

A LADY'S GUIDE TO RAKES

By Kathryn Caskie

Warner Books, 2005

Reviewed by :: Stacey Brutger

Once a rake, always a rake. And that is what Meridith Merriweather sets out to prove. Left at the altar and subsequently ruined by such a man, Meridith intends to publish *A Lady's Guide to Rakes* to protect other innocent misses. With only one chapter left, she focuses her studies on capturing London's most notorious rake, Alexander Lamont, Lord Lansing. The problem? He claims to have reformed. Hah! Not one to be taken in, Meridith hires both a courtesan and a merry widow to hunt down her prey.

Only things go awry from the start. Intent on witnessing his downfall first hand, Meridith goes to the park and literally falls in his lap ... From a hot air balloon!

On a tight rein from his father for past escapades, Alexander receives an ultimatum, reform or no allowance. For months he's kept his word, until he meets the luscious Meridith and finds his attraction to her hard to control. When his father hears of this latest on dits, in a public park no less, he insists Alexander marry the chit to prevent a scandal or lose his inheritance altogether. Remembering the enchanting Meridith, what else can a man do but submit? With the help of Meredith's kind hearted but meddling aunts, he sets out to do one last seduction, and risks his heart in the largest gamble of his life.

Meredith overcomes a harsh past, becoming a stronger woman in the process. Alexander first comes off as a dandy, yet redeems himself with his compassion to both animals and his household. Every character in this story has manipulated someone or has been on the receiving end, leaving this reader frustrated. It took me a while to become involved with the characters but in the end it was worth the wait.

3 ½ Kisses