



The Saint Who Stole My Heart

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Desire, danger, intrigue, and steamy seduction unite a sexy spymaster and an intrepid bluestocking as Stefanie Sloane's luscious new series continues.

Possessed of a brilliant mind and a love for puzzles, Dashiell Matthews, Viscount Carrington, is a crucial member of the elite Young Corinthians spy league. Assuming the façade of an addle-brained Adonis, he hunts for a notorious London murderer known as the Bishop. When fate causes him to cross paths with Miss Elena Barnes, Dash discovers an enigma that will prove delightfully intoxicating to unravel: a voluptuous beauty as intelligent as she is fearless.

Only the lure of a collection of rare books bequeathed to her family by Dash's late father could tempt Elena from her cozy rural life to the crush and vanity of London. But if Elena finds his lordship to be the most impossibly beautiful man she's ever seen, he also seems to be the stupidest. Which made her body's shameless response to his masterful seduction all the more unfathomable. Yet when she discovers Dash's mission to track the dangerous Bishop, she willingly risks everything—her trust, her heart, her very life—to join him.

The Saint Who Stole My Heart Details

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Author : Stefanie Sloane

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From Reader Review The Saint Who Stole My Heart for online ebook

Karen says

DNF-- I gave up on this one at Chapter 11 (appropriate, no?). To be fair, I started this book thinking it belonged to a different series entirely, because I confused the description of the hero with that of a character from the other series. That said...

I feel that, particularly in romantic series (where the focus of each book is on a couple), books should be able to mostly stand on their own from the rest of the series. Supporting characters who obviously have more backstory elsewhere, fine. Overarching plot that neither begins nor ends with this title, fine. But at least a FEW extra words of introduction or description to get new readers up to speed (and hopefully make them hungry for the books they missed) would be appreciated.

Not only did this book NOT do that at all (from the flashback introduction, I expected the heroine to be an entirely different character), but even the main couple's plot made wild and unexplained leaps. (Her maid's abduction and bizarre rescue? Where the heck did THAT come from?) And when one of those unexplained leaps is when, exactly, the main characters have grown so close as to passionately "become one" in a coach... yeah. (Honestly, I actually flipped back. I thought I'd somehow skipped 20 or 30 pages of romantic plot development.)

Add to that the hero's unconvincing and healfhearted "emptyheaded" act (despite the fact that this is a facade he's supposedly perfected over years) and the heroine's odd terror of Society (people called her a bluestocking SIX YEARS AGO. They did not beat her with sticks. Why is she so spooked that she can't even exchange civilities with a stranger in the street without freaking out?)

Yeah. Time to call it quits... and it's left me with absolutely no desire to read any of the rest of this series.

My Book Addiction and More MBA says

THE SAINT WHO STOLE MY HEART by Stefanie Sloane is an exciting Regency historical romance. Book #4 in the "Regency Rogues" series, but can be read as a stand alone. See, "The Devil in Disguise", "The Angel in My Arms", and "The Sinner Who Seduced Me". What an exciting series with sexy, strong, heroes and independent, witty heroines, you can not go wrong with "The Saint Who Stole My Heart". Filled with intrigue, danger, desire, passion, puzzles, a killer, spymasters, humor, mystery, suspense, and did I mention sweet seduction. Join

Dashiell Matthews, Viscount Carrington and Miss Elena Barnes as they try to unravel a puzzle and stop the dangerous "Bishop". Dashiell Matthews, Viscount Carrington, is a member of an elite Young Corinthians spy team, has a brilliant mind, and a love of puzzles. Miss Elena Barnes, a plain spinster with a brilliant mind of her own, who has a love of books. Appearances can be deceiving... A must for anyone who enjoys a bit of wit with their dose of historical romance, puzzles, missions, misunderstanding, and a lot of seduction will enjoy "The Saint Who Stole My Heart" for you will lose your heart also. An amazing and exciting story! I can hardly wait for my next dose of the "Regency Rogues". Received for an honest review from the publisher and Net Galley. Details can be found at the author's website, Ballantine Books, an imprint of Random House Publishing Group and My Book Addiction and More.

RATING: 4.5

HEAT RATING: MILD

REVIEWED BY: AprilR, My Book Addiction and More/My Book Addiction Reviews

Lisa Jo says

Fabulous characters and a sweet, charming romance make Stefanie Sloane's **THE SAINT WHO STOLE MY HEART** a great historical read. Add a touch of mystery and suspense and you have a strong addition to the Regency Rogues series.

Elena Barnes cannot resist the lure of an ancient book collection...even if she has to travel to the home of Dashiell Matthews, Viscount Carrington to retrieve it. Elena's first impression of Dash is laughable, at best. The poor man appears to be a half-witted Viscount, but he is undeniably handsome and Elena cannot deny her attraction to him. Yet the more time she spends with Dash, the more she realizes his demeanor is just a facade. He is really a brilliant member of the Young Corinthians spy league working to solve the murder of his friend's mother.

When a cruel injustice happens to one of Elena's closest friend, she does everything she can to ensure the man is punished. As Dash and Elena's path cross to crush this evil villain, they must work together to ensure their victory. With everything on the line, Elena and Dash must decide if they are willing to risk their lives, their future...and most importantly, their hearts. While neither one is well versed in matters of the heart, they may find risking their love is too high a price to pay.

One thing easy to fall in love with in this novel are the characters, Elena and Dash. Dash maintains a charming charade of being a little on the slow side and it was very adorable. What made this characteristic even more adorable is when Elena wormed her way towards the truth. She quickly discovers that he is far more intelligent than he leads people to believe. He also has a suave sensibility that came very naturally and was incredibly sexy. He could seduce anyone, but reading about him seducing Elena was so much more fun.

Then you have Elena, and I have to say that I simply loved her. She was the strong and fierce bluestocking heroine with a mind of her own. While Dash sought to hide his intelligence, Elena did the exact opposite. She had a strong personality, and an amazing compassionate nature that made her the perfect heroine for this story. Her connection to Dash is fantastic and really makes this story worthwhile.

While I loved the romance in **THE SAINT WHO STOLE MY HEART**, I found a few issues with the match between Elena and Dash. First of all, it develops rather quickly. The advancement of their feelings is done more internally when they were apart and not really through scenes when they are together. I felt like I did not get as many pages or scenes of them together as I would have liked. Parts of the novel were extremely sweet and by the end it felt like a great historical romance. I would have loved more details about their developing relationship. Still, what is presented in this novel is fantastic. These two are the perfect couple and it's hard not to adore the romantic moments they share together.

THE SAINT WHO STOLE MY HEART was a truly enjoyable read. I found Stefanie Sloane's novel very difficult to put down because I easily became attached to these characters and their journey. Not only do you have a sweet romance, but the novel has great amounts of suspense and drama as Elena and Dash work to solve the mystery concerning the villain known as The Bishop. Some questions are resolved in this novel,

but many are left unanswered which in this case I can't complain about. Mainly because there was a particular secondary character that I became fascinated with and am now curious about his own happily ever after!

THE SAINT WHO STOLE MY HEART is book four in the Regency Rogues series, but you do not have to read them in order to enjoy this installment. It can easily be read as a stand alone. This was the first novel I have read by Ms Sloane and not once was I confused or lost because of complicated story lines from previous novels.

All in all, Ms Sloane has a unique voice that allows you into her addictive Regency world where you never want to leave. With character like Elena and Dash and drama that keeps you turning the pages, THE SAINT WHO STOLE MY HEART is sure to posses enough magic and appeal to steal your heart.

Lisa Jo @ The Romance Reviews

Quinn's Book Nook says

I have this absolute love of *The Scarlet Pimpernel*, particularly the 1982 movie starring Anthony Andrews, Ian McKellan and Jane Seymour. Because of this obsession, I can never resist books that are based or inspired by *The Scarlet Pimpernel*, which is why I picked up this book. Unfortunately the Scarlet-Pimpernel inspired books I've read rarely live up to my expectations. ***The Saint Who Stole My Heart* by Stefanie Sloane just couldn't live up to my expectations, and really left me quite disappointed.**

The basic premise: Dash is gorgeous, so all of society thinks he's an idiot and while Dash has never gone out of his way to correct these silly assumptions, he's certainly never gone out of his way to play the fool either. He decides to investigate the murder of his friend's mother (years after it happened), which is very dangerous. At the same time. Elena has come to Dash's home because his deceased father left all his books to Elena and her father. Because Dash worries about Elena's safety, he decides to act the fool so she books it from his house quickly. Such a silly premise, really.

Here are my problems with this:

Why society thinks Dash is an idiot simply because he's gorgeous is beyond me. I mean, this makes no sense, especially when the character is a man. Maybe I could have believed it if the character was a woman, because, let's face it, it doesn't take much for people to think less of women, especially in this time period. But for Dash, I just couldn't buy it.

And then when Elena shows up. Elena is a smart, well-read young woman. She's intelligent. She reads all the time. She shows up thinking that Dash is stupid, and although he attempts to act that way, he really does a terrible job. **So I couldn't understand why Elena kept thinking that Dash was a fool.** I just didn't understand that. There is even a time when Dash's relative (who I really liked) told Elena that Dash was really intelligent, but she didn't believe her. And all I could think was, "why not!? What has Dash done that would make you think he is such an idiot?" It was so frustrating.

Another issue was that **I thought this book was down-right dull.** I kept thinking that suspenseful things would happen, but really, it was such a slow story, and I never got really excited to read it.

The Saint Who Stole My Heart by Stefanie Sloane just didn't work for me. The premise just wasn't written well, in my opinion, and the story was really quite bland. And **while I did actually like Dash, his aunt, and Elena, it wasn't enough to make me invested in their lives.** If you want a good Scarlet Pimpernel story, I recommend *Across a Star-Swept Sea* by Diana Peterfreund. It's the best one out there, I think. This review was originally posted on Quinn's Book Nook

Melanie says

Reviewed for www.bookworm2bookworm.wordpress.com

The story opens up in 1768 with our hero Dash Matthews, his friends Nicholas and Langdon Bourne, and Sophia Southwell playing on the grounds of Afton Manor, Earl of Afton's and Sophia's fathers country estate. All are good friends, but now that they are growing up, the boys are having a bit of trouble explaining to Sophia that she's not 'fitting' in with their boy's games, and to get that across, they're pulling her hair, making fun of her and she's not having none of it....

"Sophia shaded her eyes against the sunlight and crowned him with her bouquet, bits of green leaves and white petals showering his shoulders. 'First of all, you shan't get near any part of me with those spit-stained hands of yours or I shall kill you. Secondly, it's not just my braids, you ninny,' she huffed, sweeping the three with an exasperated look. 'It's your treatment of me this summer-as if I'm somehow different...' 'But you are, aren't you?' Dash asked, grinning. 'Look now, you're wearing a dress, while we three,' he paused, punching first Nicholas in the arm, then Langdon, 'are attired in breeches. And shirts. Nary a dress among us.'

Sophia brained all three with the flowers this time. 'I've always worn dresses, you idiot-I am, after all, a girl.'

'Precisely,' Dash agreed, brushing daisy petals from his hair. 'A girl, with ... Well, that is to say... What I mean...' He felt his cheeks grow hot. 'Come on, Sophia. Don't make me say it.'

'With girl parts and such,' Nicholas offered helpfully as he arched his eyebrows. 'You've ten-year-old girl parts.'

Suddenly, Dash and Langdon couldn't take their eyes off of a greenish-blue emperor dragonfly that'd presumably followed them up from the lake. To watch the boys expire from embarrassment. 'Well, it's true, isn't it?' Nicholas added, scrubbing at his sweaty neck. Langdon sighed and shoved his brother up the path. 'We don't want to talk about your girl parts, Sophia-well, that is, we would. If it wasn't rude. But it is, isn't it?'

'Of course it is,' Sophia agreed simply, apparently quite calm about such intimate references. 'Yes, of course. Anyway, it's just that we're all getting older,' he explained in his steady way, belaying his thirteen years. 'You're ten now. Nick and Dash nearly twelve. And I'll be fourteen soon enough. We're growing up.'"

That was such a prophetic statement from Langdon, as all four would face a life changing and altering event.

Our hero, Dash Matthews, now Viscount Carrington, is as handsome as a Greek god, very intelligent and yet because of his work as the Corinthians' best code-breaker, he is forced to hide that intelligence, and to the ton, he appears as someone who is 'slow'.

Dash's father left his prized library of rare books to Baron Harcourt, and as Baron Harcourt was unable to take the long journey, he sends his daughter, Elena in his stead.

Our heroine is Elena Barnes and she loves her life in the country. She is definitely her father's daughter; smart and witty as well as very well read. Upon learning from her father that they would be soon the caretakers of such a great treasure trove of books, she's willing to leave her comfort zone and go even though the trip would be bringing some unpleasant memories from her come-out season. However, her plan to make this trip short, unravels as her chaperone has matchmaking on her mind.

This is another fast paced story from Ms. Sloan full of action, humor and romance. What made this story so much fun was its hero. He was one of the best Beta heroes I've read about in a while. Very charming, witty and passionate.

The Saint Who Stole My Heart by Stefanie Sloane is book 4 in Regency Rogues series and from the first page of the prologue, I knew it would be a story to make me laugh and cry. Guess what? I was right and I'm looking forward to reading Nicholas' story in The Scoundrel Takes a Bride out October 30, 2012, which promises to be yet another emotional journey for not just our protagonists, but for us too.

Melanie

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

Dottie says

Actually, I rated this one at 4.5. This review is taken from my review at RomanceJunkies.com.

Growing up, Dashiell 'Dash' Matthews, Viscount Carrington, was friends with brothers Nicholas and Langdon as well as Sophie. He lost his mother when he was quite young, so he does not remember her. However, Sophie's mother, Lady Afton, feels like his own mother as she showers the four children with love. So when they arrive at Sophie's home one afternoon after spending the day together, they find Sophie's mom dead. Devastated, her death has haunted all of them, but they had promised not to mention it and to try to get past it. But fifteen years later, Dash is working with the Young Corinthians, a clandestine spy organization, alongside his friend Langdon. He realizes that if any of them are ever to get any peace of mind, he must find Lady Afton's killer. But before he can get the investigation underway, he has a couple visitors to his home...his Aunt Bessie and Elena Barnes.

With the death of Dash's father, Elena Barnes discovers that she has been left the viscount's library of books. She is thrilled, even though it will mean a trip to London, where she will catalog the books before moving them to her home. Elena has only met Dash once before, during her disastrous Season in London. Because of her love of books, she has been dubbed a bluestocking and the title irritates her.

Dash knows that his aunt would love nothing better than playing matchmaker. He also is aware that Elena is a bluestocking. So to keep Elena from being attracted to him, he acts as though he is not very bright, despite his brilliant work with the Young Corinthians, which entails using his mind. Even though he puts on this act, he cannot deny his attraction to the voluptuous lady.

Elena is attracted to Dash, comparing him to Adonis...if only he weren't so dim. But as they spend time together, she begins to suspect that her assumptions are all wrong. Soon they are working together to find the

monster known as the Bishop. Will they be able to find him before he finds them? When Elena's life is put in danger, Dash knows he will do anything to keep her alive.

THE SAINT WHO STOLE MY HEART, the fourth book in gifted author Stefanie Sloane's REGENCY ROGUES series, is an intriguing, mystery filled historical romance that you will not want to put down. A well written, beautifully plotted story, filled with engaging characters, humor, clever repartee, intrigue, spies, kidnapping, danger and romance, it is brought to life right before your eyes. I thoroughly enjoyed this story; including the subplot about Elena and the home she is trying to set up in Dorset to protect abused women. The sections about the abuse of Elena's maid, as well as the abuse of another woman, were heartrending. The only problem with Ms. Sloane's stories is that now I must wait for the next story...one which I am really looking forwards to as it stars Nicholas and Sophie. Entitled THE SCOUNDREL TAKES A BRIDE, this fifth REGENCY ROGUES romance is due out at the end of October. Despite being part of a series, these stories can be read as standalones. However, for additional enjoyment, I recommend reading all of the books in this delectable series; THE DEVIL IN DISGUISE, THE ANGEL IN MY ARMS, THE SINNER WHO SEDUCED ME and finally, THE SAINT WHO STOLE MY HEART. Do not miss any of the books in this delicious series!

Dottie, RomanceJunkies.com

Romancing the Book says

Reviewed by: Sarah L

Book provided by: Netgalley

Review originally posted at Romancing the Book

Review: The Saint Who Stole My Heart is book 4 in Stefanie Sloane's Regency Rogues series. I was a bit hesitant to pick this up since I prefer to read a series in order and I have not read the first 3 books. No worries though. This book does very well as a standalone.

The main character Dash is an interesting gentleman. Even though he has a face and body that would make a woman swoon, he portrays himself as simple-minded and deliberately masks his supreme intelligence as part of his efforts to safe guard his secret of being a Young Corinthian spy. Elena on the other hand makes no secret of her intelligence and shows insecurity with not recognizing that she is in fact beautiful on both the inside and outside.

While I enjoyed getting to know both Dash and Elena, the romance portion of the story was very slow with most of their courtship apparently conducted "behind the scenes". In fact, the entire book in general moved a bit on the slow side. I found myself easily distracted and had a hard time staying focused. Some of the scenes seemed to start and stop abruptly and immediately shifted focus to something or someone else which resulted in a lot of backtracking to reorient myself. For example, it is late at night and Elena cannot sleep so she goes wandering and ends up in the gallery where she stumbles onto Dash. Among other things, they are discussing why she cannot sleep and then the story immediately cuts to Elena, Dash and Lady Mowbray at the breakfast table.

Overall, the plot and characters held a lot of great promise, but with the abrupt scene changes and feeling like some of the scenes were lacking key information, it was just too much work to stay focused and involved.

Kati says

original review by Jamie posted at Romancing Rakes For The Love of Romance

As just a child, Dash discovered Lady Ashton's body, a woman he considered to be like a mother to him. Now years later Dash Matthews, Viscount Carrington, is easily considered by ton to be the most beautiful man but he is a bit lacking in the brains department. Well, that's what he wants everyone to think but in reality he is member of the Young Corinthians, a secret spy society and extremely smart. He hides his intelligence as a way to keep people away from his dangerous life especially as he takes on the task of finding Lady Ashton's killer. That is until the bookish and voluptuous Elena Barnes shows up to collect his father's books and he realizes what he's missing.

Elena is all about collecting the books and heading back to Dorset. When she meets Dash she can't help but be drawn to the blonde Adonis even in spite of his lack of intelligence. But as she gets to know him she starts to discover that Dash isn't as dumb as he makes himself to be. When she stumbles upon a clue to the murder she can't help but getting involved despite Dash's attempts to protect her.

FAVORITE QUOTE:

Elena touched her lips with one hand, gently caressing where Dash's lips had been but a moment before.

And then she slapped him hard across the cheek. "I will choose when I give myself completely, do you understand?"

"Of course," Dash whispered, guilt and regret beginning to flood his senses.

"And I choose now." Elena grabbed his lapels and pulled him against her, crushing her lips to his.

OVERALL:

This was my first Stefanie Sloane book (yes, yes I know! I've been living under a rock) but will most definitely not be my last. Now, this is the fourth book in the Regency Rogues series but it is a great starting point if you haven't read the others because it focuses on a new set of Young Corinthians.

Dash is definitely on the top of my favorite hero list. I love that he wasn't a rake and that he's smart. Intelligence is sexy and plus he is very loyal to his friends and to Elena. I love Elena too. Usually the heroines annoy me but I liked her from the start. She knew who she was and wasn't afraid to show it.

While there is a big mystery of trying to find Lady Ashton's murderer, *The Saint Who Stole My Heart* focus is more on the romance between Dash and Elena. Yes, you get a bit of the mystery but it was nice to see the how the romance between them developed. And of course, the murderer hasn't been caught but they are one step closer.

If you're looking for a sweet romance with a bit of mystery then pick up *The Saint Who Stole My Heart*. I will say I am VERY eager for the next book *The Scoundrel Takes A Bride* because I love Sophie and well, Nicholas intrigues me. I do love the bad boys.

review book provided by Netgalley

Rebekah says

One of those random "I have three minutes in the library so sure" grabs that doesn't know quite what it wants to be and has a few too many threads going on for me to bother trying to keep them straight. Is it a mystery, a romance, a feminist novel, or all three? It's each of those poorly. AND YET, the mystery is juuuust interesting enough that I might seek out the next book. MIGHT.

Michelle says

This was my first Stefanie Sloane book and my first Regency Rogues even though this was book number four in the series. Overall, I really did enjoy the book. I thought there was a great premise; a country bluestocking comes to London to pack up a famed book collection. A London dandy with more looks than brains captures her heart. But is he who he really says he is? Dash and Elena were great characters with wonderful development in their romance throughout the story. Unfortunately I'm leaning more to 3.5 stars on this title because it almost felt like some of the ideas or storylines were not fully developed. I almost felt like things could have been described or detailed more. This did not put off my overall enjoyment of the story and I will try something from Ms. Sloane again.

Danielle says

Review originally posted at Ramblings From This Chick

I adored this book from beginning to end. I can't believe I've waited until Stefanie's fourth book to pick her up. Believe me, I will definitely be reading the rest of Stefanie's books and quite soon. I loved her characters and the world she has created. I admit that I have a fondness for spy story-lines and Stefanie executed to perfection.

Dashiell Matthews, Viscount Carrington is an important member of the Young Corinthians, a spy league that he works for. He is brilliant at breaking codes and solving puzzles. Since Dash is an extremely attractive man, he uses his looks as a facade to hide his brilliance. Only the people closest to him know he is truly intelligent, thus allowing him to keep of his facade. For the last several years he has been on the hunt for The Bishop, a murder who was responsible for the death of his closest friends mother years before. Ever since Lady Afton's death, he and his friends have thought of nothing but the revenge that they would one day have against Bishop.

Elena Barnes lives a quiet life at home in the country with her father. She is very intelligent and very well read. She believes anything can be learned from a book and when a missive from London arrives informing her and her father that he has been left a rare collection of books from the late Viscount Carrington she immediately though reluctantly, sets off for London to retrieve them. Elena has been to London before and had a rather unsuccessful season and she is not looking forward to encountering the vipers of the ton again. She plans to quickly pack up the books and return home. What she doesn't expect to find is Dash Matthews.

When Elena first sees Dash, she can hardly believe her eyes. She has never seen a man so beautiful in her life. The image is quickly ruined when he opens his mouth and begins to act like the addled-brained Adonis that he is known for. But the more and more time that begin to spend together, Elena starts to see whats beneath the facade, a truly intelligent man.

I loved both Dash and Elena. I loved their characters and I especially loved they way they both interacted with one another. There were instant sparks between them and I love the way everything progressed with them. It felt just right and not rushed at all.

As soon as Dash appeared I was instantly transfixed. He is everything I love in a hero. Not only is he sexy but he is very witty and extremely intelligent. I love me a smart hero! I truly loved him and Nicholas together. I found myself giggling a quite a few of their scenes together. I did enjoy watching Dash struggle with his feelings with Elena. On the one hand he wanted to push her away because he wants nothing more than to keep her safe from Bishop, but on the other hand he can't let her go.

I also had a great fondness for Elena. Not only is she smart, but she is also brave and willing to help others. I also liked that she is willing to ask for help if she needed it. Sometimes when authors are writing bluestocking heroines, they tend to be very stubborn and won't rely on anyone else's help. That was definitely not the case with Elena. I also enjoyed her relationship with Bessie.

My only complaint with this book and honestly it's not really a complaint is that towards the second half of the book things seem to slow down relationship wise between Dash and Elena. But honestly, it didn't really bug me. I was so caught up with everything else that was going on I didn't even miss it.

I highly recommend this book. I can't wait to get my hands on the rest of this series, including Stefanie Sloane's next book The Scoundrel Takes a Bride. After reading this book I honestly can't wait to get my hands on that one. I just know it's going to be good.

ARC copy provided by NetGalley

Angelic says

This was my first book by this author, and it definitely won't be my last. Sloane's writing style is full of witty, Regency era banter that is so much fun to read. It's an intelligent humor that you only see in certain regency romances, I'd compare her style to such authors as Eloisa James and Julia Quinn.

The romance in the book was a bit of a double-edged sword for me. On one hand, when there were scenes between the couple where they admitted how they feel, they were so very romantic and in the old fashioned, all consuming way that I love. On the other hand, sometimes I felt like I couldn't really follow their love story. They seemed to jump into the physical too quickly, and also seemed to jump into admitting all these feelings for each other that I hadn't really seen develop.

The strong point of this book is definitely witty repartee between all the characters. Lady Mowbray is a fantastic chaperone, who really knows her job of throwing the two leads together at all costs. I really enjoyed Dash's facade of being a not-too-bright pretty boy when really he is hiding his superior, spy-worthy intelligence. I wanted to see more of this ruse played out because it was quite entertaining. Dash also had a lot of comedic moments with his roguish partner in crime, Nicholas. I'm looking forward to seeing more

from these two and the rest of the friends in future books.

Fans of witty, intelligent regencies with heart will flock to this author's books.

book sent by publisher and publicist in exchange for honest review

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

Phoenix77 says

Enjoyable while I was reading but utterly forgettable when I was done. The Hero and heroine were very dry so the book was stolen completely by a secondary character. Felt like the author was using terms like "Bluestocking" & "Spy" and making the reader fill in the blanks about what those terms meant. Maybe that was her plan since part of the theme was not letting stereotypes make our judgments for us.

Full Review below:

Reading through the Regency Rogues series this month has been a roller coaster for me and not the most pleasant ride if I'm honest. I will give the author credit in that each story has a very good idea behind it, starting off with great potential for drama, intrigue, and a satisfying conclusion. But of the four books currently released in the series, only one really paid off from this great beginning to a great ending. Unfortunately The Saint Who Stole My Heart wasn't that book.

I wanted to like the character of Dashiell Matthews. He's a gifted and intelligent man who has devoted his life to the cause of England's war efforts. He uses his mind to gather information for the Young Corinthians, cracking codes of the enemy, translating documents, and keeping secrets. He also happens to be an Adonis of a man, having one of those faces that women just swoon over. I really loved the idea that he used his appearance as a shield so that people never realized that he was spying on them. Everyone in society just assumed that as a handsome man there could never be a mind underneath it all. But the author only shows Dash using that shield once or twice, and mainly to the detriment of the heroine and his relationship with her. Otherwise we see him as the master spy that he really is, so I couldn't buy that society could ever think he was stupid. I recently read another book that had a handsome man playing the fool, and that author did it so much better.

I also never felt a connection with Elena Barnes even though I happen to like bluestocking and intelligent heroines in books. She allowed one miserable Season in London to steer her entire life's course into spinsterhood and found solace in organizing her father's library. She returns to London on the quest for more books, but her attentions are immediately taken by her lust for Dashiell. Chapter after chapter has her lusting after him, but being confused by the mixed signals that she is reading from Dash when they interact. Is he really a dimwit or is there something more behind his eyes than he's letting on? I wanted her to put all of the pieces together and have an incredible moment of awakening to who he really was, but the author chose to have all of it spelled out to Elena by another character. It was a poor story choice that took away from an opportunity for real character development.

One of the worst offenses within this story was how little chemistry there was between the two leads. Their relationship came together almost as if they were fated-mates, when just the smell, touch, or sight of the other person was enough to make them fall desperately in love with one another. I truly believe I can count on one hand the times the two of them talked to one another without deceptions before they were sleeping together. Then, for the remainder of the book they are pushing away from one another for completely contrived reasons, until that final climax when they realize they are better together than apart.

On the plus side, this book did have an intriguing set-up for the story arc that will tie the next few titles together. A secret organization operating within England knows all about the Young Corinthians. The group, with a mastermind known as The Bishop, has lashed out at the Corinthians in the most personal ways, including killing members of their families, if their plans were foiled. One such murder occurred fifteen years prior to this book, with the death of Lady Afton at the hands of a man known as The Rook. Lady Afton's murder changed the lives of four young children, Dashiell Matthews being one of them, and the quest for justice rises again when all four of the kids reunite in London as flawed adults. Because the romantic side of this book was so bad, my attentions were really drawn to the investigation into finding The Rook and stopping him before he could strike any members of the newer Young Corinthians. The conclusion to this part of the story was satisfying where the love story was not.

This Saint Who Stole My Heart is almost a new beginning for the Regency Rogues series, with very little binding it to the stories that have come before. We meet new agents, a new sinister group is introduced, and a new complication for the Young Corinthians comes to light. I would recommend this book to new readers of the franchise; those wanting to get in on the ground floor without having to go back and read anything that had already been written. The few callbacks to the earlier books can be easily accepted as fact. There are only a handful of reoccurring characters, and their part in this book is completely separate from their actions before. As a current reader I'm almost willing to give this author one more shot, if only to learn more about Nicholas Bourne and the demons that may have followed him back to England from his self-exile in India. I'll have to see how I feel in October when book five makes its debut.

Marlene says

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The Saint Who Stole My Heart by Stefanie Sloane is book 4 in her Regency Rogues series. It's also very clearly the "setting up" story for the next two books, at least, in this series. There are definitely unresolved suspense elements hanging over the end of the story.

The prologue starts out with a bang. Let's say it cuts to the chase. Childhood friends Dash Matthews, Nicholas and Langdon Bourne, and Sophia Southwell make the journey from carefree youth to painful responsibility in one sharp moment when they come in from playing outside to find Sophia's mother, Lady Afton, murdered. None of their lives are ever the same.

As men, Langdon Bourne and Dash Matthews both join the Young Corinthians, a spy network based in England. They've both been warned off Lady Afton's case. All they know is that she was the victim of a man code-named "The Bishop" and that she was murdered because Lord Afton was also a member of the Corinthians. The Bishop targets his enemies' loved ones.

Dash Matthews is the Corinthians code-breaker. He is gifted with puzzles, locks and ciphers. Unfortunately for the spy, he has also got the looks of an Adonis. Spies should be able to blend into a crowd, and Dash, he just can't. Everyone notices him, especially the women.

Since he can't hide himself, he hides his intelligence. He pretends to be pretty, but well, empty-headed. Everyone except his closest friends thinks he's an idiot.

Then Elena Barnes steps into his life. And his library. His late father's library, to be precise.

When his father died, Dash inherited the title of Viscount Carrington, along with the estate. But his father's prized library of rare books was left to Henry Barnes, Baron Harcourt, a noted expert in such things. And Baron Harcourt sent his bluestocking and equally expert daughter, Elena, to catalog and pack up the books.

Elena found Dash to be incredibly handsome, and completely vapid. The problem she had was that her physical reaction to his handsomeness overwhelmed her mental reaction to his vapidness. Which just seemed wrong to her.

Dash, on the other hand, found Elena fascinating. Which was equally problematic for him. Because when he was fascinated, he had an unfortunate tendency to drop his idiot act.

And Elena was no idiot. She noticed.

This is a Regency, if you will recall. Elena, as an unmarried woman, could not be living in Dash' bachelor household unchaperoned. Lady Mowbray, Dash' aunt, was temporarily in residence to serve that role. Bessie Mowbray wanted nothing more than to see her nephew happily married, and spent time, effort and Dash' money to make it so.

Lady Mowbray knew perfectly well that Dash was no idiot. And she noticed everything.

The more Dash revealed of his true self, the closer he and Elena became. This wasn't a courtship, it was a falling into the inevitable.

But as soon as Elena seemed important to Dash, she became a target of the Bishop, and the suspenseful part of the story really began.

Escape Rating B-/C+: The second half of this story is a real page-turner. Once the hunt for Lady Afton's killer goes into full-swing, it's really hard to put down. On the other hand, setup for the next books was a little too obvious. It's not that there isn't a happy ending, but there is so much unresolved that I was frustrated by a lot of the way the story ended.

Also, based on the prologue, I was expecting it to be Sophie's story, and it's not. She's the main character in the prologue, and then disappears for the rest of the book.

Kat Latham says

When Dash Carrington was a boy, his friend Sophia's mother was brutally murdered. Dash, Sophia, and their two friends Nicholas and Langdon were the ones to discover Lady Afton's body.

The boys grow up and become part of a secret spy society, the Corinthians, which their fathers were part of. Dash is quick witted and brilliant with puzzles, but he pretends to be dumb in public so he can fly under the radar of the baddies they pursue. He gets away with this because he looks like Adonis, so no one expects him to be clever.

Sophia reappears in the men's lives briefly to ask for help finding her mother's killer. Despite the fact that up until this point I thought she was the heroine, she disappears from the story after this.

Enter Elena, a bluestocking whose father has inherited a massive collection of rare books from Dash's recently deceased father. She travels to London with her maid, who's also a good friend of hers, to collect the books, but she begins to be intrigued by Dash - and he by her.

At this point, I started to wonder what the story was about. I hadn't connected to any of the characters - probably mostly because I thought Sophia was the heroine, and she and Dash seemed lukewarm toward each other. As I got to know the actual heroine, Elena, I really started to like her, but then the characters kept acting in ways I truly didn't understand, which undermined my belief in the story.

For example, after they have sex for the first time, several scenes go by without either of them even thinking about it. Elena lost her virginity to Dash, but it seems to be days afterward before the experience passes through her thoughts. And then her only thought is that she shouldn't be with him because he's distracting her from seeking justice on behalf of her maid, who had been briefly kidnapped. Really? I just couldn't believe it.

Then there were strange scenes like this one - though, I'll admit my bias here. I really detest "I hate you / I love you / let me shake you because I can't control my emotions" scenes. This happens right after Dash tells Elena he needs her out of his life, and she asks if that's what he wants.

He looked hard into her eyes, willing his mouth to open and "yes" to tumble out. But he saw her soul in his reflection, and it undid him completely. He was utterly lost in her depths, and it felt so right.

"Don't be such a gudgeon," Dash demanded, taking hold of her upper arms and shaking her. "I want you. More than anything."

Just after that, Elena caresses her lips where Dash kissed her, then slaps him, then says she'll have sex with him.

It was just too close to a caricature of a romance novel for me to fully enjoy it. There's a subplot involving trying to find Lady Afton's murderer, but even that feels quite slow and like there wasn't enough meat in the story for an entire novel - however, it looks like it will be stretched into the next.

Overall, the novel was okay, but never rose above that for me.
