



## Ruining Miss Wrotham

*Emily Larkin*

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*If he helps her, he'll ruin her...*

Eleanor Wrotham has sworn off overbearing men, but she needs a man's help—and the man who steps forward is as domineering as he is dangerous: the notorious Mordecai Black.

The illegitimate son of an earl, Mordecai is infamous for his skill with women. His affairs are legendary—but few people realize that Mordecai has rules, and one of them is: Never ruin a woman.

But if Mordecai helps Miss Wrotham, she *will* be ruined.

## Ruining Miss Wrotham Details

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## From Reader Review Ruining Miss Wrotham for online ebook

### Laura (Kyahgirl) says

4.5/5; 5 stars; A

That was just lovely. I really enjoyed this romance that is a combination of a quest, a road romance, and a little bit of fantasy. The characters, especially Mordecai Black, really drew me. The author managed to make me feel a great deal of empathy for him. I also liked Nell and her unconventional approach to getting what she wanted.

One of things about this book that I liked was that there was nice balance between character development and plot development and the author didn't shy away from the darker aspects of the story which only served to sweeten the mix.

I was lucky enough to receive a copy of this book for review from the author and for that I am grateful. I would recommend this to any of my reading friends who like historical romance.

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### Courtney says

This book was recommended to me in an email from netgalley. I followed the link in the email thinking it would take me to the book's page and let me learn more about it, but instead it provided me with a free copy in exchange for an honest review. And, since it was by an author I had not read and was the 5th book in a series, I really and truly forgot about it for a while. MY MISTAKE!!!!

I really and truly enjoyed this book. I loved getting to know Nell and Mordecai! It has been a while since I've found a hero to be so swoon worthy, but oh, my, I just loved him. He was very modern in that he could be domineering and alpha, but would apologize for it, or at least explain why he was being so forceful with his opinions. He had a dark and broody past, but yearned for love, companionship, and family. I loved how he knew, almost from the start, that Nell was the woman for him and that he was devoted and faithful to her, even when she was engaged elsewhere and their future was uncertain. His loyalty, his honor, his going above and beyond to help Nell find her sister...Not to mention what he carries in his coat pocket! Well, what can I say...SWOON.

Then there's Nell. She's obviously devoted to her sister, but has been dealt a raw hand by her family. I appreciated her need and drive to find her sister, to put her remaining family ahead of her own needs or wants. I love how she had to grow into her romantic feelings, while holding back the panic about her sister, and also balancing out her fairie godmother storyline. She has a good head on her shoulders and doesn't make any real cringe worthy decisions - aside from turning down Mordecai!

As for the book in general, it much like a missing person, road trip sort of historical romance with everyone trying to avoid scandal with the Ton. But, there is a paranormal element, as well, making it a lovely mix-up of the two romance genres. I adored meeting the other women in Nell's family and learning about their gifts and can only hope that the rest of the series focuses on them. The pacing is excellent, the writing is top notch, and, while this book work as a stand alone novel, I can't wait to read the rest of the series!

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### **Georgie says**

Ah yes, I remember why I like HR. Because every now and again, there's a hero like Mordecai Black, 6'5" of gorgeous, competent, kind Beta-in-Alpha's-clothing. And a low-key well-managed plot with a wounded, sensible heroine like Nell Wrotham.

I've enjoyed all the Baleful Fairy Godmother books, particularly this one, but largely in spite of the coming-of-age magic gift the BFG brings to each heroine, rather than because of it. The gift seems to operate more as a plot device to create conflict / resolve a situation, rather than as part of an inherently magical universe. I get that it's the McGuffin, but when Emily Larkin writes as well as she does, and creates such persuasively sympathetic MCs, the magic's almost surplus to requirements.

Nevertheless, this was really delightful, and I'm still smiling wistfully. Were it not for Mr G (whom obviously I adore with a masterless passion), I'd be wishing for a BFG to bring me my very own Mordecai.

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### **WhiskeyintheJar/Kyraryker says**

Armed with only a four month old letter, Eleanor is trying to find her runaway younger sister. In a cloud of ruin because her younger sister ran off with a soldier, her ex-fiance won't even help her.

Armed with a special license, Mordecai is trying to chase down Eleanor. When he finds her, she'll begrudgingly take his help in finding her sister but she won't marry him.

On a road trip fraught with fire, fairy godmothers, and danger, Mordecai and Eleanor are on a journey that will hopefully last a lifetime.

Fifth in the Baleful Godmother series, I would suggest you start at the beginning. The fairy godmother part is not really explained and the way it is offhand mentioned, without me a new reader knowing what it was about, made it feel very odd. I think since the story is solidly set in a "normal" universe, the supernatural small part felt like a square peg in a round hole. For the majority of the story, I know Eleanor gets a wish on her twenty-third birthday but not until towards the end do I get the explanation for why; I assume the first book in the series would clear this up. Without knowledge, explanation, or depth to this supernatural part, when it was mentioned or appeared, it felt very awkward.

***He'd call Eleanor Wrotham's bluff and seduce her into marriage.***

This is a road romance but even though our heroine and hero are having adventures, the story focuses pretty solidly on them. Mordecai came off as a very sturdy fellow and I know he really liked/loved Eleanor, I feel like I missed the falling in love. The beginning of this did make me feel like I missed the beginning introduction to these characters (maybe in a previous book?) and even though Mordecai relays a story to Eleanor telling her why he first took notice of her, I never felt like I actively saw or journeyed along with him as he fell in love. To me, Eleanor danced around the too stupid to live line. She was the "I won't marry you because you could be ostracized!" which was definitely a valid fear but her circumstances and later feelings made her continued refusal seem extremely overplayed story roadblock. Unlike with the hero, I could see why and how Eleanor started to fall for Mordecai, that growth was clearly there. However, I'm not sure I personally connected with this couple.

In what is probably a personal dislike, I wasn't a big fan of Eleanor's bright spotlighted innocence. I know women at this time would not have a lot of opportunities to gain knowledge about sex or anatomy but the "teaching" by Mordecai to Eleanor with the almost dictionary and thesaurus approach made her feel too much like a little kid to me. While their sex scenes didn't quite feel clinical, the way they played out took out a lot of the passion for me. I'm also not one to complain when other men or other women are mentioned but the listing of Mordecai's mistresses and his explaining of their relationship felt a bit pointless and stretched out. Mordecai and Eleanor do talk a lot, which is great, I just felt that most of their conversations didn't fully add to the emotional narrative so much as feel long winded.

Looking at all the other reviews I'm definitely in the minority, sometimes a story doesn't personally jive and I can tell a lot had to do with the author's style of connecting Eleanor and Mordecai and probably not reading the other books in the series. At the end, I did feel more of a connection between the two but the deeper feelings felt rushed. I'll probably go back to the first book in the series and give that one try; hopefully getting the foundation for the supernatural part will help.

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∅???? [Punya Reviews...] says

**My review contains spoilers and they're mostly my thoughts... for more, visit Punya Reviews...**

I had been eagerly awaiting the 5th installment of Emily Larkin's historical romance series, Baleful Godmother, titled Ruining Miss Wrotham for the past couple of months, and it was well worth the wait. For me, this has to be the best installment of this series! I had this feeling of profound happiness when it ended, that even with wanting to read a few more chapters, I was content with how it all played out.

The Baleful Godmother is a Regency-set series based on female characters who have special "gifts" or powers. But if you want to start from the *very* beginning, you can with The Fey Quartet. These are a set of novellas listed as "prologue" to this series. Set in Medieval-era England, the prologues explain exactly how our unique heroines come to inherit their "gifts".

Books 1 and 2, Unmasking Miss Appleby and Resisting Miss Merryweather had something common in them apart from Baletongue, our dubious Fairy Godmother. Heroines of both of these books, Charlotte and Anne AKA Merry (respectively), were bestowed their gifts at the age of 25, which I thought was THE age they were supposed to have their wish fulfilled and 2. They were cousins so the stories were linked that way. However, the h of book 3 Trusting Miss Trentham, Letty, has had her wish fulfilled at 21. "Why" is explained in this installment as the h, Eleanor or Nelly, had her wish fulfilled at 23. The women, who were originally granted a wish each, were sisters, and our heroines simply descended from a different sister each, hence the age of their wish fulfillment differs from one another. Though Charlotte and Merry were cousins, Letty wasn't even known to them at all. Same goes for Eleanor. Therein lies the uniqueness of this series, you never know to which direction the author is going to lead you. An element of surprise is always there.

Charlotte had no idea about her gift because she was orphaned at an early age, so Baletongue took her by complete surprise. She was living quite miserably with her mean uncle's family and this gave her the opportunity to get out of there and earn money on her own. She chose shapeshifting and transformed herself into a man to get the lucrative job offered by Marcus, Lord Cosgrove, our H, in a newspaper advert. Merry,

on the other hand, wasn't introduced in book 1 but she was already aware of her Fey inheritance. She knew she'd be visited by Baletongue but was ever unsure of what to choose. She was also an orphan by the time her story began so she was living with Charlotte and Marcus when she met Sir Barnaby Ware, who is also Marcus's closest buddy. Well, at that time, they had a falling out but book 2 helps mend that bridge bit by bit. His visit also brings Merry and Barnaby together. Something closer to a tragedy later in the story prompts Merry to choose the gift of healing to save people's lives. By the time book 3 begins, both girls were happily married and expecting.

Letty had her own inheritance, yet she had a really bad luck in the marriage mart. Her 'plain' looks wouldn't have been a barrier for any fortune-hunter eager to snare her fortune. But she'd already had her wish fulfilled by then, so she could hear lies from truth and none of those idiots even had a chance with their sweet nothings full of lies. Letty's gift or 'quirk', as others thought of it, was quite known to her circle and that's how Icarus Reid, a former soldier, found her. He was bent on revenge, a mission of life and death for him, and he needed Letty's help in locating a traitor.

Icarus and Letty's lovestory would've been a tragedy because Icarus had PTSD of the worst kind. He was depressed, determined to end his life once his mission was completed. It was Letty's gentle, sometimes not so gentle, coaxing brought him back to the land of the living. It started simply from the fact Letty wanted him to eat well as Icarus already looked like a dead man; pale, gaunt, haunted. I should've found her high-handedness as irritating as Icarus found it in the beginning. However, I knew she had a heart full of goodness and she ached for him. It took Icarus some time to get to that part, when he knew without his Letty he wouldn't have a chance of survival. No one would've cared the way she had. I loved, LOVED their book and couldn't wait for the next one!

I'd like to note that Merry, Barnaby and Marcus do make an appearance here and finally, Letty got to know that she's not the only one with the same dubious godmother! How fun, right?

Book 4, *Claiming Mister Kemp*, is actually a novella between two characters who appeared in book 3. According to the author, she had no plans of writing Lucas and Tom's book but she fell in love with them and wanted to tell their story. I couldn't agree more. I'm not an M/M romance girl but this one was a sweet story between two men who had wanted each-other for long, but because of the taboo surrounding gay men, they couldn't acknowledge their feelings. It also takes place quite simultaneously around Letty and Icarus's book so if you're not into M/M romances, you can skip it. But IMO, you should give this one a chance.

Now, Eleanor was never introduced to any other installment, and though I found Mordecai's name a bit familiar, I don't think he was introduced before either. Yet the author did an excellent job of not only introducing two new characters, but also making us fall in love with them as they fell in love with each-other.

Mordecai Black is the bastard of the Earl of Dereham but had been acknowledged and loved by his father. But that didn't make his life any easier. Mordecai hadn't had a lovely childhood, thanks to his absentminded, drunkard mother who named him Bamber. Yeah seriously! Bamber Pew (Pew was her own surname). I will not discuss that part of his life farther because I was rather... uh, taken aback by that name of his. No wonder he chose a different name for himself! :/

Mordecai grew up to be a tall and strong man with a dangerous vibe around him. It had to be his formidable height of 6'5", his strong body and dark goodlooks. Oh and he also had made quite the reputation with the ladies, so there was nothing 'Bamber' about him for sure. :P He's one of those characters that the Ton didn't wanna acknowledge but they had to and the ladies still tittered and sighed over his looks and his aura, not to

mention his prowess in the boudoir. He was a hard man to ignore, in more ways than one. ;) However, looks can be deceiving as we find pretty much in the beginning of the story. Mordecai had been rather obsessed with honorable Miss Eleanor Wrotham since he'd set his eyes on her in a ball. I mean it was one of those meetings where you are struck by that one person in a way that you can never forget them. Miss Wrotham was, of course, a debutante, hence a virgin, and pretty much out of his league; also blissfully unaware of his budding devotion to her. But Mordecai wasn't going to let anything dampen his intentions towards her.

Practically speaking, knowing Eleanor's narrow-minded, snooty father, Mordecai knew he's got no chance. And he hadn't. His offer for her hand has been summarily rejected; his letters to her were never even acknowledged. Her father made sure he knew all these, calling him all sorts of names, with how he isn't even fit to lick their boots-type narratives. But what hurt Mordecai more was when Eleanor accepted the hand of his own cousin, the heir to the Dereham earldom, Roger. The same Roger who couldn't stand the sight of him, yet there has never been a bigger POS that ever existed. He abused women and Mordecai had more than once saved the maids from his home by hiring them back in his estates. Hell he even bought a ramshackle estate just so he can employ them. He had money, no doubt about it, his father made sure he lived like an Earl's son even if he can't ever be the rightful heir. Roger was an a\$\$ and Mordecai was duly worried about Eleanor. But what could he do about it?

Fortunately for him, and unfortunately for her, in a few months Eleanor's younger sister Sophia ran away with a soldier. Roger was quick to break off the engagement and wash his hands off of her. Typical! Her father was quick to denounce Sophia, who was his favorite of the two before that. Eleanor was mad at her too, for ruining her chance at marriage, for ruining her own reputation. Mordecai, though sad for her, saw that little light of hope. Then, when, her father finally cocked up his toes and left her life in shambles, Mordecai was even more hopeful about acquiring Miss Wrotham's hand in marriage. Eleanor, again, was blissfully unaware of any of the above.

Mordecai was even now trying to locate her. He heard she's been trying to find Sophia and left her home, alone, which worried him more than anything. Since he was more than determined to win her hand, Mordecai made sure he had a special license ready for the occasion. Now all he has to do is to find her, and help her find Sophia. Maybe then he can make her notice him. Maybe then she will consider becoming his wife.

But what Mordecai didn't know that Eleanor has noticed him, more than once in fact and it's not because they've danced in a few balls and soirees. He was what the Ton gossip was all about; the scandals, the hot tid-bids. How could she not notice him?! She too, saw his physical appeal much like any other woman of the Ton. She may carry on aloof and haughty, Eleanor was made of flesh and blood and he made her feel butterflies in the stomach. It was something so new for her, something she never felt for Roger even once. Eleanor knew of his reputation well enough, as her father always made sure she knew whom to stay the hell away from and Mordecai Black was number 1 on that list. But that didn't deter her from drooling over him when she thought no one was looking. :D

Thankfully, her father is not here to say anything and Mordecai Black offered help to find Sophia where her ex-fiancé blithely refused any help. Sophia, her young, pretty half-sister, was pregnant and abandoned, alone somewhere and needed her help. Thanks to her father's infuriating butler, Sophia's letter reached Eleanor quite a few months late, so she was desperate. Black's offer came as a surprise but no less welcomed. She didn't care for her own tattered reputation any longer, even if it meant traveling with Mordecai Black for the next couple of days. Even if it means she will feel all out of breath and shaky just having him so near. All that matters now is to find Sophia as soon as possible!

Their journey to various places in and around London was such a joy to read! Mordecai was not afraid to propose to her and that caught her, and me, both by surprise. Eleanor couldn't even believe what she was hearing! No one thought Black was the marrying kind and yet, here he is, offering for her hand quite seriously. However, being burned by men more than once Eleanor wasn't so ready to jump in, even if she desired Black more than any man she'd ever met. She didn't care for reputations and the more days passed, he proved that any gossip about him was only that, gossips. He was kind, very thoughtful... his only flaw being a bit, uh, overbearing where she was concerned. At first, it put Eleanor off quite a bit. But soon enough, because of different incidents, she realized he was only trying to protect her. He did everything out of worry, that he had no intentions of controlling her in any way.

And Mordecai Black would propose to her every single day without fail for 2 weeks, and she'd say 'no' every single time, even though by the last week, her resolve was failing. The more she got to know him, the more it became harder to reject him knowing it must hurt. But strong she must remain, and so Eleanor decides she's going to distract Mordecai by proposing something rather risqué. Knowing him, she knew he'd never ever do anything to ruin her. It was well-known that Mordecai went by that motto about not ruining any woman. If only she knew Mordecai had other plans to dissolve her resolve, in his own way. After all, if it's done with marriage in mind, it's not wrong, is it? All he knew that he didn't want to lose Eleanor. He was certain their attraction was mutual, and knew from where her insecurities stem. Mordecai had a plan alright and he was about to put it in motion to win Eleanor over. ;)

Mordecai never forced anything on Eleanor. Hell, me who hates any talks of previous mistresses, wasn't that bothered by his talks of his past mistresses. He even had a number and it wasn't that big! Eleanor was duly curious. She was a smart girl after all and wanted to know more about him. She soon figured out Mordecai was nothing like a seasoned womanizer, that he's actually a romantic at heart! Someone who can still blush, having that type of oddly adorable innocence around him. I don't even know how to explain it but I loved him! If only you could read his mind! He wanted Eleanor SO MUCH, hoping she'll accept his offer. And those marriage proposals— so stalwart, so hopeful; all 9 of them knowing she's going to refuse. WOW! I fell for him right there.

The magic part of the story inevitably arrives with Baletongue, and at a time when Eleanor seriously needed some magic in her life. It does caught Mordecai by surprise and you could guess that he wasn't happy about the whole thing. But with the intervention of Marcus, Letty and Icarus, Mordecai finally tried to grasp at the fact that magic do exist. :)

If you wanna read about a H so crazy about the h, I mean you just know they belong together, then this is the book for you! There was no pretense, no games, no unwanted drama or any dragging, boring moment in Ruining Miss Wrotham. In the end, I was SO HAPPY for them that all I had was a loopy grin on my face. Beautiful, and without a doubt, 5 stars!

PS: If you see any mention of one Arabella Knightley (clever, very clever!), you can learn more about her in *My Lady Thief* (formerly titled *The Unmasking of a Lady*) which I highly recommend. However, this book is in no way connected to this series.

**ARC received from the author, thanks Ms. Larkin!**

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**Mei says**

The hero of this story was the most fantastic one in this whole series!

Mordecai, such an unusual name for a hero... better suited for a villain...

I simply loved him! He's an illegitimate son of a nobleman and while his father acknowledged him and left to him everything not entitled with the Earldom, the Ton depicts him as a worst sort of rake and womanizer. And he doesn't do anything to disabuse them.

As our heroine, Eleanor will discover, he's exactly the opposite!

He's the only one who would help her find her sister who ran away with a soldier and disappeared somewhere in London. When Eleanor receives her letter asking help, she discovers that everybody around her have deceived her, since her sister's letter is months old and any trace left now cold.

So, while Eleanor makes some very disturbing things about people she thought gentle, honest and noble, she also discovers that that same people put their own even deeds on Mordecai's shoulders!

Obviously, Eleanor is due to receive her Godmother's gift and already knows what she wants: the ability to find people and things to help her find her sister and her friend's fiance first and then help all the other people who need someone or something found.

But things don't go as Eleanor would wish and, when the Godmother appears she chooses something completely different in order to save Mordecai's and other people's lives.

I adored Mordecai and his apparent aloofness. I loved how he was willing to explain everything to Eleanor, even if it didn't show him in the best light!

I also wanted to slap him for his domineering attitude, but I appreciated how Eleanor was able to bring him down a peg! LOL

A well worth story! I'll be looking forward to the next one!

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## Caz says

### **I've given this an A- at AAR, so that's 4.5 stars rounded up**

This fifth instalment in Emily Larkin's ***Baleful Godmother*** series is a charming and beautifully romantic road-trip story that pairs up a most unlikely couple. As she has demonstrated in all the books in this series, Ms. Larkin is a fabulous storyteller with the ability to create memorable, likeable characters and inject new life into well-used tropes by sprinkling in a bit of magic and whimsy while firmly grounding her story in the familiar – to historical romance fans at least – world of early nineteenth century England. **Ruining Miss Wrotham** is laced with gentle humour, sensuality and tenderness as we watch our heroine discover surprising truths about herself, her wants and her desires, while struggling with her growing feelings for a man she should have no feelings for at all.

Miss Eleanor Wrotham is counting the days until her twenty-third birthday, because then she will be able to choose a magical gift from Baletongue, the malevolent and pitiless faerie godmother who is bound to deliver

a supernatural power to the females of her family line as the result of an ages-old curse. Eleanor knows what she will chose; the ability to locate missing people, and with only a few days to go, is impatient for the faerie's visit so she can use her gift to find her younger sister, Sophia, who eloped with her lover some months earlier and has now gone missing. But when Eleanor receives a months-old note telling her that Sophia is in London – in Seven Dials – she wants to go to her immediately, regardless of the fact that it's one of the most dangerous areas in the city. She asks her former fiancé – who jilted her once he learned of her sister's disgrace – for help, but he refuses and as she is storming out of his house, bumps into the last man on earth she would have considered helpful or trustworthy, the deliciously handsome but highly disreputable Mordecai Black, bastard son of the late Earl of Dereham.

It's apparent from the first page that there is a lot more to Black than meets the eye – and given he's a hulking six-foot-five, there's a lot of him to meet! – and that he's in love with Eleanor and has been for some time. He tries to dissuade her from going to look for her sister by offering to find her himself, but Eleanor will have none of it, and he has no alternative but to allow her to go with him. Ms. Larkin paints a vivid picture of the dank, rubbish-strewn streets of the stews of London, and creates a strong atmosphere of menace as the couple ventures into a part of the city into which only those with no alternative – or no idea of self-preservation – would ever go. They find the place where Sophia was when she sent the note, but learn that she left with a friend some time ago, most likely to travel to Exeter and the home of someone who helps fallen women.

For a young, unmarried lady to travel alone is scandalous and dangerous, but Eleanor doesn't care and wants to set out for Exeter immediately. Her meagre funds mean she must travel by stagecoach, but Black will not hear of it and insists upon escorting her himself. He also insists on procuring her a disguise in order to protect her reputation, even though Eleanor maintains that the fact of her sister's elopement has already ruined her good name and she has no reputation left to protect.

Thus begins the journey during which Eleanor starts to uncover the truth about Mordecai Black and learns that he is not nearly as black (pun unintentional!) as he has been painted. He's an honourable perceptive and intelligent man who lives life on his own terms and doesn't give a fig for what people think of him. He's also gorgeous and charismatic – and Eleanor is unnerved by the visceral pull of attraction she feels towards him. She is stunned to learn that he once asked her father for her hand in marriage – although not that he had been refused – and is furious that her father never told her of the proposal. Eleanor can't imagine what prompted Black to ask – they are not well acquainted, so surely he can't be in love with her? – yet she can't help being flattered that such an attractive man would want her. Even so, she steels herself against the temptation he represents, and tells herself she doesn't want him; having been manipulated and controlled by her tyrannical father her entire life, the last thing Eleanor wants now he is dead is to find herself subject to another man's domination – and Black is nothing if not high-handed and dictatorial. But he's also generous and kind, and the longer they spend together, the harder it becomes for Eleanor not fall in love with him, in spite of his tendency to try to order her around.

Ruining Miss Wrotham is a carefully crafted, multi-layered novel in which the sub-plots are skilfully woven into the main storyline to create a cohesive, well-paced whole that grabbed my attention from the first page and didn't let me go until the end. The romance is a delectable slow-burn, with Black determined to allow Eleanor time to realise that they are kindred spirits while the undeniable sparks of sexual awareness sizzle in the air between them. Their over-dinner conversations are delightful, their enforced proximity engendering trust and shared confidences, and his nightly marriage proposals are incredibly sweet – there were times I wanted to give Eleanor a good shake and tell her just to accept him already! But her reasons for refusing are understandable, especially as at this period in time, women were little more than possessions and her experiences with her father would naturally make her wary.

Historical romances are full of heroines who are repeatedly told not to put themselves in danger and then go ahead and do just that because they don't want to be told what to do. Fortunately, Emily Larkin doesn't fall into that trap; Eleanor doesn't like it when Black is high-handed, but she understands that his intention is to protect her, and rather than having them constantly at odds, the author has them learning to make compromises in order to keep each other safe. It's not easy for either of them to adapt in this way and they make mistakes, but their willingness to try speaks volumes about the depth of their feelings for each other.

While all this is going on, Eleanor finally gets her visit from Baletongue – but things don't go as planned, which leads to something of a rift between her and Black. Fortunately for them both, the Earl of Cosgrove (*Unmasking Miss Appleby*) and Icarus and Letty Reid (*Trusting Miss Trentham*) are on hand to provide assistance, but while I liked seeing them again, their sudden and fortuitous appearance smacks a bit of the *deus ex machina*, and strikes a bit of bum note.

That, however, is the only major criticism I can level at the story, which is otherwise captivating and thoroughly enjoyable. The way that Eleanor sometimes sees Black's concern for her safety as attempts to control her can be a little irritating, but as I've said above, it works within the context of her character, and I liked her in spite of it. Mordecai Black, however, is sure to win you over immediately; a swoon-worthy rogue with a heart of gold, his absolute devotion to Eleanor will melt even the hardest heart.

**Ruining Miss Wrotham** is part of a series that can be read without reference to the other books, although an understanding of the basic premise – that the heroines have a faerie godmother who is nothing like the one in *Cinderella!* – is probably a good idea if you're not going to start at the beginning. That said, the first book, **Unmasking Miss Appleby** was one of my favourite books of 2016 (and a DIK), so it's well worth checking out. Whatever you decide, Emily Larkin is a gifted author of historical romance and one fans of the genre shouldn't miss.

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## Rose Blue says

4.5 Stars as reviewed at Roses Are Blue: <http://wp.me/p3QRh4-Ag>

Eleanor "Nell" Wrotham was jilted by her fiancé, Roger, when her younger Sister, Sophia, eloped and caused them both to be ruined. Now that Nell's father is dead, she has a measure of freedom, and is determined to find Sophia. Nell received a months old letter from Sophia, asking for her help, as she had been abandoned in London. No longer caring for her own reputation, Nell visits Roger, hoping that he will aid her, but he refuses. As Nell angrily leaves Roger's home, she runs into Mordecai Black.

Mordecai is the acknowledged, though illegitimate, son of the Earl of Dereham, and he has the not-really-earned reputation of being a rake and a libertine. Mordecai has been in love with Nell almost since he first saw her. He approached her father for permission to court her, but was refused. When Nell became engaged to his cousin, Roger, Mordecai gave up all hope. Now that the engagement is broken, and Nell is in need of help, Mordecai offers to provide his assistance. And, maybe, just maybe, he can try again to court Nell.

Nell is willing to accept Mordecai's help, but she is insistent on being part of the search. At first Mordecai refuses, wanting to protect her reputation, but when Nell insists that she is already ruined, he relents. What Mordecai doesn't know is that Nell is part of a family line in which the females, upon reaching a certain age, are entitled to select a magical ability, a reluctant gift from a genuine fairy godmother. Nell is due to receive her gift on her upcoming twenty-third birthday. If Sophia isn't found by then, Nell will choose the ability to

locate people.

Mordecai, who, in truth, is a loving and generous man, still wants to protect Nell, and has her travel in disguise. Nell is shocked to learn that he tried to court her, as her father never let her know that he sent Mordecai away. Every day Mordecai offers his protection and proposes marriage to Nell, who promptly refuses. However, each day the refusal becomes a little less abrupt, and sounds a little more reluctant. The road trip and the close proximity have allowed Nell and Mordecai to see each other more clearly. While Mordecai's love only increases, Nell's stiff demeanor slowly begins to unbend. Though she doesn't intend to marry, she finds that she badly wants to learn about passion with her handsome protector.

Just when Mordecai and Nell's relationship is looking promising and they are on the path to happiness, there is disturbing news about Sophia. To make matters worse, a tragic event occurs, forcing Nell to make a split second life or death decision about her magical gift. And, can Mordecai accept this new facet of Nell? That is, even if he believes in magic.

Author Emily Larkin's latest installment in the Baleful Godmother series is another gem. I fell in love with the main characters, in particular, Mordecai. He's everything a hero should be – strong, protective, caring, devoted, and, oh, so sexy. Nell comes across as somewhat cool at first, but as I learned about her life, I came to understand her. She became more likable as she unbent, and she was unselfish in choosing her gift – it was chosen for the benefit of others. The romance in RUINING MISS WROTHAM is very emotional and passionate, and the plot is exciting and moves along at a quick pace. I totally enjoyed this read and highly recommend it, along with the previous books in this magical and unique series.

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### **Mindy Lou's Book Review says**

Mordecai was a true gentlemen and a pleasure to read. To see a man go to such lengths to help a woman he barely knows made him a great Hero. To learn he paid attention to Nell from afar and learned her character showed what a great husband he would be to her if she accepts him. So many obstacles was thrown in his way of pursuing her, just made me root for him more. I also enjoyed the magic aspect of the story even though it really wasn't a big part of it.

It's been awhile since I have read a historical romance novel and it was a bit shocking to read about a heroine that knows nothing about sex. It seems so unreal that a woman can be that innocent after reading today's contemporary novels. I grew up on HR and I enjoyed dipping my toes back into this genre. I've never read Emily Larkin before and I'm happy to find that I really enjoyed this story and will be looking for more of her books. ARC provided by NetGalley.

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### **eyes.2c says**

Passion and petulance with a good dose of perfection!

Mordecai Black and Nell Wrotham. What a tale and what a pair!

He is a large man with a large heart and dark secrets. A perfect foil for Nell.

Nell is one in a line of daughters going back in time who is given a wish by a faerie godmother--not the

sweet old lady short, rather the eyes flashing and lightning crashing sort! And a faerie godmother gift was something to be thought about. But then life gets in the way and suddenly the gift Nell thought long and hard to ask for just didn't meet the circumstances. All else became moot. But how is Mordecai going to take the apparition of Nell's gift. After all what a godmother gives cannot be taken away!

I loved the dance between Mordecai and Nell. A scintillating read from go to woe!

A NetGalley ARC

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### **Sarah Wayne says**

I had about fifteen books in my to be read queue and I picked this one, Ruining Miss Wrotham a Baleful GodMother series book first because I absolutely love every single book I have read by Emily Larkin. She's been on my Favorite Author list for awhile now and has yet to disappoint me.

I love the depth of character development and chemistry between them. Although there is an aspect of magic and even though it is a big part of the story it doesn't overwhelm the plot either which makes it easier to read in my opinion. I appreciate the opportunity to read the book and Thank Netgalley and the publisher for the ARC in exchange for a honest review.

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### **Carvanz says**

First let me say this, read this book! If you ever enjoyed a historical romance this is the book that you absolutely must read immediately. If you've ever considered reading a historical romance, this is the book that you should begin with.

I was awarded this book on Netgalley after its publication date. Due to that fact and obstacles in my life, I placed this one lower on my ARC list and ignorantly allowed it to sit there. I am an idiot! This was one of the most entertaining, enlightening, heartfelt and romantic books I have read in forever!

I'm not really sure what I was expecting going into this but what I received was a book that will stay with me always. The characters are so real and, in my opinion, true to the time period. Their speech and actions were written in a manner that I didn't get bogged down but hurried to consume more of it. I could not get enough. I felt like I was gorging myself on this story and yet still so very hungry for more.

I'm not going to get into what happens, and not because there is a huge twist or a deep secret, but because the simple act of reading the words and learning more and more as each page was turned was so very enthralling to me. (Did you see that? Enthralling? Yeah, I'll try to tone it down some.)

I will say that Mordecai is the perfect historical hero and he's got the alpha thing down ladies. Nell is a strong heroine that is so very sweet and yet she isn't going to irritate you with stupid decisions. This couple is just...perfect. I absolutely loved how every night Mordecai would...oh wait, I said I wasn't going to tell

you anything.

You'll have to read it to find out what this incredible hero does. Here's a warning, he's going to steal your hearts!

Now picture this, me giddy, twirling, dancing and skipping because not only did I just finish this book, but there are more out there that I haven't read yet!

As previously stated, this was an ARC and this is absolutely my honest opinion.

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### **Blackjack says**

(B-) - I enjoyed aspects of this story quite a lot, especially the road trip to locate the heroine's missing sister, the plot that sets the entire story into action. The sinister moments in the novel where Nell and Mordecai are in peril are very dramatic and engrossing. At about 60% into the book, I started racing through it to see what would happen next. There are also moments in the book too when I felt caught up in the emotions about the tragic events that unfolded. I also enjoyed the appearance of Baletongue, the evil fairy godmother, and the book's message that there are hidden dangers of having a wish bestowed.

The romance, however, did not engage me much, which is a shame, as I did like Mordecai and thought he was well developed. For years he had been cast as a rake for openly having affairs with well-known ladies, but he knows he's a far cry from a rake and he does not pretend to be anything but honorable and caring. Nell was less knowable to me and I had some difficulty understanding her mercurial personality. More importantly, I did not feel the chemistry between Nell and Mordecai.

Also, of note is the odd start to the novel that has Mordecai frantically searching for Nell with a marriage license in his pocket. I don't mind novels that use *in medias res* as a fictional strategy, but though we do eventually discover that Mordecai has long been enamored with Nell and has even asked her father for her hand in marriage, his love for her is revealed in fairly prosaic conversations. He tells Nell he fell in love while dancing with her once at a ball and that he's observed her being kind to a street urchin. These recounted memories are not particularly exciting in the telling and even Nell seems surprised by the strength of Mordecai's feelings. He claims they are kindred spirits but I never really saw evidence of this. More than once, I wondered if Nell and Mordecai's encounters had been developed in a previous book and I had missed out on something.

Finally, I had a visceral dislike for a big misunderstanding that emerges when Mordecai discovers the paranormal element in the story. I disliked his anger and hostility toward Nell, but I especially disliked that new characters to the novel suddenly showed up to clarify everything to Mordecai, and then they vanished. So basically, Nell's word was not enough, but a couple of men can apparently restate exactly what she has told him and everything is smoothed over.

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### **Cynthia Chan says**

This book is one of the best I've read of Emily Larkin's creations. It is full of substance. Complete with angst, action, sexy scenes and of course, HEA, this book is a winner. I find the moves of Mordecai so precise that wore Nell down in the end. I especially find the proposal scenes funny. I also like how the other characters from the previous books crossed over to this one for cameo roles with ease. With so many interesting subplots, it was hard to put it down. I highly recommend this book to all.

I received an ARC from the author for an honest review.

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### **Em says**

My favorite in this series...so far.

Loved Mordecai Black. My favorite kind of hero - rake (not so much) with a heart of gold. Swoon.

Great couple with terrific chemistry - they light up the pages. Thought the slow burn start was better than the bit too rushed conclusion - but I loved every bit of it nonetheless. So good. So romantic. Perfect rainy day historical romance.

More please Ms. Larkin!

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