



Lady Maggie's Secret Scandal

Grace Burrowes

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LADY MAGGIE WINDHAM HAS SECRETS

And she's been perfectly capable of keeping them...until now. When she's threatened with exposure, she turns to investigator Benjamin Hazlit to keep catastrophe at bay. But Maggie herself intrigues Benjamin more than the riddle she's set him to solve. As he uncovers more and more of her past, Maggie struggles to keep him at a distance, until they both begin to discover the truth in their hearts...

Lady Maggie's Secret Scandal Details

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From Reader Review Lady Maggie's Secret Scandal for online ebook

Susan says

Good book. Lady Maggie is the Duke's oldest daughter. She is also illegitimate, though he did adopt her. She has been an important part of their family all along. Maggie is very independent and is determined that she won't marry. She has her own household and is a bit of a financial genius. When her reticule (purse) goes missing with some very personal items in it she hires Ben Hazlit to find it. Ben has worked for her family before and Maggie has always intrigued him. In order to find her missing property they will have to spend time together and he suggests a fake courtship to prevent rumors. But the more time they spend together the more Ben wants to make it real and Maggie is afraid to.

Maggie's independence is something she has worked hard for. Even though she loves her family and knows that she is loved by them, she still feels disconnected. She has distanced herself from them in order to protect them from her scandalous background. She is very conscious of being the daughter of a courtesan and lives a life that she keeps clear of any hint of impropriety. When her bag with some very personal letters goes missing she hires Ben to find it. But her stubbornness prevents her from telling him everything he needs to know to find it. She consents to his fake courtship, but is frustrated by the way that he acts as if it is real. She doesn't plan to ever marry as she doesn't want her background to reflect badly on a spouse. She is drawn to Ben in a way that she has never felt before. She would like nothing better than to make it real also but feels it is impossible. I loved her closeness to her family. She was determined to protect them and therefore didn't tell them what had been going on. I felt that she didn't give them the credit they deserved, as they would have solved her problem without her having to go through everything she went through. Her feelings for Ben were growing stronger every day but she still had problems trusting him enough to tell him everything. When she could separate herself from her problems, I loved seeing the wonderful relationship that was growing between them. Finally allowing herself to trust Ben completely not only solved her problem but knocked down the last of the barriers between herself and her family. She also allowed herself to fulfill her own dreams.

Ben has been working as an investigator to various members of society for a long time. He prides himself on his ability to do what needs to be done with discretion and honor. When Maggie comes to him for help he nearly turns her down because of her refusal to give him all the necessary information. But he is fascinated by her and also senses that the secrets she keeps are tearing her up. He uses the fake courtship as a way to meet with her without arousing suspicions but soon finds that he is more interested in Maggie herself than in finding her property. I really liked his ability to see beneath the prickles to the woman beneath. He saw in her the same kind of loneliness that he suffered from and found that he wanted to make their "courtship" real. His frustration at her secretiveness was real and he found himself doing things he didn't usually do while trying to help her. He was also very protective of her which started him realizing that she meant more to him than just a job. I loved his support of her and how he accepted how much her independence meant to her. The resolution of her problem was handled perfectly by Ben and her family.

I really enjoyed seeing more of the Duke's family. From being such a pain in the first books it becomes more obvious that the Duke loves his family very much. I really enjoyed seeing more of his relationship with his wife and how devoted they are to each other. I loved the way that they worked together for the benefit of their family. I also enjoyed seeing the relationship the brothers had with Maggie, their obvious love for her and how they wanted her to be happy.

Angela says

4.5 Stars

If you are a fan of historical romance and you haven't read any of Grace Burrowes' books yet, what are you waiting for? Her books are so romantic, so emotional, and full of a great big loving family of characters. Her fantastic characters are what makes me keep coming back for more with each new book. I love the style of series where a huge family is interconnected through many different books. Even though this is technically part of the "Duke's Daughters" series, all of the characters from all of her books are in this one. I was especially glad to see my favorite character back, Valentine Windham.

Admittedly, this particular installment wasn't my favorite of the author's books, but it was still a fantastic addition to the series. I loved revisiting the characters that I know and love. I felt like her style of writing had really picked up the pace in Valentine's book and Sophie's book, while I felt like this book had the slow, almost melancholy feel of her earlier books. Sometimes her writing feels a bit slow, but for some reason I like that about her books. I know when I start one that I will be reading it for a long time, it's not going to be over and forgotten in a flash.

Sometimes, I felt like Maggie felt slightly sorry for herself and sometimes Benjamin was a bit too alpha for me. They had great chemistry though, and it was fun to see her family trying not to meddle in pushing them together.

Overall, a lovely addition to one of my favorite historical romance series.

ARC sent by publisher in exchange for honest review

reviewed for <http://inthehammockblog.blogspot.com>

Elizabeth says

Have you ever read a book teetering on the edge of DNF? Little things bother you, such as choppy writing, too many side characters because in a family series we must get to know each member of the family in every single book? Yet, you keep going because you like certain aspects of it (hey, who doesn't love a red-headed heroine who's a financial wizard) and you keep thinking it has got to get better. And then you get to the end and not only do you want to throw the book against the wall, you want to demand not only a refund but compensation for the time spent reading? If so – you can relate to how I felt about this book.

I'm not going to spend too much time recounting everything that bothered me, but it comes down to this – any book whose main message is "Let a man protect you because it will solve all your problems" is not for me.

Our heroine, the beautiful redheaded Lady Maggie, is the by-blow of a Duke who raised her as if she'd been born legitimate. Something has gone wrong in her life and despite the fact that she's wealthy and drop dead gorgeous, has never married. She hides herself away at her estate. As the story begins, her purse, containing something very important, is stolen. She hires Lord Hazlit, an aristocrat who hides that he's actually an aristocrat for reasons that don't make a lot of sense to me and who's also a private investigator, to look into it.

He investigates and gets a bit stalkerish. Oh let's not kid ourselves – a lot stalkerish. But they're both fabulous people and of course amazingly attractive so clothing is removed and badongadonga ensues. That is not what made me want to smash my Nook.

As the story unfolds, we learn Lady Maggie has been assisting a young woman, whom we know is her sister even though the book stalls on telling us that. Maggie knows she needs to do something but refuses to reach out to anyone else for help because it will impact her family negatively and she trusts no one.

It is only when she trusts Hazlit that she is able to solve this problem. And that's when the story goes off the rails.

I have no issue with her needing the assistance of another person to help her. In fact, if she'd been willing to seek others' assistance life for her and her sister would have been a heck of a lot better much earlier. It's the notion the author puts forth that Maggie simply needed to accept the protection of a man and all would be right with the world. Wow. Seriously.

Let me quote: "Men such as ours need to protect the women they owe, and we need to allow them this."

So we have this fiercely independent, intelligent and savvy woman – who's been doing it all wrong. She needs to let her man protect her.

Ugh. Yeah, I need to stop. What an awful mess.

Lady Wesley says

I liked Maggie a lot, which put this book a notch above the sisters' stories.

See my review of the series at <http://www.goodreads.com/review/show/...>

Wollstonecraftmegirl says

This was not my favourite Burrowes. In fact, it's probably my least favourite to date. I didn't care much for Benjamin. Sort of prickly without any real explanation. The conflict between him and Maggie's was told (she doesn't like people who snoop) but not really shown. It would've been a better novel, in my opinion, if those

aspects had been developed more. Maggie's unwillingness to share her problem with either Benjamin or her family was frustrating and inexplicable for one so bright. Essentially, the annoying aspects of this story overshadowed the usual Burrowes greatness. Thus, only three stars.

Blodeuedd Finland says

Burrowes books are always so easy to read, they just flows, even when you get annoyed at the characters ;) But then again it would not be that easy to get me to marry you either if I just met you.

Maggie is the bastard daughter, still she is adopted and loved. Oh and she is 30, oh yes 30, I loved that. She is firmly in the shelf and she does not care cos she wants her independence. And with a mother who was a courtesan *coughs whore* I do get why she wants her freedom. I like an author that takes a chance with an older heroine.

Benjamin is someone we have seen around in previous books, he finds missing things, he digs up dirt on people. Not your usual kind of hero and of course I like him, because he is nice. So very nice and kind. He wants to protect Maggie and as in previous books he is the one who tries to make her see that they would be good together. I always love a hero who fights for that which he believes in.

Sure, one thing was silly but I got it, it was there to bring the drama forwards. Maggie is kind and loving and scared. That is why the big scandal is a secret. But with a talk she could have saved herself from much grief. Even I knew that something we found out could not be. And I did not really see what the scandal was about either. She is a walking scandal herself. Still was the whole deal does it brings the drama and the fear that everything will go downhill from now. That is exactly what kept me reading. I wanted to know if everything would work out and if they would live happily ever after (which they always do but a good authors makes me fear it none the less.)

Conclusion:

I can't say what made it so, but this was my favorite Grace Burrowes book to date. Light, exciting and with a happy ending that will make you smile.

Jacqueline says

Another nice regency by GB. I felt the writing was very well done, the plotting was good and tight. The characterization was good. I loved the hero. Very competent and very much in love with the heroine. This book revolved around conversation mostly with some action but not really very much description. For example there wasn't a lot of telling me what color the morning room walls were and etc., that sort of thing can become very intrusive. So the book was fast moving and I really enjoyed it.

Amanda The Book Slayer says

This was originally posted at Sisters Unedited

4.5 Stars

Recommend : If you enjoy Historical Romances then give this book a try. You don't have to read the other 4 books to enjoy this book. It can stand alone or enhance the last 4 books of the series.

*I fell in love with the Windham's from the very first book *The Heir*. Maggie is the oldest of the Windham daughters. She also has been firmly put on the shelf for several years and therefore has learned to live a peaceful life in her own home with her own money. Her Grace, Maggie's stepmother, fears she will never find love and as with all her other children, for she considers her husband's child from another mother her own, she tries her hardest to play matchmaker. However this story is not put into play by Her Grace but Maggie herself and a secret she is trying desperately to keep contained.*

Evie, the youngest sister, and Maggie are desperately trying to find Maggie's reticule so that they may both go to Her Grace's for the family tea get together. Try as they might they are unable to find it and have to head out without it. As they enter their parents house men who were meeting with their father are exiting. Maggie manages to get her shawl intertwined in Mr. Hazlit's flower attached to his pocket with a pin. While trying to untangle them, Maggie gets her hair stuck in his lapel. Mr. Hazlit, or Benjamin ends up taking her hair down and that sparks ignite which sets everything into motion.

"His dark eyebrows rose, and for one instant, Maggie had the satisfaction of seeing Mr. Benjamin Hazlit at a loss."

That is just the beginning for Maggie and Benjamin. She returns home and continues to look for her reticule but still can't find it. Now she can either keep looking herself or turn to a private investigator to help her find it in time to keep her secret from coming to light. But it isn't as simple as Maggie would like. She expects Benjamin to preform this service for money without knowing all the facts but quickly finds that he is going to require more of her than she wants to give. An innocent request turns into playing with fire. Will they be able to find her missing reticule without getting burned in the process?

"Mr.Hazlit?" She took another sip of tea.

"Miss Windham?"

"If you waggle your fingers at me, or-heaven forbid-snap them, I will bite you."

.....

"Where?" Something lurked in his eyes, something....playful?

"Where what?"

"Where would you bite me?"

God help her, he'd dropped his voice to that smoky register she'd heard out in the rose arbor.

This book has the whole Sherlock Holmes feel to it. Lucas and Ben working together to solve this mystery.

Mr. Benjamin Hazlit and Mr. Lucas Denning Private Investigators at your service!

What I loved about this book:

I loved that Ben, who we meet in the first book, gets his happily ever after. I love how we watch his and Maggie's relationship bloom. There was tons of humor mixed with anticipation.

I loved Lucas Denning's, or Deene, character. When Evie and him happen upon each other the clever insults fly. I can only hope this means another great novel with these two characters actually admitting that there is more to them both than meets the eye.

I thought this book brought out more of Her Grace's strong and loving character. You can see how much love she has for all her children, even those she didn't give birth to.

Favorite Quotes:

"Were I them, I'd be snuggling up to Deene before many of his peers. There he goes now, and God help that twit on his arm. She looks like she went poaching for hares and got a boar in her gun sights."

"Naughty, Helene." Maggie hid her smile by pretending to search in her reticule.

"Sometimes, baby sister, your powers of observation border on rudeness."

"There was something behind his smile, something Maggie suspected a woman would call concern and a man wouldn't deign to put a label on even under threat of torture."

"I've taken a sudden notion to appreciate mature females," Deene was saying. "Though if her brothers ask, I'm being protective in their absence. Hold my drink."

"He's struggling a bit," His Grace said. A neutral answer that applied to most men between toddlerhood and senescence.

"Mark me on this, Hazelton. I have daughters, daughters-in-law, granddaughters, and one duchess. I have made a study of the fairer sex out of sheer self-preservation, as any wise man will." It is simple-devote yourself to her happiness, and you will be rewarded tenfold.

"The Portmaine family motto is, 'We thrive on impossible challenges.'" Deene arched a blond eyebrow. "You just manufactured that for present purposes. You're from the North, and your family motto is probably something like, 'Thank God for friendly sheep.'"

I really enjoyed this book. I thought it had plenty of romance and quite a bit of mystery to keep me on the edge of my seat guessing what would happen next.

Thank you to Netgalley for providing me with this ARC to review.

Melanie says

REVIEW: What an interesting character Maggie was! You couldn't help but admire the strong character of this woman who was basically sold to the Duke, who wasn't even sure that she is his child, yet accepted her as such and loved her as much as all his other children. Only a loving father would be so perceptive about his

eldest daughter to say this.

"She's in want of... dreams, I think. My other girls have dreams. Sophie dreamed of her own family, Jenny loves to paint, Louisa has her literary scribbling, and Evie must racket about the property as her brothers used to, but Maggie has never been a dreamer."

It was heart-wrenching to watch the strained relationship between Maggie and the Duchess, who was always aware of Maggie's feelings towards her and the family, but never knew how to break that last 'brick' on the wall that Maggie has meticulously built around her to protect them all from being hurt with the secret she had kept for much too long.

"Esther did not hold out her arms to this woman she'd raised. From the posture of Maggie's spine, a maternal embrace would be politely tolerated, as it had been on the rare occasions Esther had attempted it since the girl had joined the household all those years ago."

I so admired the Duchess while she does her best to hide her frustration with Maggie and tries hard to understand this woman, her adopted daughter.

"Esther spoke as gently as she could, considering she was using logic to bludgeon someone she dearly loved. 'Do you want your child to bear the same burden you have?' Maggie shook her head, but the tears were coursing down her cheeks unchecked. Esther passed her a serviette, when what she wanted to do was hurl her teacup against the wall.

'You have another option, Maggie.' Maggie turned her head an inch to meet the Duchess' eyes. 'If I have conceived, I will not do anything to harm our child.' Our child?

'Put such notions from your head. For God's sake, Maggie... to think we'd let you risk yourself, much less... For God's sake.'

Boys were difficult to raise into young gentleman, but girls... girls were the biggest challenge. Especially girls who, despite every effort to the contrary, seemed to have a thorough knowledge of things too sordid and awful to be contemplated."

Even though Maggie has been brought up with St. Just (the other bastard in the family), she deep down inside had always been uncomfortable and felt that she never quite belonged to them, although she would never admit it nor would she show it to the other members of the family.

As for the hero of this tale, Benjamin Hazlitt, we've met him before and what a complex man he was! A man who is too competent in unearthing all the ton's secrets, gets himself hired by the woman he finds too attractive and an enigma that he needed to solve.

As Ben and Maggie try to adjust to their new-found acquaintance through the scheme of pretending to be courting, the search is on for her lost reticule, and we are in for a treat. To watch these two slowly coming to realization that their 'casual acquaintance' is turning into something neither is looking for or really want, yet at the same time hoping for, is amazing.

There's no way I could tell you how much I loved the character of Ben, who it turns out has a couple of skeletons in his closet as well. As is Ms. Burrowes' want, she populates her books with an abundance of secondary characters so interesting and compelling, that I feel she had a very hard time holding some of them back. As is the case with Ben's sidekick, Archer Holloway; otherwise he just might have stolen the story.

Grace Burrowes can do no wrong. PERIOD! She writes stories that touch my heart and soul, and this tale is

no exception. This is her fifth book and if you haven't yet discovered her, I think it time you did. I highly recommend this entire series, *THE HEIR*, *THE SOLDIER*, *THE VIRTUOSO*, *LADY SOPHIE'S CHRISTMAS WISH* and this one too. The author does an outstanding job in writing this connected series so well that you don't need to read them to understand the dynamic of this wonderful and engaging family, yet I highly, **HIGHLY** recommend you read them all in order because if you're like me, you will appreciate the Epic feel to the series, and for all of us who love saga's, this is just up our alley. Come October, Ms. Burrowes has Lady Louisa's Christmas Knight and in December *The Bridegroom Wore Plaid* will be out. Oh happy dance!

* I received a copy of this book from NetGalley in exchange for an honest review*

www.bookworm2bookworm.wordpress.com

Ilze says

Lovely hero and some nicely-written parts, but somehow the whole thing didn't really gel for me.

Lady Maggie is supposed to be a financial genius and a decisive, strong woman, but these sides of her were never really shown, just told. In fact, other than her hiring of the hero to retrieve her missing reticule (and it turned out she had a pretty good idea who had taken it, but she never told her sleuth that), Maggie is almost completely passive in the story and the relationship, much like the heroines of a couple other Grace Burrowes books that I've read. The "financial genius" part of her character just didn't compute for me - if she has been giving most of her allowance to a blackmailer (who uses it to maintain an expensive lifestyle), *and* maintaining her own household with all the attendant expenses, how on earth could she have had enough left over to make investments and end up with a fortune in less than 10 years?

A few problems with the story: the fact that Maggie is the bastard daughter of her father from a courtesan is stated so many times in the story that it just started feeling like filler to me. The supposed true love between the hero's cousin, who is a viscount, and the blackmailer's maid, who happens to be a former street whore, didn't make any sense, and was far too pat a coincidence to be believable, especially in the final resolution of Lady Maggie's problem.

Judy & Marianne from Long and Short Reviews says

Originally posted at: <http://www.longandshortreviews.blogspot...>

Secrets rule the lives of both Lady Maggie and Ben Hazlit. They're motivated by the same need—to protect family! The sensual, soul-satisfying love that twines itself around their hearts and holds on tight through the confusion and conflicts brings them from their shadowy personal lives.

Maggie, the illegitimate but adopted daughter of the Duke of Moreland, is a much-loved daughter and sister. But her early life still influences her actions. Thirty-year-old Maggie has her own home, her own funds, and lives in seclusion as much as her family will allow. Her acumen in financial matters is unusual. She has not only made herself wealthy, but has also helped her brother Gayle, Earl of Westhaven, put the family's

finances back in the prosperous column. She's the epitome of propriety, but regardless of all her precautions, she now needs help to keep her nemesis at bay.

Ben Hazlit, an investigator and friend of the Moreland family, is brusque but trustworthy, competent, and a man who keeps not only his own secrets but also the secrets of many elite families. He too avoids attention, living in the shadows. When he's hired by Lady Maggie to find a lost reticule, his world shifts and he takes Lady Maggie right along with him.

Sprinkled into Maggie and Ben's story are snippets of the other Moreland family that intrigue if you have not read earlier books about the Morelands. However, if you have read them, it's like catching up with old friends and acquaintances. What a surprise to learn that Ester, the Duchess of Moreland, has a burdensome secret. She never falters in her determination to take care of her own and to her Maggie is "her own". The love in this unique family enriches the story.

However, LADY MAGGIE'S SECRET SCANDAL stands alone with many new characters. Archer, Ben's relative and fellow investigator, brings in delightful humor while being a valuable source of information. He has friends in all ranks of society who keep him well informed about what's going on in Society and in lower echelons of the population.

Cecily, an aging courtesan, her fourteen-year-old daughter Bridget, and their maid Adele Martin create a sub-plot that weaves itself into the main plot keeping the suspense high. While the rake and friend of Ben's, Lord Deere, is truly a dear who helps pull off a daring caper that sends the heart racing.

Grace Burrowes' exquisite writing style and her focus on the hero and heroine while weaving in subtle side stories make phenomenal reading. Her descriptions and ability to plumb the depths of the characters' emotions keep the reader in the moment of the action. Best of all is the incredible, breathtaking love she weaves around Maggie and Ben—a love that promises a happy-ever-after that is so deserved.

Caz says

I've given this a B for both content and narration at AudioGals.

Lady Maggie's Secret Scandal is the fifth full-length novel in Grace Burrowes' series about the eight Windham siblings; the three sons and five daughters of the Duke and Duchess of Moreland. Like Devlin St. Just (The Soldier), Magdalen – Maggie – Windham is illegitimate, fathered by the duke before his marriage, but welcomed into the family as a child, brought up alongside the ducal couple's legitimate children and later legally adopted.

Now aged thirty, Maggie maintains her own small establishment and is a wealthy woman in her own right, having discovered a talent for investing and speculation when she was in her teens. She regularly advises her brother, the Earl of Westhaven (The Heir) on financial matters, but in general keeps very much to herself, not one for socialising or regular outings. She is unmarried and likely to remain so given her reclusive tendencies, and it's no secret that the Duchess worries about Maggie and her happiness as much as she does her own daughters.

You can read the rest of this review at AudioGals.

Cecilia says

This was a very slow read and it felt unnecessarily long. The hero is of the sweet and giving variety. Most of the plot related to a worry of the heroine's that the hero could've helped clear up right away. Since the worry is not really actually based on the heroine's actions, the title might be more accurate as "Lady Maggie's Annoying Tendency to Wallow in Helpless Martyrdom." I guess it's not as alliterative and snappy, though.

Sia McKye says

I'll be the first to say I've gotten tired of the rash of Regency period stories. Grace Burrowes reminds me why I loved the period. She writes the kind of historical novel I love to read. Rich on details, the setting of the time, dialogs, and nuances. Good story, great characters with lots of inner conflict and insecurities, a mystery to solve, time running out, and an ending that brings a smile to your face.

Maggie is the illegitimate but adopted daughter of a powerful Duke and while she is accepted by the ton she prefers to live a retiring life. Maggie is lovely, independent, and a financial whiz with investments. She is also very careful to allow nothing she does to reflect badly on her beloved family.

However, Maggie has a dirty secret and someone to protect (aside from her ducal family) and it's been wearing on her heart and cutting up her peace. When her purse is stolen (containing information that mustn't fall into other hands) she has no recourse but enlist investigator Ben Hazlit, family friend and a man who loves puzzles. Which could be the reason, aside from the fact he finds her sexy and beautiful, he has been drawn to Maggie for quite sometime. She refuses to explain why she needs to find the purse at all cost and without the reason, Ben chooses to decline. Maggie is smart and finds a way to compel him to help. So begins a dance of wits between them and that dance keeps you turning the pages to find out what or who is Maggie protecting and is Ben going to win his heart's desire this time? Will Maggie follow her heart or

The story reminds one of how important love is for family and just what we will do to protect it. The Windham family is very loving and close. The kind of family any would want. It also explores insecurities one might have even with the love and support of a strong family.

If you haven't read a Grace Burrowes, and you enjoy historicals, you really should check out her series on the Windham family. She's an excellent storyteller who leaves you feeling good long after *the end*!

Jan130 says

3.5 stars. I liked this episode of the Windham siblings. This one was about the eldest daughter Maggie, half-sister to the others because she is an acknowledged bastard of her father the duke, from his crazy days before he met the duchess. But she has been adopted by them and brought up in the ducal household, loved as much as the other children.

But Maggie has a secret related to her inauspicious beginnings and her birth mother. And she battles to protect the Windham family from the sordid situation and the scandal. Then, along comes the wonderful Ben Hazlitt. Ben is half-brother of Sindal, from the previous book, although Sindal is barely mentioned in this book and the reader has no real sense of any relationship between the half-brothers. But Ben sees the real Maggie, as she really is, as few actually see or know her. The attraction between them grows and they fall in love.

It was a very enjoyable book up to the last 5% or so. In the resolution of Maggie's situation, the ending seemed unnecessarily complicated and even confusing. A pity. I felt the ending detracted from the rest of the book. But still, overall, I liked it. Now, onto Louisa's story :)
