



How the Scoundrel Seduces

Sabrina Jeffries

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The third deliciously sexy novel in the *New York Times* bestselling Duke's Men historical romance series, featuring an investigator who sets out to find gypsies— and unexpectedly finds love.

Investigator Tristan Bonnaud has one aim in life— to make sure that his half-brother George can't ever ruin his life again. So when the pesky Lady Zoe Keane, the daughter of the Earl of Olivier, shows up demanding that the Duke's Men find a mysterious gypsy woman, he seizes the opportunity to also hunt for a gypsy friend who knows secrets about George. Tristan doesn't expect to uncover Lady Zoe's family secrets, as well... or end up falling for the woman who will risk all to discover the truth.

How the Scoundrel Seduces Details

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Author : Sabrina Jeffries

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From Reader Review How the Scoundrel Seduces for online ebook

Inka says

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Rose Blue says

Lady Zoe Keane's world is turned topsy-turvy when her aunt tells her that she is not the biological child of her parents. Zoe's father is an earl, and the title is a rare one that can pass to a female child if there is no male heir. Since she has no siblings, she's in line to inherit, and is very afraid that, if her aunt's claim is true, a

scandal could occur if the knowledge is made public. In order to get a definitive answer, Zoe hires the discreet investigators known as the Duke's Men to find the truth.

Tristan Bonnard is the investigator assigned to her case, much to Zoe's dismay, as the two had a previous, somewhat antagonistic encounter. However, the trail leads to gypsies, who were friends with Tristan as a child, so he is the logical man to handle the questioning. Tristan is the illegitimate son of a deceased viscount. Years ago, at his father's deathbed, his legitimate half-brother destroyed a document bequeathing him some valuables, and tossed him and his mother and sister off the property where they had been living. This forced Tristan, at the tender age of seventeen, to be responsible for the welfare of his family. So, now, he has no love for the noble class, and has become somewhat of a scoundrel.

Right from the start, sparks are flying between Zoe and Tristan. They each battle the attraction in their own way – Zoe doesn't show Tristan much respect at the beginning, and acts the part of the snooty countess. He, in turn, refuses to acknowledge her superior social status, and constantly baits her. Soon, whenever they stop bickering long enough, they are stealing kisses. I liked these two characters very much, as it's clear they are both wearing masks, and just trying to protect themselves.

I found myself totally engrossed in this book, hating to put it down. There is a lot more that turns up in the search for the truth about Zoe's birth, and it has ties to Tristan's own childhood. Sabrina Jeffries has crafted a very well written story, where the unanswered questions keep you on the edge of your seat. There is also an odious villain, who finally gets his due. The main focus, though, is the romance. The scoundrel, Tristan, became a different man as he fell in love, and he turned into a true hero. The resolution was particularly satisfying because of the hard knocks he endured earlier in life.

This is the third book in the Duke's Men series, and it can be read as a standalone, but there are related characters in the first two books. In particular, reading book one, *What the Duke Desires*, will provide more insight into this story. I found this to be one of Sabrina Jeffries' most enjoyable books – and I recommend it for her fans, as well as all historical romance lovers who enjoy a well plotted, exciting and romantic read.

As reviewed in *The Season for Romance*:
<http://theseasonforromance.com/wordpr...>

Jennifer says

Readers of Jeffries's Duke's Men series first met Tristan Bonnard in *What the Duke Desires* and I, for one, have been intrigued by him ever since. He is the illegitimate son of a viscount who was cast out of his childhood home (along with his mother and sister) after his father's death. After years of working any job he could get a hold of, Tristan is now a professional investigator working alongside his half-brother, Dominick Manton. He has always been wary of getting involved with the aristocracy so his world turns upside down when Lady Zoe Keane asks for his help.

I really liked both Tristan and Zoe. Tristan has had some hard times in his life and isn't very trusting with anyone besides his immediate family. But, he can't resist his protective nature as well as his hidden attraction to Lady Zoe. I was a bit afraid that the author would overdo it on the "I'm illegitimate and therefore not worthy of you" theme that is used so often in these types of stories, but, thankfully, it was a minimal issue.

For her part, I liked how devoted Zoe was to her family's estate and the people who relied on its success. She did have some reckless moments that made me shake my head, but she usually admitted her errors and learned from them. I also enjoyed the fact that she didn't let Tristan's past define his character. While she was constantly given reasons why he was such a scoundrel, she always gave him the benefit of the doubt.

Besides the romance, Sabrina Jeffries also provides readers with a mystery: Lady Zoe's birth parents. She hires Manton Investigations to figure out if she is truly the daughter of the Earl of Olivier and this causes a whole subplot which, of course, ends up connecting to Tristan's family. I did think the mystery was a little obvious, but that didn't ruin the enjoyment of seeing Tristan and Zoe work together. I also liked the respectful way that the author depicted the Romany culture.

It was also great to see more of Tristan's brother, Dominick, whose future was destroyed upon the old viscount's death as well. There is definitely still some tension between him and his former fiancée and I am excited to read their story next. And, finally, we got to see some resolution on the horrible deeds that Dominick and Tristan's brother, the current Viscount Rathmoor, has been doing the entire series.

All in all, I did enjoy *How the Scoundrel Seduces* and the way that it sets up for the conclusion of the entire series. Zoe and Tristan were very easy to root for and I thought their romance was entertaining. Another success for Sabrina Jeffries!

I received a free e-galley of this book from Pocket Books via Edelweiss in exchange for an honest review.

Anna says

I was hoping this book would be about Dom and Lady Jane from *What the Duke Desires*. Oh well...

I still cannot wait for this book! Especially now since Dom and Jane have a book coming out in January! :)

Cyndi says

Pretty good book. Didn't require a lot of deep thought, which can be relaxing. The characters could have been a bit more developed, but maybe I needed to read more in the series to connect. Unfortunately this is the only one on overdrive. As usual overdrive skips a few books in a series. Anyway, not the best narrator voice. Her American accent was cringe worthy. So skip that and just read the book.

Caz says

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

This is the third book in Ms. Jeffries' current series, *The Duke's Men*, the name which is loosely applied to Manton Investigations, the firm built and run by Dominic Manton and his half-brother, Tristan Bonnaud.

Towards the end of the previous book, *When the Rogue Returns*, Dom and Tristan were working an investigation involving a theft and kidnapping when they were literally stumbled upon by the spirited Lady Zoe Keane. In return for keeping quiet and beating a hasty retreat, Zoe secured Dom's promise that she could call in a favour sometime – and at the beginning of this book, that time has come.

Zoe is a rather unusual heiress. The only child of the Earl of Olivier, she is one of the few women in England who is able to inherit her father's title and property and she will therefore be a Countess in her own right. But that is part of the problem and the reason she needs the help of Manton Investigations. For Zoe's aunt has let slip that she isn't actually the daughter of the earl and his late wife, but the daughter of a gypsy woman who sold her baby to the childless couple – and Zoe needs to know the truth. If what her aunt has said is untrue, then nothing needs to change, but if it is true, then she needs to find out, and, just as importantly find out who else knows about it. Matters are complicated by the fact that her cousin – who is next in line for the title after Zoe – is shortly to arrive from America, and it may be necessary for Zoe to marry him just to make things that extra bit watertight.

Tristan is a charming scoundrel who has, in the manner of many a hero of historical romance, sworn off love because of the misery it ultimately caused his mother. But he cares deeply for those few who are close to him, and would do anything for them. He is not fond of the aristocracy given the treatment meted out to him and his family at the hands of his half-brother George and his own father's irresponsibility, which accounts for his cynicism over Zoe's concern for her estate, making it clear he believes her to be interested only in monetary gain rather than in her responsibilities towards her tenants and estate workers.

Tristan senses Zoe doesn't like him, and takes great delight in needling her. Panicked by the almost overwhelming feelings of attraction she is experiencing toward him, Zoe decides she absolutely does not want Tristan involved in her case. But he grew up around Romany gypsies, is familiar with their customs and can speak their language, so he is ideally placed to get the information Zoe needs. The fact that it will enable Tristan to secretly pursue an inquiry of his own is an added attraction. For years, he's wanted revenge against his half-brother George for robbing him of his inheritance and having his mother and sister evicted from their home on the Rathmoor estate. Tristan is searching for a Romany named Milosh, who he believes has information about George which will help Tristan in his quest for vengeance, so visiting Romany camps in order to gain information about Zoe's situation presents him with the perfect opportunity to do a little investigating of his own.

There's plenty of chemistry between the two leads, and they're practically unable to keep their hands off each other from the get-go, which means that the romance feels a little underdeveloped in the early stages of the book. Tristan has made a point of never dallying with "ladies", preferring instead to seek his pleasures with women who know what the score. But Zoe is proving the exception – he knows he shouldn't want her, but he does, even to the point of considering marriage for the first time in his life.

I enjoyed the story, and zipped through it in a couple of sessions, but even though the writing is good and the principals are engaging, that isn't enough to disguise the fact that the story depends on a massive contrivance for it to progress beyond a certain point. (This is an issue I also had with the previous book in the series). I found the constant hints dropped by the author about Zoe's possible origins through her love of "dash" – her preferences for unusual and bright colour combinations, for example – to be a bit heavy-handed. And I really disliked the part where Lisette (Tristan's sister, the Duchess of Lyons, who was the heroine in the first book, *What the Duke Desires*) basically spills the beans on Tristan's past to Zoe, telling her things he had specifically not wanted to talk to her about himself. Now, I know there are times in a novel when a character perhaps needs a bit of a nudge or pointer, but this feels overly intrusive, given that Tristan clearly isn't ready to divulge that information. In fact, it has the flavour of an info-dump as Lisette fills Zoe in on what

happened to them after their father's death, and how hard Tristan had had to work in order to support his family. I have no problem when a roguish character is revealed to have a heart of gold beating inside his splendidly muscled chest, but the heroine should discover those laudable things about the hero for herself, or hear about them from him. To simply have the hero's sister tell the heroine what an admirable man her brother is, diminishes its impact and means there's nothing left for the heroine to find out on her own. She can now go the hero completely sure that he's an honourable man and a safe repository for her heart, and once she's convinced of that, we might as well all pack up and go home.

Incidentally, I find it difficult to believe that Ms Jeffries wrote those lines where Tristan describes his male appendage as a "beast" with a straight face. Because I certainly didn't have one when I read it!

On a more positive note – one of the things Ms Jeffries does very well in the book is to incorporate and explain many Romany customs and beliefs, which is both informative and interesting. I also liked the emphasis placed on Zoe's dedication to the land and her fierce determination to make sure that she would be able to ensure the security of her dependants, and what we saw of her relationship with her stern, but obviously loving, father.

I'm giving **How the Scoundrel Seduces** a very qualified recommendation, because in spite of my criticisms, it does have things to recommend it, namely the writing, the well-researched background and the fact that it finally resolves the plotline revolving around Tristan and George. I wouldn't recommend it as your first introduction to *The Duke's Men* but if you're following the series, as I am, then it's a decent addition to the series.

? Kimberly says

Five reasons to grab an iced coffee and lose yourself in **How the Scoundrel Seduces**

1. The Duke's Men run an investigative agency on Bow-street and they are all yummy, unique, complicated, noble and totally swoon-worthy! Jeffries has fleshed them out with interesting histories and plenty of snark and wit.
2. Lady Zoe Keane is feisty, and daring. I love how independent and persistent she is. On more than one occasion she made me giggle, and I loved her gypsy spirit. The passion shown towards her family's estate and tenants made her a heroine admire.
3. Tristan Bonnaud is complicated, and sweet even if he denies it. Born a bastard, and mistreated by his brother the rightful heir you cannot help but have a soft spot for him. He made a youthful mistake for the love of his mother and sister and has dearly paid. Tristan has been a favorite since the beginning of this series and I delighted in learning all of his secrets.
4. The mystery of Zoe's family secret was fascinating and well plotted. Danger and twists kept me thoroughly engaged as I rooted for both characters. Jeffries weaved in characters from Tristan's own past into Zoe's secrets which notched up the suspense and satisfied readers of the series.
5. The romance is wonderful from the banter to the heated kisses. Zoe is brazen and I loved how it undid Tristan. From the beginning these two aggravated each other even as they were drawn together. The spark felt genuine and each enhanced the other.

Susan says

We first met Tristan in the first book, *What the Duke Desires*, as co-owner of Manton Investigations with his second half brother and got some of his background. Tristan and his sister are the illegitimate children of the late Viscount of Rathmoor. Tristan's father died when Tristan was seventeen, after writing out a codicil to his will that would ensure that Tristan and his family were taken care of. Unfortunately, immediately after the man breathed his last, Tristan's oldest half brother, the new viscount, threw the codicil into the fire and promised that there would be nothing for them. Tristan, being young and hotheaded, stole the horse he would have inherited and used the money from selling it to get his mother and sister out of England. Over the next years he did whatever he had to in order to support them. For the last several years he has been working as an investigator, but always with a burning need for revenge against his half brother George. He is always looking for something that he can use against George.

Lady Zoe Keane made her first appearance at the end of the second book in the series, *When the Rogue Returns*, when she nearly blew an investigation Tristan was working on. She and Tristan had a rather antagonistic meeting, and in promising to keep his secret, Zoe extracted the promise of a future favor from the investigators. At the beginning of this book, Zoe has come to claim that favor. She is the only child of Lord Olivier, and thanks to an unusual inheritance circumstance, will inherit her father's lands and the title of countess when he dies. Unfortunately, thanks to something her aunt has said, Zoe believes there is some question about whether she really is her parents' child. She wants the investigators to find out if it is true. Added to that stress is the arrival of her American cousin, who will inherit if Zoe does not. Her father and aunt are encouraging her to marry the man, which would keep her on the lands she loves so much, no matter what happens.

Once again, the meeting between Tristan and Zoe is contentious. Tristan thinks that Zoe is bored and making drama out of nothing. Zoe thinks that Tristan is a womanizer of the worst sort. Much to her dismay, Tristan is the best one to work on her case, as he is experienced with Gypsy culture and speaks the language. Tristan doesn't really think there's any truth to her story, but checking it out will give him the opportunity to find his Gypsy friend who bought the horse, and find out what he knows of Tristan's brother George. What neither of them counted on was the steamy attraction between them.

I liked Tristan and Zoe, though each of them had their issues. Tristan is, at heart, an honorable man who has done the things he has in order to protect the family he loves. He is also a bit of a scoundrel, in that he has quite a reputation with the ladies. But he keeps things light with them, avoiding any kind of commitment or emotional entanglement. He doesn't believe in love, having seen what havoc that supposed emotion caused in his mother's life. He also looks at the aristocracy with a cynical eye, lumping them all with his brother George. He's not happy about his attraction to Zoe for two reasons. First, it's too strong and tends to make him lose control, not something he's ever done before. Second, nothing can come of it. After all, he's illegitimate with a shady background and she's a future countess.

Zoe is a woman who has grown up knowing that her father's lands are going to be her responsibility and she doesn't mind at all. She loves the land and the people. She is devastated to learn that there is some question about who she really is and is determined to find out the truth. If she really isn't her father's daughter, she may have no choice but to marry her cousin if she wants to be able to continue to care for her people. She's

also stubborn, and isn't going to just sit back and wait for Tristan's report, she plans to be involved every step of the way. But that puts her in his company far too often for her peace of mind. Her attraction to Tristan makes her realize that marriage to another man would be a miserable life.

I loved seeing them together. Tristan is excellent at pushing her buttons and they are constantly in verbal battles with each other. But those battles turn into kisses when the sparks get to be too much. They also get to know each other better and realize that there is more to each other than had been apparent in their initial impressions. I really liked seeing Zoe fall for the man Tristan is now and not letting his past affect her feelings, though she's unsure of his. Tristan realizes that Zoe isn't just a spoiled society miss, and his feelings for her continue to grow. But he's a bit insecure because of their differences, and doesn't know what her feelings for him really are. It takes surviving a dangerous situation for them both to realize that only by risking it all can they have it all.

I really enjoyed the mystery of Zoe's background. As she and Tristan get further into the search for the truth, her search and his begin to follow the same path. There is a very interesting twist to the identity of Zoe's mother and it adds to the building tension. Pursuing information about Zoe's natural father involves Tristan's Gypsy friend, and creates the possibility that a huge scandal could erupt. I loved seeing Zoe's adoptive father get involved, now that the cat is out of the bag, and his presence is vital during the final confrontation. It was quite intense as all the players came together, and I wondered how everything was going to work out. I thought it was pretty realistic, with believable actions on all parts. I enjoyed the reaction of Zoe's cousin at the end, and how everything worked out.

Cruth says

My copy received from publisher via NetGalley with thanks.

Author: Sabrina Jeffries

First published: 2014

Length: 4604 locations

Setting: 1829, London. Late Regency.

Sex: Explicit. Infrequent.

Hero: Illegitimate son of Viscount. Private Investigator.

Heroine: Countess-to-be. Searching for her true parents.

One of the great joys of historical fiction is the ability to *learn* something whilst being entertained. Jeffries obviously embraces history. One gets the distinct impression she enjoys the research and creation of a complex World. Along with her clever plots, Jeffries weaves historical tidbits, people, places and social history.

In *Never Seduce a Scoundrel* we were taken to the Dartmoor Massacre in Devon.

Beware a Scot's Revenge made many references to the issues resulting from Scotland land owners moving to sheep (Cherviot's), as well as illicit whiskey making.

A Hellion in Her Bed delved into trade, brewing and a woman's role in that time period.

And in *How the Scoundrel Seduces* Jeffries gives us a peek into the lives of the gypsies/Romany in Regency England. As other authors slip French words into their stories, Jeffries introduces Romany. We visit their campsites; we touch on proscription. It enlivens the narrative, giving a good but not spectacular tale added

depth and colour.

It is what keeps me coming back to historical fiction/romances.

Now, as to *this* book in particular.

It's a nice story. The third "real" book in the series. It stands happily alone with a solid conclusion rather than HFN. The characters are interesting and their tale unusual.

But it wasn't *great*.

I wasn't that enamoured of the characters. I found Tristan one-dimensional and Zoe, strong and intelligent, could have done better. Cousin Keane has some great possibilities!

In the end there wasn't anything truly *remarkable* about their tale.

The Duke's Men:

Cross-over book 'Twas the Night after Christmas - Pierce Waverly, the Earl of Devonmont and Camilla Stuart

Book 1 What the Duke Desires - Maximilian Cale, the Duke of Lyons and Lisette Bonnaud

Book 2 When the Rogue Returns - Victor Cale and Isabella

Book 2.5 Dorinda and the Doctor - Dr. Percy Worth and Dorinda Nunley

Book 3 How the Scoundrel Seduces - Tristan Bonnaud and Lady Zoe Keane

Book 4 If the Viscount Falls - Dominick Manton and Jane Vernon

References:

Author's website: <http://www.sabrinajeffries.com/>

(ISBN 978-1-4516-9353-9)

-CR-

Caz says

I've given this an A for narration and B for content at AudioGals. I liked it better in audio :P

In the first book in this series, What the Duke Desires, we learned that Viscount Rathmoor had two families – two sons (George and Dominick) by his late wife, and a son and daughter (Tristan and Lisette) by his French mistress of twenty years. The viscount's failure to provide for all his children leads to a last-ditch death-bed attempt to add a codicil to his will, but he is thwarted by George, who destroys it in front of Tristan and then orders him, his mother and his sister to leave the estate before his father's body is even cold.

In **How the Scoundrel Seduces**, we see those events and subsequent fall-out from Tristan's point of view, as narrator Corrie James paints a truly vivid picture of the dying viscount and his two sons, with George sounding immediately unpleasant and Tristan youthful and somewhat naïve.

You can read the rest of this review at AudioGals.

Lover of Romance says

Tristan Bonnaud, has one goal in life, to get revenge against his brother, that almost destroyed him and his family who had to flee the country and live in France for a time. But Tristan is part of a investigative business, and is good at it. Then a woman walks through the door needing his help that coincides with finding his own justice and searching for his long time gypsy friend. Zoe Keane, is searching for the truth of her birth. When her aunts makes allegations to her, hinting that she was adopted and not born to her parents by blood, she needs to find the truth. Zoe is responsible in managing her families estate, one that she has worked hard to maintain and will do anything to keep, because it is her greatest passion in life. Her search leads her to the Duke's Men, and Tristan. At first she doesn't want Tristan at all, but he is the most experienced in Gypsy tradition and language, and she soon learns that he will be the key to finding the truth about her parentage. But what begins as a innocent search for her origins, turns into a passionate affair, a love blossoms when least expected and soon Tristan and Zoe will be tested to the limits of their feelings for each other...but will the love they share be enough?

How The Scoundrel Seduces is the third installment in the Duke's Men series. I adored this book....my goodness, this story seemed so much like her older books, which are still my top favorite romances to read to this day. I fell madly in love with everything to do with this story and could barely contain my excitement as I was reading this. Definitely my favorite book of the series, it had pizzazz and such intensity in the romance that you just find it beyond endearing. Sabrina Jeffries has succeeded once again in putting together a love story that will bring a tear to your eye and bound to burn in your memory and make it a romance to never forget!

We begin with Zoe Keane, needing to find the truth and trying to contain anything she learns, so that she can be the heir to her father's properties, land that is everything to her. When she goes for help, the last thing she wants is to work with Tristan, whom she sees as arrogant and full of himself. But despite her protests, they start working together. Tensions are high between the two, but so is desire, and these two characters are about to light a flame that will consume them. This story was very unique in the setting, and I always love it when you throw Gypsy's into the mix...it adds a certain flair element into the story that really draws you in even more into the story. The characters in the story here are intense and magical...I loved each and every one....even the villain had a certain dramatizing quality to him, and his involvement in the story is crucial and I LOVED every intense and ever suspenseful moment.

I found How The Scoundrel Seduces charming, witty and a fun story to the series. A new favorite romance that is solid and sure in its foundation. Even though the relationship starts rocky, it turns into a lively and adventurous romance, with a magnetism that tugs at those heart strings. You won't be able to pull away from this one. Be ready for a story to master your heart and soul!!! MEMORABLE TILL THE END!!!

☞???? [Punya Reviews...] says

My review contains spoilers and they're mostly my thoughts as I went with the book... for more, visit [Punya Reviews...](#)

Sabrina Jeffries' *How the Scoundrel Seduces*, book 3 of the *Duke's Men* series, tells us the story of the Scoundrel of the Bonnaud/Manton Family, Tristan. I've been eagerly awaiting his book ever since I finished book 2. I loved most aspects of this story, unless I count in some things that also left me a little exasperated.

As for those who don't know, you should probably start with the *Hellions of Hallstead Hall*, IF you want to be introduced to the protagonists of this series, who were secondary characters. It's not strictly necessary but fun nonetheless. 'Duke's Men' is a fancy name for Manton's Investigation, run by Dominic Manton. Dominic or Dom's younger half-siblings (his deceased father, the viscount's mistress's children) also help him running this company. Though Dom's elder brother, George, can't stand the sight of either Tristan or Lisette, Dom is fond of both and appreciates having them close. Thus he has been banished and disinherited. But Dom doesn't care a whit, he has studied and happy doing what he loves best.

The Duke of Lyons, Max, was one of the characters from the *Hellions* series. He's also the H of book 1 of this series, *What the Duke Desires*. Thankfully, he's now happily married to Lisette.

Max's long lost cousin, Victor, was rescued in book 1. At that time, Max thought himself alone in this world. With the rumors of a so-called curse hanging above his head, he was only too happy to have someone to call 'brother' again, even if he was unable to find his own brother, the original heir, who passed away long ago. Victor's story can be found in *When the Rogue Returns*.

Victor was treated by Dr. Worth, and you can read his story in a novella called *Dorinda and the Doctor*.

Max hired Manton's Investigation to find his brother. Even though the result wasn't what he was looking for, this case received much popularity in the media nonetheless. Thus, Manton's Investigation got its fancy name 'The Duke's Men'. Dom is not amused by all the unwanted attentions but Tristan, the mischief-maker, obviously loves it. Dom, though, appreciates that this helped boosting his business. Then Lisette went and fell in love with Max. As Victor gradually got hale and hearty, he became restless. He was then given an assignment by Dom which also corresponded with his own mission in life; to find his erstwhile wife and teach her a lesson for betraying him. I would say, I loved these installments much, except for Dr. Worth's novella.

At the end of book 2, Dom and Tristan are caught up in Victor's case, most especially, to save the life of his wife and daughter. To help him out, Tristan had to go under a disguise. Lady Zoe, who was attending the house-party where it all took place, saw something she shouldn't have. Upon hearing they're the Duke's Men, she asked for a favor to keep their secret safe. Dom and Tristan had to accede to her wishes. It was apparent that though she doesn't look spoiled, Lady Zoe loves getting her way, much to Tristan's irritation.

How the Scoundrel Seduces essentially starts from there and is based on this 'favor' that Zoe asked for. Even though she's been a loving daughter, Zoe has always known there's something not right with her dark hair and darker skin. She's an heiress on her own right so she's the only heir to Viscount Olivier's legacy. Zoe is an accomplished Lady as well. When she hears from her aunt, Lord Olivier's sister, that she has Romany blood in her, she becomes worried. Lord Olivier, formerly a Major who inherited the title after his elder brother died, is a white man. So was his wife, whom Zoe has known as her only mother. What is this now?

This puts Zoe in a dilemma. Very soon, one of her American's cousins, an accomplished artist, Jeremy Keane will arrive. It's Lord Olivier's wish that they marry to keep the family legacy into the family. Zoe is not averse to it. She's been bred to abide by her responsibilities as an heir and will do whatever is asked of her like the dutiful girl. She loves her estate, which she has, so far, been managing successfully, all thanks to her father who trained her early on. But if what her aunt told her is true and the words get out, not only she'll

be disinherited of everything but also, her family's good name will be in shambles. Lord Olivier refuses to even acknowledge any truth in that. But Zoe needs to know it, to confirm that maybe her aunt is wrong. Who best can help her but the famous Manton's Investigation?

As gypsies, Romany people were considered lowest of the low by the white people. They were associated with all sorts of crime and in no way accepted in and around the larger society. There might've been a part of them who were criminals, just as any white man around them but they were still stigmatized and ostracized. Anyone having any link to them was also treated the same. But that's not all the Roms were. They had their own culture, beliefs and lifestyle that didn't go with the people around them. They don't have material ties to the world, hence they'd move as a clan from one place to another, making a living from selling this and that along the way. And it certainly didn't mean they were not rich in their own heritage, to something they held on even today. In here, this social inequality plays a dominant role.

I could understand Zoe's problem and her subsequent (and secret, her father's can't know about this) arrival to the Manton's. There she meets up with Dom. Soon Tristan joins in too. Now here is the thing, they got off on wrong foot the last time, especially because Tristan has a decided dislike of the *Tonnish* people, apart from the few that are in his immediate family, like Max. They have treated his family, including her mother, so poorly, that he'd rather not mix with them. So it was no surprise that he begins being rude to Zoe on spot. Dom becomes a little exasperated by Tristan's behavior but Zoe can hold on her own. She doesn't care to be cowed by a rude man, even if he's handsome as the devil. Though I got a little annoyed by Tristan's presumptions and behavior, I can confirm that he had a hard on ever since he met her, so you do the math. I'm sure that was one of the reasons why he was so grouchy to her. Want but can't have. Ooh the misery! :p

The case ultimately goes to Tristan, to Zoe's frustration, for he knows the Romany camps in and around the city like the back of his hands. It's also because he had a 'history' with them, as you'll know in the beginning as a flashback. There are different sides of that flashback present in the other installments too, as an opening scene, that tells us how trouble found the Bonnauds and things came to be this way today. Above all, it's a fact that Tristan can speak splendid Romany, so to Dom, he seemed to be the best choice. But then he has a 'history' with beautiful but loose women too. And Zoe is rather an unconventional beauty with her beautiful skin, dark hair and curvy body. Dom had to give Tristan *that* look that says 'no game with this one'. As if Tristan would! She's a 'Lady' for crying out loud, even if at the moment that status seems questionable. And Tristan always preferred honest women, like opera dancers and actresses. Lady Zoe possesses no threat to his sanity or his well-being... even if he questions these things by the reaction of his body whenever she's around.

Tristan is frustrated by his body's demand and he and Zoe are bound to meet, secretly, because of the case. He, at one point, decides to work on the case so that he can also start looking for a Rom named Milosh to whom he 'sold' a horse many moons ago. The horse his father willed him before his death. But the codicil was burned by George, his stepbrother, right afterwards. Later George did everything to catch Tristan so that he's tried and hanged for 'horse thieving'. But Tristan escaped to France with his family. They didn't fare well and their mother died without any treatment because of their poverty stricken state. It was quite recently that Tristan returned after working with the Sûreté Nationale, trained as a bona fide investigator. His primary object was to stay close to Dom and Lisette, also try everything to exact revenge on George. Now it seems that he can work on both cases side by side.

In between, Zoe's cousin Jeremy arrives. He turns out to be one handsome man. Though Zoe likes him, she's not sure of his habit of frequenting brothels. And who else but Tristan to show him all the 'fun' places around London when they met at a ball later! But what disturbs Zoe is rather Tristan's womanizing ways, that he may have been with someone else on their outing. But Tristan later denies this. Right now, there's

only one woman in his mind. And so we find them dancing around this attraction but rather unsure of what to do considering the circumstances.

After some investigation, Tristan comes up with some information. Lord Olivier did bring Zoe as an infant, and his wife was with him when this happened. Zoe gave him the name of her possible biological mother, Drina. She then insists that Tristan take her with him on his investigations. The trips to the Romany camps don't bring much result. They can't trace Drina, for now, but they sure do kiss each-other's face off whenever they get the opportunity. Then there was a very pregnant Lisette's equally unsubtle attempt at matchmaking for her older brother. She'd love to see everyone around her happily settle down it seems, just the way she was lucky enough to have. She likes Zoe, who seemed to her like the perfect candidate for Tristan. She even decides to tell Zoe of their sordid past and the things they'd suffered. It does help Zoe to soften up towards Tristan even more.

At one point, Tristan is finally able to track down Milosh. He needs to see him and discuss their 'past'. He can also inquire about Drina here Milosh is at that moment. Zoe, as usual, tags along, though Tristan is not happy about this. He's worried about her safety but when Zoe is determined, even he can't stop her! This trip (finally) proves to be fruitful. When Milosh takes one look at Zoe, he exclaims 'Drina' in such a way that both Tristan and she are surprised. From there we get the whole heartbreaking story of love, a pregnancy and apparent betrayal. Zoe learns that she's probably not her father's mistress's child, as she was vaguely hoping for. Drina is, or was, Milosh's older sister who got entangled with George's man-of-all-trade, Hucker. The same Hucker who would do anything George asks of him, including all the dirty work.

Tristan hated Hucker with a passion, almost as much as he did George. Hucker, who once was a nice enough guy, changed with years, becoming a puppet for George's whims. He made a lot of trouble for Tristan's family on George's behalf. Tristan's not sure how he'd react, if Zoe indeed is his daughter. At one time, Milosh's people were allowed to be on Tristan's father's land, who didn't mind about it all that much like his peers. This is how Drina and Hucker met. In Rom culture, you don't mix up with a *gadjo* or risk banishment. Poor Drina got caught and was banished by her people. After she got pregnant, she began living with Hucker permanently. Milosh, for one, didn't want his sister to suffer but he couldn't do anything at that time. But he had hoped that someday she'll return to them.

Sadly, that never happened. And though, at first, Milosh thought Zoe 'Drina', he knew almost instantly that she's too young to be his sister. But this also made one thing clear. Drina was Zoe's mother. Now it's apparent that she has an uncle with a big family as well. After learning Drina has died, Milosh instantly suspects Hucker and becomes enraged. He vows to exact revenge, to kill him on spot. But Tristan can't have it. If Milosh is to face Hucker, George would inevitably know, and he'd do everything to ruin Zoe's reputation. After all, they're trying to be hush-hush about it, not bandy it about the whole country! With George, you can be sure that he'd spread this bit of news with utter relish.

Tristan and Zoe already became a lot closer over their regular meetings and trips together. After this news, she seeks solace in his arms. Though Zoe knows Tristan might not marry her, as he has told her many times that he's not the marrying kind, she still wants him. As for Tristan, what Zoe doesn't know is that in the deepest recesses of his jaded heart, he has been hoping that things were different for them. But she's an heiress and their match can never happen. Either way, she'd be socially unacceptable if she marries the French Whore's bastard, as Tristan's mother was known throughout, thanks to George. Ah, the irony!

But then, they are caught together by Lord Olivier. When that happened, both Tristan and Zoe was having conflicting thoughts regarding each other; does he love me? Does she love me? Does she love me for myself? Has he proposed because it's the 'right thing to do'? But ultimately, they both express the intention

of getting married. That they want to be together, even if it means Zoe's reputation will be ruined once the words get out on who she's marrying. Then comes the hardest part; Lord Olivier *finally* having to come clean about the circumstances of Zoe's birth. It wasn't as surprising as much as it was emotional, Zoe and Tristan already having a good idea what went on. It only confirmed everything. Zoe was in emotional distress knowing how Lord Oliver and his wife found a heavily pregnant and badly beaten up Drina on the road, who died in the next hour giving birth to her. The opportunity to know her birth mother lost even before it began.

Lord Olivier demands that Tristan take him to Milosh and they work things out about Zoe's future. Zoe's Romany heritage can't be known if she is to survive the scrutiny and stay an heiress. Jeremy, for all his faults, was the easiest to handle. He never seemed like an evil person to me, and he kinda accepts the fact that Zoe is not marrying him. Oh well, all he wanted was to work on his creative juices, among other things. *eyeroll* Moreover, he has his own load of cash inherited from his family, so why would he really bother? For Zoe, in her heart, she didn't care what happened as long as she's with Tristan. If only she had some idea what was on his mind.....

Milosh does give Tristan, Lord Olivier and Dom, who join them later, a hard time when he goes to search out Hucker anyway and avenge Drina's death. This part of the story was quite suspenseful and the truth revealed making the read more even emotional. As they face Milosh and Hucker, news spread through George's men. Unsurprisingly, he doesn't waste one moment before butting in. I had an inclination that he'd get his comeuppance sooner or later, which he does, but it doesn't mean I didn't feel bad for him. Oh, I do NOT condone his spiteful behavior but I could totally see where it came from. Father moving away from mother who loved him, finding a mistress in a few years of marriage, then the infant little brother's birth killing his mother... it was a seriously sad and messy history, thanks to the old Viscount! Even Tristan and Dom saw why George became so bitter. They never liked the man but I totally appreciated that they accepted the reasons *why* it might've been. Most importantly that it was essentially their father's fault for breaking up their family, and not George.

Now, the Manton/Bonnaud family is just looking to bond and create, not break things up. I have to say I felt very glad for them. Dom becomes the Viscount after George's passing. Tristan and Zoe marries, knowing that Hucker didn't kill her mother. In fact, Hucker loved her and was looking forward to marry her. Sadly, George's meddling ruined everything for them. Now, Hucker knows he can't even claim his right, as do Milosh but that doesn't mean they can't be close by and be a family in their own way. Hucker is willing to start anew to make his daughter happy. As for Zoe, she certainly doesn't wanna let go of her own people, found through so much anger, frustration and tears. She's all ready to settle down with Tristan, having the love of her loved ones surrounding them both.

Before the conclusion, I'd like to mention that Dom was engaged to a girl named Jane, who is also George's wife's cousin. For some reasons, their engagement broke. We do see a few scenes with Jane and Dom, both clearly still into each-other yet have not been able to break down the walls that were erected in the intervening years. Even Lisette's constant match-making has not been able to get these two even to talk. So was it Dom's fault, for Jane seems to be mad at him for 'something' that might've made him do it. I guess we just have to wait till Dom's book, *If the Viscount Falls*!

4 stars for *How the Scoundrel Seduces*. If you're a SJ fan like me, don't miss out on this installment!

I was auto-approved for this ARC from Pocket Books via edelweiss which didn't influence my review and rating in any way.

Jaclyn says

Sabrina Jeffries was my gateway drug into the historical romance genre. I jumped into it after I finished my master's degree and have never looked back. Ever since stumbling upon Jeffries' novels, she has been one of my favourite and go-to authors in historical romance. To date, *A Notorious Love* is my favourite Jeffries book, but she is an author that never disappoints, and *How the Scoundrel Seduces* is no exception.

The latest installment in *The Duke's Men* is about Tristan Bonnaud (brother to Lisette from book 1) and Zoe Keane. The pair originally met in the previous book, *When the Rogue Returns* and while there was no love lost there, Tristan is the only one Zoe can turn to when she needs some investigative assistance. It turns out Zoe's parents are not her biological ones. In fact, her parents took her as their own after her mother dies in childbirth. However, this is a complicated matter as Zoe is heir to a great fortune and if anyone should learn of her true parentage she could lose control of the estate she manages when her father dies. Since Zoe's father refuses to discuss the matter and her mother dead, Zoe is forced to turn to the Duke's Men to track down the truth, and just which investigator should be assigned the case, Tristan Bonnaud.

Tristan initially doesn't have a whole heck of a lot of respect for Zoe, but that's more to do with his own experiences with the aristocracy than anything to do with Zoe herself. As they work together, Tristan starts to revise his opinion of Zoe, although this process of reexamination is not without it's trials (this is a romance, after all).

I really enjoyed returning to this series and I really liked both the characters of Zoe and Tristan. Zoe especially was a fun heroine. She was ahead of her time because of her unique inheritance situation. This situation makes her life all the more complicated as it means she has to choose her husband with care, since he will be representing her in the House of Lords not to mention assisting her with the management of the estate when her father is gone. I think that this makes Zoe grow up fast and throughout the novel she displays a depth of maturity that I didn't expect considering her relatively young age. I also liked the fact that Zoe dealt with these restrictions to her freedom with poise. She recognized that she had a duty because of her position, and while she does come to realize that she also needs to act for herself as well, she never forgets that she has others relying on her. I thought this was admirable and I liked this characterization.

Tristan on the other hand is the bastard son of a Viscount. He's had to make his own way in the world since his father died and his older stepbrother refused to care for him, his mother and younger sister. As a result, Tristan's a cautious fellow and unwilling to take a chance on love (isn't this the case with all the best heroes?) after seeing what it had done to his mother. Of course, we know that it just takes the right young lady to make him revisit this stance on love and commitment. But what I really loved about Tristan was the fact that once he realized that he loved Zoe, he was vulnerable when it came to any decisions that she made. He wanted to be in her life, but this choice was ultimately hers. I loved how his anxiety about her impending decision as well as his own worth was conveyed; it added a layer of complexity to the novel that only made me enjoy it all the more.

How the Scoundrel Seduces was yet another fantastic romance from Sabrina Jeffries. It had flashes of humour and gave readers another great happily ever after. The only thing I'm disappointed in is that I'll have to wait so long for Dom's book. He popped up frequently in this one and I can't wait to see what happens with him and Jane in the next book.

Head over to The Book Adventures for similar reads.

Ezinwanyi says

3.5 stars

Sandy S says

4.25 stars

About the book: Release Date August 19, 2014

Investigator Tristan Bonnaud has one aim in life—to make sure that his half-brother George can't ever ruin his life again. So when the pesky Lady Zoe Keane, the daughter of the Earl of Olivier, shows up demanding that the Duke's Men find a mysterious gypsy woman, he seizes the opportunity to also hunt for a gypsy friend who knows secrets about George. Tristan doesn't expect to uncover Lady Zoe's family secrets, as well...or end up falling for the woman who will risk all to discover the truth.

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REVIEW: 4.25 stars-HOW THE SCOUNDREL SEDUCES is the third instalment in Sabrina Jeffries The Duke's Men historical romance series focusing on the men (and women) who work for Manton Investigations. This is Tristan Bonnaud (half brother to Dominick Manton) and Lady Zoe Keane's storyline. Zoe and Tristan were first introduced to one another in book two When The Rogue Returns.

The focus of the storyline follows Zoe as she hires Manton Investigations to search for a mysterious gypsy woman with possible connections to her family. Zoe finds herself behold to Tristan Bonnaud (a man she once believed to be a rogue and a thief) to aid in the search for the woman. But Tristan's need to take on this particular investigation is less than honorable when he uses the time to search for another gypsy believed to be in league with his evil half-brother George. What our couple never expected to find is a deeper connection to one another than they could ever have imagined.

The relationship between Zoe and Tristan is one of immediate attraction but Zoe's father has other plans for his daughter. Tristan is the 'bastard' son of Viscount Rathmoor and believes he is not worthy of a Lady's love and continues to push Zoe away believing she may be betrothed to another man but Zoe is a woman possessed to find the missing woman and Tristan is the man with whom she is falling in love. The sexual tension is high and the mores of the day find the couple in a compromising position that results in an admission of a possible future together.

The secondary characters are colorful and add mystery, suspense and some heartbreaking revelations to the story. Several of the previous storyline characters play an active role in both the hunt and the identity of the mystery woman. We are introduced Zoe's American cousin Keane whose own story is a mystery with a few secrets yet to be revealed.

HOW THE SCOUNDREL SEDUCES is another well paced, romantic and engaging tale of seduction,

mystery and family secrets. Sabrina Jeffries pulls the reader into a captivating story of love, loss and betrayal. There are painful revelations and an emotional fall out for two families whose lives are connected by one woman-a woman whose only sin was to fall in love with the wrong man- but a woman who sacrificed her life for the life of another.

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