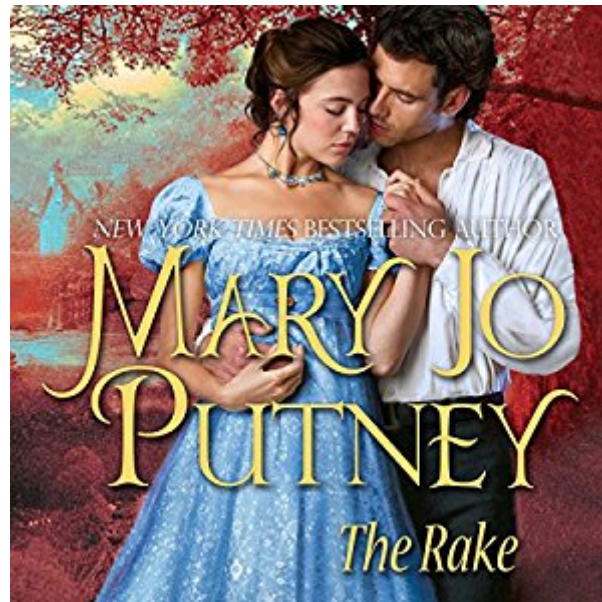




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The Rake



Synopsis

Known as the despair of the Davenports, Reginald is a disinherited, disgraced alcoholic who is headed for a bad end - that is until the new Earl of Wargrave gives him one last chance at redemption by letting him take his place as the heir of Strickland, his lost ancestral estate. Masquerading as a man in order to obtain a position as estate manager of Strickland, Lady Alys Weston came to Strickland after having fled her home, her wealth, and her title due to betrayal and despair. She vowed never to trust another man, but when the new owner appears, his dangerous masculinity threatens everything Alys holds dear, awakening a passion that she thought she would never feel again - a passion that will doom or save them both.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I purchased this book in 2012 and enjoyed it but didn't really consider it among my top favorites. Lately, I've been doing some re-reading and decided to give it a re-read since I kept remembering that it's one of my favorite reviewer's top regency romance novels of all time. I'm glad I gave it another chance. I would highly recommend reading *The Diabolical Baron* before reading "The Rake." If you read "The Diabolical Baron" first, you will see a side of our hero, Reginald Davenport, that contributed to his rakehell and dishonourable reputation. But, it's time for the bad boy to work toward reformation and why not give him a good woman to help him through the process? In the previous book, Reggie was hit hard when, after years of waiting for his uncle to die so he could finally inherit the earldom, a grandson of his uncle shows up and Reggie is left out in the

cold. In this book, the new earl calls Reginald to his office and tells Reggie he will no longer pay him an allowance, but he will give him the most prosperous of the unentailed properties for Reggie to do with whatever he so desires with the estate. Who would ever imagine that Reggie is a farmer at heart? But he does have a surprise waiting on him when he travels to what was his boyhood home. It seems his more than capable estate manager is a woman, Lady Alys. Not just a woman, but an of a woman. Reggie is over six feet tall and Alys is 5'11" - she's accustomed to towering over men - but not Reggie. She's not a conventionally pretty woman, but she has a commanding presence and Reginald is entranced by Alys, including her lean figure and her mismatched eyes. Lady Alys soon learns she is in over her head in some ways. As much as she wants to befriend her new employer - yes, he does need a friend - she doesn't know how to deal with Reggie's alcoholism. There were so many attributes of Reggie to be admired. He had a type of scoundrel's honor and was actually a kind of knight in white shining armor to a few people, only most of Society never learned about his good deeds toward various people and of course Reggie wasn't about to explain his actions to anyone. As we traverse the story and Reggie's background is slowly revealed, one of the most touching scenes for me was when he visited his great uncle and his uncle gave him a major key for Reggie's release from his alcoholism - explaining that in his own situation, he called out to God to help him. This was unexpected and yet very appropriate to the situation Reggie found himself in. Lady Alys has deep insecurities of her own and a past from which she has run away. Additionally, there are actions by Reggie that she misunderstands, mostly due to her own insecurities. So, we have two people thrown together, both of whom are in need of healing from wounds in their souls. Still, they have enough left inside to place the needs of others before their own. Only when Reggie makes the ultimate sacrifice, does he at last find peace. There is a third novella in this series and it may be found in *Christmas Revels*. Within this book, there are several short stories including "Sunshine for Christmas" which features Lord Randolph Lennox, the man who contributed to Lady Alys' insecurities which haunted her for years.

"In a way, they were opposite sides of the same coin: the rake and the reformer, both stubborn and proud." **THE STORY:** Reggie Davenport is the "Despair of the Davenports". He is a rake and an alcoholic and has done little productive with his 37 years. When his titled cousin gives him his old family estate for his own, Reggie begins to change his life. When he arrives at the estate, he is surprised to find out that his impressive steward is actually a woman. Alys Weston is a lady who ran from her engagement and has lived a decade taking care of herself and now her three wards. When Reggie agrees to give her a chance to prove herself to him, the two begin an interesting friendship.

Alys's secrets and Reggie's alcoholism threaten them both. **OPINION:** This book, when written, was a groundbreaking novel. To so explicitly have an alcoholic hero who is struggling to become sober as the novel progresses was novel. Such serious themes are more commonplace today and this novel suffers as a result. I liked the story between Alys and Reggie, but I never felt the strong connection with the characters and their journey that would encourage me to read this book again and again. Even the alcoholic story seems to be somewhat quaint now. It is difficult to accept how easily Reggie becomes sober. It seems likely that he will relapse as there are no real challenges that he faces to his sobriety in the book other than the heroine leaving. By the end of the book, he has only been sober for months. I might have felt better if we had an epilogue years in the future showing their happy ending. **WORTH MENTIONING:** I have read many Putney books and I only really loved one, *SILK AND SHADOWS*. That book is one of my favorite all time books. I have found all the rest of her books forgettable. People whose opinions I trust really love her books, but I have come to the conclusion that her books are not for me. Doesn't mean they are not good books. She is definitely worth a try to see if her style is one that a reader appreciates more than I do. **FINAL DECISION:** Many people point to this book as one of Putney's best. I have never thought it much more than a standard, unsurprising story. When it was written the story of an alcoholic hero was groundbreaking, but these types of stories are much more common now. I liked the book, but it is not one that I would return to again. **CONNECTED BOOKS:** This book is connected to *THE DIABOLICAL BARON*. It is not necessary to read that book to appreciate this one. **STAR RATING:** I give this book 4 stars.

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