



The Rogue's Conquest

Lily Maxton

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Wallflower Eleanor Townsend is not like most women. She has no interest in marriage, the *ton*, or fashion. Instead, her heart lies with science. And when the opportunity to present a paper arises, she takes it, even though it means dressing as a man. But her disguise doesn't *quite* work. Someone notices—and the brute intends to blackmail her!

Former prizefighter James MacGregor wants to be a gentleman, like the men he trains in his boxing saloon. His first step is gaining a beautiful, wealthy wife. Eleanor Townsend is *not* that woman, but a chance encounter gives him the leverage he needs. She'll gain him entry to high society and help him with his atrocious manners, and in return, he won't reveal her secret. It's the perfect arrangement. At least until the sparks between them become more than just their personalities clashing. But there's too much at stake for James to give in to his growing attraction.

Each book in the Townsends series is a standalone story that can be enjoyed out of order.

The Rogue's Conquest Details

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From Reader Review The Rogue's Conquest for online ebook

Lux Lewis says

The pugilist has coerced the entomologist to take part in his design to woo a lady or he will divulge her secret which will ruin her reputation.

The pugilist is the former prizefighter James MacGregor, the bastard son of a duke, who covets all things aristocratic which was denied to him from birth. The entomologist is Lady Eleanor Townsend, whose interests and knowledge on beetles would rival any male scientist but denied membership to the illustrious Natural History Society because of her gender and thus her disguise as Mr Cecil Townsend where she gained access, presented her research and has received accolades from the distinguished members of Society. James saw through the disguise and pressured Lady Eleanor for an introduction to the beautiful Lady Sarah, which he sees as his passport to gain entry to the ton.

The uncouth Scot and the Wallflower was each other's strength and weakness as they grapple for approval. James and Eleanor might have employed deceit to secure entry to Society but they had always been aware of each other's purpose.

This was wonderfully written. Lily Maxton's soul-stirring description of the characters' struggle for acceptance was affecting. Their wordplays were fantastically witty.

It's poignant. It's beautiful. Five stars.

I received an arc from the publisher through NetGalley. This is my impartial review.

Caz says

I've given this a C+ at AAR, so that's 3.5 stars

I loved *Enchanting the Earl*, the first book in Lily Maxton's series about the Townsend siblings, which I called a "*sweetly sensual character-driven romance*" between a reclusive war hero and the free-spirited young woman who shows him that he's a man worthy of love and acceptance. I was impressed by the way the author balanced the various elements of her story and by the strong characterisation – which extended to the secondary cast as well as the principals – so I eagerly snapped up the next in the series, **The Rogue's Conquest**, in the hopes of finding it to be an equally satisfying and enjoyable read.

As is shown by my grade, that wasn't quite the case. I didn't dislike the story, but I didn't really warm to either of the leads and never felt there was a strong romantic connection between them. The pacing is off, too, with most of the emotional weight of the story coming well into the second half, and I suspect that wasn't helped by the fact that the book is quite short – something between a long novella and a short novel. The protagonists and their relationship are not given time to properly develop, plus, when it's time for the hero to admit his perspective has been completely wrong, he is able to shed the beliefs and ambitions he's held for pretty much all his life in less time than it takes to blink the proverbial eye.

With their brother, the Earl of Arden, now happily married and residing with his wife at his remote castle in the highlands, his siblings Robert, Eleanor and Georgina, have removed to Edinburgh. As close relations of an earl, they move in good society but Eleanor isn't very interested in that; she is more concerned with the societal habits of insects – specifically, beetles – than the societal habits of humans. She has written several papers on entomology which have been published by the Natural History Society and has been invited to give a lecture – but of course, the society does not allow women members and Eleanor had to present her work as that of a man – Cecil Townsend – rather than as herself.

Robert and Georgiana know how important Eleanor's work is to her, and surprisingly, Georgiana encourages Eleanor to give her lecture in disguise; people see what they expect to see, and with Eleanor being tall for a woman, it should be quite easy for her to pass as Cecil with a few props and if she can alter her voice sufficiently.

Eleanor, who is reserved and somewhat awkward around people can't believe she's considering doing such a scandalous thing – if she's ever discovered, she will be ruined and so, by extension, will Georgina – but with the encouragement of both siblings she gives the lecture with great success.

It's afterwards that her problems begin, however. One of the attendees, a man named James MacGregor who looks more like a prizefighter than a scientist, somehow sees through Eleanor's disguise when nobody else has, and offers her a deal. He won't reveal she's a woman if she will gain him an entrée to her circle and introduce him to Lady Sarah, the daughter of the Earl of Lark.

While big, brawny, good-looking and the owner of a fairly successful boxing saloon, James has an inferiority complex the size of Scotland. He's the bastard son of the Duke of Sheffield, who has made it abundantly clear to James that he despises him and wants nothing to do with him, and yet James allows his father's disdain to rule his life. He wants to meet Lady Sarah because he believes that if he can court her and marry her, then he will have shown the Duke that he isn't a failure and is worth something after all. As Eleanor realises later in the book, James “*was bending over backward to fit into a Society that didn't want him, to prove himself to a man who'd abandoned him.*” And he's been doing it practically all his life.

Unwilling to risk exposure, Eleanor agrees to do as James asks, and over the ensuing days and weeks, she introduces him around and eventually makes him known to Lady Sarah. While not a gentlemen born and bred, James acquits himself well, and although their relationship might not have begun under the most auspicious of circumstances, Eleanor starts to think of James as a friend... and then as something more than a friend. He's the one person who really sees beyond the socially awkward wallflower to the stubborn, dedicated woman Eleanor really is, and she comes out of her shell when she's with him. But although Eleanor suspects that James has become fond of her, too, he's still set on marrying another woman purely because he wants to gain the approval he can't accept that his father is never going to give.

The book is well written and I enjoyed the snarky conversations between James and Eleanor, but ultimately, they're fairly one-note characters, especially James, who is suffering from a severe case of tunnel vision. The premise also requires rather a large suspension of disbelief concerning Eleanor's masquerade as Cecil – a wig, a pair of glasses, men's clothing and bound breasts seems to be all it takes to be taken for a chap – and it's also remarkably easy for James, a man who works for his living, to be accepted into the social circles in which the Townsends move.

Had **The Rogue's Conquest** been longer, I am sure that Ms. Maxton could have smoothed out those wrinkles, spent time creating more fully-rounded personalities for her principals and then in developing a stronger, more emotionally satisfying romance between them. As it stands, the book is a bit of a missed

opportunity. There's some great material here when it comes to Eleanor's desire to be taken seriously as a scientist and in James' needing to learn what's really important and what isn't, but it all needed a longer page-count to be properly wrought together into a stronger, more cohesive whole.

Nicole says

I received this novel from net galley for an honest review. Thank you!!

This novel was a quick and enjoyable read. People hide their true selves from others and give an outward appearance that they show to society. Everyone has a mask, but who has the courage to reveal what is behind the mask.

Eleanor Townsend is more interested in her study of science, particularly beetles than what society expects of her. Many people think of her as a wallflower and unusual. When she poses as a man to present her scientific work, she is successful at fooling all the men there, except for one.

James MacGregor runs his own fight club. He is a former prizefighter, but wants to be a gentleman. He is very observant and realizes that Eleanor is not a man. He blackmails her into helping him and he will keep her secret. He wants to marry a lady so he prove that is is not a no one. This has to due with what happened in his past. He needs to be married to a lady of quality to have happiness.

However, he did not expect how Eleanor would affect him. Eleanor did not expect the feelings she would have for James. The sparks fly despite their different personalities and standings in society. Both feel they are their true selves with each other, not what society sees them as. Still, James wants to go through with his plan, even though he cannot stop thinking about Eleanor. Both Eleanor and James need to decide what is more important, showing society what they want to see or being true to themselves regardless of what society deems as acceptable.

Andrea says

4.5 stars rounded up just because I finished this in almost one sitting, with a huge grin on my face the whole time.

This was so much lighter than the first book in the series, and SO much more my kind of book that I feel really bad about giving the first one only two stars. It's much shorter (almost, but not quite, a novella) than the first, but it was so delightful!

Eleanor Townsend has a problem: she has published essays on the mating habits of insects under a male pseudonym and is asked to present them at a Natural History society. To dress up as a man and take her chance, or to stay hidden in the shadows and not share her work with like-minded scientists...

James McGregor, former prizefighter, has tried all his life to reach the top, to find a way in the polite circles that have denied him access all his life. Now he is fairly well-off, runs a boxing salon for gentlemen, and is determined to marry into the ton. When he discovers a lady pretending to be a gentleman, he seizes his chance and decides to blackmail her: if she introduces him to the most eligible girl on the marriage mart, he won't tell anyone her secret.

Appalled by James' audacity, Eleanor soon realizes that there is much more to the big man who so desperately wants to fit in than she wants to admit. And finds herself falling hard for a man who is

determined to make a good match- which she, most decidedly, is not...

I loved Eleanor and her scientific mind, and I admired her for having the courage to defend her publications. When she stood up to all those stuffy old aristocrats, I actually found myself cheering her on. I also really liked that her shyness wasn't just the typical romance shyness where there is a gorgeous girl hidden underneath all along, but that she was actually plain, awkward, and genuinely shy. But once she let James in and started teasing him, there was a whole new side to her that had me laughing quite a lot. Their teasing and bantering was adorable and just what I want from a book couple. I equally loved that she actually manned up and told "the other woman" the truth about her connection to James, that said woman was not a bitch but one of the nicest people imaginable (I really hope she gets her own book at some point!), and that there was actual female friendship.

And James? I thought he was lovely. I liked his determination to make something of himself, his bad fashion sense was adorable, and I loved how he teased Eleanor. With the initial blackmail set-up I was a bit worried that I would hate him for it, but it actually worked out really well for me. It did take him just a tad too long to realize that he doesn't want the perfect proper heiress, but I get it. For him to let go of his "I need to prove myself to the world" nonsense is not easy, but once he does realize he could have everything he never thought he wanted with Eleanor, he does make up for it in my opinion. Oh and I feel like I should mention it: the man is actually not physically perfect! He has a broken nose, crooked teeth, and shoulders and arms far thicker than acceptable in polite circles.

This was a lovely read that made me laugh, cry, and cheer for both main characters to find their HEA. And now I'm off to the next book in the series!!!!

Mei says

I like it!

I liked James' stubbornness, even when it was misplaced! It took him a really long time to stop being a stubborn a** and faced the fact that Eleanor is the perfect woman for him! But, as I said I liked him even when I wanted to bash him in the head with a blunt object! LOL

I loved his outrageous taste too! His waistcoats and cravats were something that a color-blind man could wear!!! But he was blisslessly unaware of how horrendous they were!

Also his behaviour was outrageous! He balckmailed Eleanor without missing a beat and without remorse!

When you read this you'll think I was crazy for liking him, but you have to read the book to understand, so go and read it! :)

eyes.2c says

Fools rush in, maybe!

Half way through reading Rogue's Conquest I realized I'd been smiling the whole time. How good is that! I was obviously enjoying this light hearted story with an intelligent wallflower heroine, whose interest in

beetles surpasses all else and does rather take her into some stuffy, closed-to-women places. Albeit that Eleanor Townsend ends up in that place presenting her paper as a man. Whatever, when means must! Of course Eleanor's sister Georgina must take some of the blame. After all she's the one who suggested Eleanor only need disguise herself as a man (one Cecil Townsend) to present her paper on the mating habits of stag beetles to the Natural History Society.

When Eleanor asked Georgina why she was helping her, Georgina delightfully threw out the line, 'You know I'm not good with dull. I'm counting on you to liven things up for me.' Upon which Eleanor mused that she was a strange sort of girl. (By the way, I already have the expectation that Georgina's story will be extraordinary to match her rather different view on life for one so young)

All would have been successful if pugilist, turned gentleman, James MacGregor who had attended the meeting for his own reasons, hadn't picked up on a small tell and discovered 'Cecil's' secret.

And he might have left it there if he hadn't wanted an entree into the sphere around the beautiful Lady Sarah, daughter of the Earl of Lark. James wants to woo and win Lady Sarah.

But there's the small matter of his attraction to Eleanor that keeps getting in the way of his objective.

Eleanor and James' story really appealed to my sense of the ridiculous. I loved the strait forward earnestness of Eleanor, the hoyden in Georgina, Robert Townsend as the best of brother's, and the abandoned and rejected child within the gentleman pugilist, James MacGregor. I also realized I'd missed the first in series and must read it now!

A somewhat whimsical romance that I really enjoyed.

A NetGalley ARC

Aisha says

It was a very sweet and beautiful book. I did not like that he continued to pursue Lady Sarah even though all his thoughts and heart were with Eleanor.

Some might say he did stop pursuing Sarah for Eleanor. That counts for something. In a long term, it does. I am upset that he did not come to the decision of withdrawing from courting Lady Sarah by himself.

Erin Kelly says

This is my first book by Lily Maxton, and I am pleased to say that I really enjoyed it. The Townsends series features siblings in Edinburgh that are up and coming in society, a bit on the fringe, but definitely devoted to one another.

The Story-

Eleanor Townsend studies bugs, beetles specifically. She is brilliant in her recordings and findings, and has been requested to present them to an important society. Unfortunately, they believe her to be male. What to do, but dress up as a man and present the findings incognito?! James MacGregor is a prize-fighter who wants only to climb in society for vengeful reasons. When he discovers Eleanor's secret, he decides that she is his way in.

My Thoughts-

Eleanor and James are both somewhat underdogs, so I loved seeing them interact and overcome their own personal issues to be together. This is an excellent friends-to-lovers romance with nice twists that I didn't

expect. I always have a soft spot for when a hero sees something special in a girl that no one else sees, and Maxton does that so well here. Another big plus? The "other woman" is not a b****! Yay! We have real female friendship without backbiting. Way to go! The story has great pacing, identifiable characters, and swoon-worthy moments.

The Bottom Line-

I love when I find an author that isn't with one of the big pubs that is really great. Lily Maxton is the real deal, and this book is thoroughly enjoyable. The different setting of Edinburgh, the development of this great family, and a great twist on a recognizable plot all came together to make me love this book. I will be reading the rest of the series, and I recommend this author to fans of Julia Quinn and Sarah MacLean. 5 stars

Candy Briggs says

Eleanor Townsend was a spinster and an entomologist. She lives with her brother and sister. She has written a paper on her beetles for the Natural History Society. Unfortunately she is a female and they don't accept papers from females. James MacGregor is a pugilist and he is a Scot. He wants to meet Lady Sarah Lark, she is everything he wants, wealth, connections and she is lovely. I thought the story was excellent, It kept my interest thru out. It was fun and you get to learn about beetles, at least their mating habits. The characters are witty, humorous but also have a serious side, too. I loved where she felt she had to tell Lady Sara about her deception and James MacGregor. She liked her too much to hurt her. If you like an easy going read that explains everything then this is the book for you.

I received this book from Net Galley and voluntarily reviewed it.

Juliana Philippa says

SUCH an enjoyable read!! Even writing the review now, a day later, I can't help grinning remembering Eleanor, James, and the *terrific* back-and-forth between them! They both went down in my favorite hero/heroine lists, as well as my favorite couples list; the chemistry and tension between them was superb—entertaining, sweet, funny, and just oh-so-wonderful. James' reaction when he discovers that Eleanor is normally seen by others as a timid, reserved wallflower was hysterical:

"[...] Your sister hasn't insulted me yet."

Georgina shot Eleanor a curious look. "Does she insult you often?"

"No, but when she does it's well placed." At Georgina's silence, he continued, "Don't tell me you've never been subject to her barbed remarks?"

"I can't say that I have." She raised her eyebrows. "Most in Society would call her reserved. A few may even say timid."

"Timid," he exclaimed. His head swiveled toward her, and she felt herself reddening under the incredulity of his stare. "You've not been timid with me."

"It's impossible to be timid with you," she muttered, upset at her mannerisms being the topic of conversation. Upset that he was right and she didn't quite know why it upset her. Anyway, being timid and being reserved were two different things in her mind, and she'd always felt she was more the latter. "If I was, you would flatten me with your careless exuberance and disregard."

Georgina blinked.

MacGregor grinned. "See ... I knew I wasn't imagining it."

"Clearly," Georgina said. She sounded too speculative for Eleanor's taste.

"Being able to make normally reserved women turn sharp-tongued isn't exactly a high recommendation of your social skills," Robert [Eleanor's brother] said to MacGregor, still writing his letter. "I don't know why you sound pleased."

At first glance, Eleanor and James seem like they could not be more different, and in many ways that's true, which is part of what makes their relationship all the more interesting. There's a main theme at the core of each of their stories though that is very similar—pretending to be something / someone else in order to realize their goals and accomplish what they want. James is such a colorful, energetic character (SO FUNNY!!!! Oh I love him), but tries to present a whitewashed front under certain circumstances, because he thinks that's the only way he can get what he wants (or thinks he wants). Likewise, Eleanor has a brilliant scientific mind, but in order for her work to get the attention it deserves and for her paper to be published, she submits it under a man's name, and has to keep up the charade. As Eleanor reflects:

She saw how he was trying to fold himself to fit in a neat little box, when she knew he was so much more than that box could contain. And she saw that she was doing the same thing.

And later ...

It mattered because if a man as uncontrollable as James MacGregor felt like he needed to change who he was to be accepted, what hope did a socially awkward, science-minded almost spinster have?

Why Not 5 Stars? I wish the book was longer—it's not a novella, but it's novella-ish (200-something pages, not 300-400+), and so ended up feeling a bit rushed. Also, James was sometimes a bit slappable; to be clear, it was always understandable why he was so fixated on this ridiculous goal and he was always very open and honest about it with Eleanor, so at least there's no issues of misunderstandings or miscommunications ... but still. James!!! Ugh—sometimes I really wanted to knock him upside the head, tell him to wake-up and realize he wasn't a 12-year-old child anymore, needing to prove something. Still, I got it, and we of course need conflict and something to delay the HEA, so Maxton has to give us something to lead us on, right? ;-)

Summary. The book summary given is surprisingly accurate, so won't take space to add-on (I find a lot of HR book summaries extremely annoying for their inaccuracy / misrepresentation).

The Townsends Series. This is the second in a series, but the couple from Book 1 (*Enchanting the Earl*), which features Eleanor's oldest brother Theo, don't even appear in the story until the Epilogue, so there is definitely no need to read it first. While Eleanor and her other 2 siblings do appear in the prior book, there's not much focus on them—definitely not to the point where you would need to read it to understand Eleanor more.

Recommendations. I only discovered Lily Maxton last year, but she is *terrific!!!* Unfortunately, she doesn't have many full-length novels, but the one of hers I read became one of my all-time-ever favorite romances, and her novella series (and this novella-ish series) are totally worth the read:

- *The Improper Bride* is technically #5 in the series below, but can be read alone (5+ stars—phenomenal!)
- Sisters of Scandals: #1 *The Affair* (3.5 stars); #2 *The Wager* (4 stars); #3 *The Love Match* (4.5 stars)
- The Townsends: #1 *Enchanting the Earl* (4 stars); #2 *The Rogue's Conquest* (4.5 stars)

Another Excerpt Just Because.

The pugilist in him was horrified. "You shouldn't skip meals. It's not good for your body. Cakes can't replace meats and vegetables. And what of fruit? Do you want to get scurvy?"

She lifted one delicate eyebrow. "Currants are a fruit."

"But you've buried them in flour and sugar. If I lived here, I would follow you around with a platter and feed you any number of wholesome things." He said it as a jest, but a part of him wouldn't mind taking care of her when she was too enraptured by her studies to remember to eat. The realization was startling for someone who'd never had a nurturing bone in his body.

And oddly sensual—he had a fleeting image of pressing a slice of orange to Eleanor's lips, her tongue darting out to capture tart droplets of juice that clung to his fingers.

He shook his head to clear it, realizing he was venturing into dangerous territory.

"This isn't much of a replacement for a meal, though," he remarked before finishing half his cake in one bite.

"Very well. Now eat your dry rout cakes and stop pestering me." Her lips twitched as she said it. She poured herself a steaming cup of tea and then set the teapot down again. "I can ring for something else. I know you don't like tea."

"How do you know I don't like tea?"

Her mouth twisted wryly. "Because you drink everything else in about two gulps."

It was odd, and probably ridiculous, that such an observation would cause a little pang in his chest, but cause a pang it did.

"Have you been watching me so closely, then?" He meant it to be lighthearted, but his voice emerged slightly husky.

"Only because you wear things like that." She nodded at his waistcoat. "It's a sort of fascinated horror, really. Like a carriage wreck one can't look away from." Then she proceeded to take a dainty bite of cake, as though she hadn't just blithely insulted him.

He smiled in spite of himself. "You, Eleanor Townsend, are an utter nightmare."

Her lips twitched again, and then spread to a full grin, and something in his chest lifted, or quieted, or fell silent. He didn't know exactly what the sensation was because he'd never felt it

before. But he did know that in that moment, he was not thinking of the future, or how much the porcelain tea set in front of him cost, or how he might buy one someday whether he liked tea or not.

He was simply there, in that moment, there and nowhere else.

Amanda says

“My whole life I’ve been spent looking ahead. Thinking about how to get ahead. Planning how to achieve my goals, because if I didn’t have plans, what did I have? And then you come along, with your cabinets of insects and your pert tongue, and I thought I would use you. I saw how you would fit into my plans. And then you didn’t.”

“Didn’t what?”

*“Fit,” he exclaimed. “You simply came along and blew everything to pieces without even meaning to. **You are gunpowder, Eleanor Townsend.**”*

“Oh,” she breathed. “It’s not a very romantic metaphor, is it?” She was pleased with it all the same.”

The Rogue’s Conquest was another fun read from Lily Maxton, especially since it combined two of my all time favorite tropes: heroine disguises herself as a man and is interested in science. I also enjoyed being reintroduced to the remaining Townsend siblings, this time in a little more detail. Unlike Enchanting the Earl however, this short length story wasn’t fully realized in my opinion, as if a quarter or so of the book was missing. As a result, the romance between the leads was subpar at best, without the signature intimacy or depth that this author is known to instill in all her couples. It was a real disappointment.

Although I liked Eleanor and James, they both felt underdeveloped and two-dimensional as characters. My mind kept going back to Theo Townsend in the previous book and his broody ways. However unpleasant he may have been, at least his broodiness was based on something tangible and evoked a reaction from the reader to the point that he felt like a real person, that you felt all he felt and could therefor sympathize with him, while wanting to clobber him over the head with something at the same time (or maybe that was just me?). James had only mere hints of this. While he was charming and refreshingly candid, I wanted MORE. There was a touchstone moment where James relays his fondness for bitter tastes opposed to sweet, as he and his mother could ill afford to buy sugar when he was growing up. What was seemingly a simple fact felt like anything but and for the first time gave me a hint of what James’s character could have been if it had been further explored. Instead we got a narrow minded hero who was too focused on himself and his own misplaced ambitions to see that everything he needed was right in front of him in the form of a insect obsessed bluestocking.

As for Eleanor, who I loved for her prickliness and logical mind, it sometimes felt like her scientific pursuits were all she was. I will never say no to a sciencey heroine, EVER. But I would have liked to have seen that she was more than *just* the science. She did display a certain tenacity and courage to go after what she wanted. I mean, she risked her good reputation and social standing by dressing up as a man in order to deliver a lecture on the mating habits of beetles simply because it was her passion. That took guts and I admired Eleanor all the more for it and even more so later on when she refused to hide who she was and what she loved to do from the world any longer, damn the consequences. If only both hero and heroine had displayed this kind of gumption more often throughout the story instead of just right up until the end. SIGH. Bad pacing was this novel’s biggest detriment.

Despite everything I just wrote, I thought that Eleanor and James made a great pairing. Through all their bickering and deceptions, they were able to see through to who the other one really was, no pretenses, no falsehoods or societal monikers; *just them*. I always love couples who do that, who encourage each other to be who they are and love them for that reason alone. James melted my heart a number of times the way he encouraged Eleanor's fascination with insects, though he could care less about them himself. But it made HER happy and in turn what made her happy made HIM happy. And obviously this made ME super happy. I just wish the establishment that their feelings for each other had changed to love hadn't come so very late in the story, robbing their romance of its emotional impact. Overall, the book felt more like a missed opportunity than anything else because I know for a fact that Lily Maxton is capable of much better. But I would definitely recommend this to my friends who stan sciencey heroines and the heroes that worship them; you know who you are.

Amanda says

I love strong scientific women!! I loved that she took her research and destiny into her own hands....until James snakes his way in. I have to admit James annoyed me so much but he grew on me. I loved that although Eleanor was forced into this deal she still told James how it was and helped him even if she did not understand why he wanted to change to fit society standards. It was a little frustrating at times when James was a stubborn ass but overall I enjoyed it. I loved Eleanor's family too!!! I hope the rest of them get their story!!

Sissy's Romance Book Review says

'The Rogue's Conquest' by Lily Maxton is Book Two in "The Townsends" Series. This is the story of Eleanor Townsend and James MacGregor. This can be a standalone book.

Eleanor lives with her brother and sister. Eleanor is a happy confirmed spinster who in addition is what I would call a Bluestocking. Eleanor loves Science and has even written papers about beetles. Eleanor when wanting to post her work with the Natural History Society she has to pose as a Man because they do not accept women. So she tries to pretend to be a man and is found out by James. James who wants to become a Gentleman along with getting the hand in marriage to Lady Sarah Lark. James thinks that with Eleanor she can help him those goals and if she does he will help keep her secret. But sometimes what you think you want isn't really what you wanted.

Loved their story! I could not put this book down!

"My honest review is for a special copy I voluntarily read."

<https://www.amazon.com/gp/profile/A2H...>

<https://www.goodreads.com/user/show/1...>

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Ltlmer2 says

Delightful and sweet

I thoroughly enjoyed Eleanor and James' story! It's a quick/short read, plus I didn't want to put it down. They were so cute and playful together (in a charming way), especially for people who you wouldn't expect that from really---and from a plot line that starts off with a bit of blackmail (though it's not really that type of story). The pacing is quick, as in there isn't a lot of angst and turmoil when characters make decisions, but it doesn't feel rushed and you definitely still get to know the characters and enjoy seeing them come together. This story is not as spicy as others of Lily Maxton's, though it does have good chemistry in general and the heat is there in the end.

Robert also continues to be a great character and I am so hoping that he gets his own story (maybe with Lady Sarah???). Surely Georgina will get a wild adventure too! Maxton has an easy and enjoyable style that leaves you wanting more.

Jaclyn says

The Rogue's Conquest is a sweet read featuring an improbable romance sparked by blackmail. Eleanor Townsend is a smart woman with an interest in beetles; however, due to her gender she is unable to present her findings to an academic society. Her sister suggests that Eleanor present as a man, which she does only to be discovered by James MacGregor, a prizefighter who is aiming to enter the upper echelons of society through marriage. James blackmails Eleanor into helping him woo the woman he intends to marry otherwise he will share Eleanor's secret, which will spell ruination for her. Naturally, feelings get in the way of this plan.

In all honestly, *The Rogue's Conquest* requires a large suspension of disbelief when one considered the large social gap between Eleanor and James, as well as the unlikely fact that Eleanor gets so much help in making her masculine disguise. If you can set aside the less than historically accurate premise, *The Rogue's Conquest* is a rather sweet read. James' drive to better himself is understandable and the characterization of Eleanor is well done - her motivation to be accepted into an academic setting as well as her longing for a relationship with James is quite lovely.

While *The Rogue's Conquest* is cute and sweet, I did find the romance to be lacking in depth. This was a short read and because of that, I felt that the romance seemed more instantaneous than it should have been. I liked the fact that James and Eleanor's relationship was founded by friendship (at least after starting with blackmail), but there wasn't a lot of page time devoted to the developing romantic relationship. I would have liked to have seen the growing relationship between these two more fleshed out.

*Review copy provided by the publisher via NetGalley.
