite a ride. As for the hero, he'll do whatever he can to stop her. All along the way they trade quips, banter and some very good slicing/go for the jugular word play. It's not Loretta Chase's Lord of Scoundrels but it's on the outskirts which is a far cry from a lot of authors who try to do this theme and have both the h/h loving each other in a sickly sweet way after 30 pages. So yes it's well done.

The story is fast paced and written with a very British regency feel to it which is refreshing seeing as more and more authors forget about the tone of their book which takes away from the historical feel. There's some action too and a side story about another gossip columnist (a rival who happens to be man --maybe) but it never detracts from the love story. My only complaint is that the steam scenes were few and far between and very brief. I felt a bit short-charged what with all the tension building throughout but because that was well-done, and I really wanted to keep reading, it's still worth 4 stars.

Her writing reminds me a little of Suzanne Enoch and Olivia Parker --not quite as good but in the vicinity. Actually if you liked Olivia Parker's At the Bride Hunt Ball with the Bachelor theme you'll like this one because it reads like Gossip Girl all that was missing at the end of the column entries was the "xo xo, Gossip Girl" (lol!)

Rodale is a new author for me. I may just have to keep an eye on her ;-)

Caroline Linden says

A girl with a gun
A charming, singing scoundrel
One cracking good tale!

Jess the Romanceaholic says

This is a Quickie Review. For the full review, please visit The Romanceaholic.

Expected Release Date: Available Now!
Publisher: HarperCollins
Imprint: Avon
Author's Website: <http://www.mayarodale.com/>
My Source for This Book: Amazon.com
Part of a Series: Yes, Book 2, Writing Girl
Series Best Read In Order: Worked well as a standalone
Steam Level: Hot

This book wasn't quite what I expected, but in a good way. Simon is what I like to call, a man-ho. He loves women — their taste, their smell, the touch of their skin, and one thing that sets him apart from other rakes is that he doesn't make the mistake of thinking that women are all interchangeable. Instead, he enjoys falling in love. Over and over and over. For about a week or two at a time.

Julianna made the mistake of falling in love with a rake when she was 17, and even though he loved her as well, their love didn't last and he went back to his promiscuous and scandalous ways. When he was killed trying to manage his drink, a prostitute, and a carriage (all at the same time), Julianna was left almost penniless because her horrible husband left the majority of his estate to previous mistresses and the illegitimate children he'd fathered by them. Julianna has turned to writing as not only a way to make money, but also a way to earn her own self-respect.

This book had a lot of what I like to call "exterior angst", where things like societal opinions and familial ultimatums create most of the stress. There was Simon's fall from grace, the revenge scandal he visited upon Julianna, his reasons for marrying, and Julianna's employment issues which caused most of the trouble for these two, and yet in the end, the real issue was whether Simon could remain faithful, and whether Julianna could risk her heart with someone proven to be fickle.

Above all, though, this book was fun. The things repercussions of their ruined reputations aside, the banter and little revenge plots between Simon and Julianna were immensely entertaining, and I thoroughly enjoyed watching them fall for each other. I still wish there'd been an epilogue so that we could see that Simon was really and truly faithful to her, but even so, 4/5 Stars.

Kimberly says

1.5 stars

My review cross-posted from Joyfully Reviewed: <http://www.joyfullyreviewed.com/new-r...>

The rakish Lord Roxbury is a godsend to someone like Lady Julianna Somerset, gossip columnist for *The London Weekly*. And when Julianna spies Roxbury in a scandalous position with someone in men's clothing...well, she's sure she has the scoop of a lifetime! Only Roxbury doesn't quite see it that way and he doesn't take kindly to the lies the mysterious "Lady of Distinction" has written about him, particularly when his reputation is shredded and chances of marriage are ruined because of it. It's not long before Roxbury and Julianna's battle becomes public and all of London is agog. With both Julianna and Roxbury teetering on the ledge of complete ruination, there's only one solution: the scandalous pair will wed. It's supposed to be a marriage of convenience, but love and desire have a funny way of bringing together even the most reticent spouses.

Gossip and scandal pile up faster than a modern-day celebrity rumor-mill in *A Tale of Two Lovers*. Maya Rodale's unique Writing Girls falters in its second installment, dragged down, as it were, by an incredibly unlikeable heroine. For the first third of *A Tale of Two Lovers* I attempted to find something to like about Julianna. After that, I simply tried (and failed) not to hate her. Julianna wears emotional scars thanks to her first husband, a vice-ridden rake. Because of this, and her eagerness to beat another gossip columnist, (view spoiler) Were this in another story, Julianna would be a halfway-decent villain. I don't catalogue Julianna's faults to belabor the point, but rather to explain why I was so disappointed in *A Tale of Two Lovers*. Perhaps what irritated me about her will not bother other readers. Roxbury, on the other hand, is a perfectly likeable hero. He's amiable, sensual, and when he makes mistakes, he owns up to them. The only thing I didn't entirely understand was why he fell in love with Julianna.

Roxbury and the cast of secondary characters bring charm to *A Tale of Two Lovers*. It was nice to revisit Sophie and Brandon (of the first Writing Girls book, *A Groom of One's Own*), but what delighted me the most was the glimpses of the other two Writing Girls, Eliza and Annabelle, and the men I sincerely hope will be their heroes. Though *A Tale of Two Lovers* was not the story for me, I still liked Roxbury and the supporting characters enough that I am looking forward to Eliza and Annabelle's books.

Lisa says

Lady Julianna Somerset has worked hard after her husband's scandalous death to make her name proper and she has succeeded for the most part. Julianna reports on gossip and is the mysterious Lady of Distinction and one of her most reported on persons is the notorious rake, Lord Simon Roxsby. Just after Simon is dealt an ultimatum from his father, Julianna reports a bit of gossip that makes Simon's life much more difficult. In return to this nosy, attractive woman, Simon does something that makes Julianna the subject of untrue gossip and it puts her job in jeopardy. So what are two people surrounded by untrue gossip to do? The notorious rake and the scandalous lady wed in order to become respectable.

Watching the sparks fly between these two was quite fun! Even though Simon was a rake to top all rakes, once he meets Julianna she consumes his thoughts and there is no one else. Julianna is most hesitant about marriage to Simon as her first husband was a horrible rake and treated her shabbily and she does not think

her heart can stand another heartbreak like that. Oh but when Simon decides to seduce his wife, sigh...very sweet, fun (boxing!) and hot! There is a bit of a mystery involving a rival gossip columnist, The Man About Town, that adds a little action near the end and sets up the next lead, I believe, for the next book. Even though this is book two, following A Groom of One's Own, this could be read as a stand alone. Another enjoyable, easy, fun, sexy read from Maya Rodale. 4 stars

Eastofz says

Strong heroine, alpha hero and they hate each other right off the bat because she's spreading a nice tidbit of gossip about him ---something I haven't seen yet in a straight up historical so I was VERY surprised at how well the scene that fuels the rumor was done.

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Rondale is a new author for me. I may just have to keep an eye on her ;-)

Lisa - (Aussie Girl) says

Nicely written Regency novel with an enemies to lovers, redeeming the rake themes. Medium heat level. An enjoyable read.

3.5 - 4 stars
