



SARA RAMSEY TALKS ABOUT HER DEBUT NOVEL, HEIRESS WITHOUT A CAUSE, AND WHAT TO EXPECT NEXT FROM THE MUSES OF MAYFAIR...

Welcome, Sara! And congratulations on the release of your first book!!

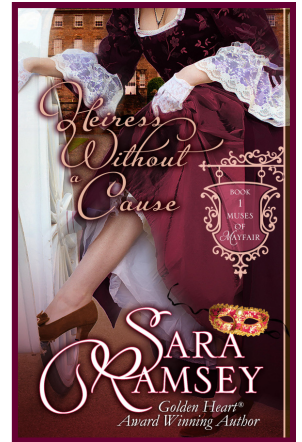
You've set both of your novels, the Golden Heart Award Finalist **HEIRESS WITHOUT A CAUSE** and the Golden Heart Award Winner **SCOTSMEN PREFER BLONDES**, in Regency England. Were Regency novels among the first romances you read?

Yes, though the very first romance I read was a western, *Brave the Wild Winds* by Johanna Lindsey, which I read at age twelve. My family lived in Ukraine for a year while my father worked for an agricultural nonprofit, and I read anything in English that I could get my hands on. As soon as I returned to the US, I devoured every romance my local library carried. Johanna Lindsey's Regencies were a natural starting point, and from then on, I was hooked on the period.

You started *The Muses of Mayfair* series by writing **SCOTSMEN PREFER BLONDES** and then you wrote **HEIRESS WITHOUT A CAUSE**, which has just been published. Time-wise it's the first book in your *The Muses of Mayfair* series. Why did you write them "out of order," so to speak? And when do we get to read **SCOTSMEN PREFER BLONDES**?

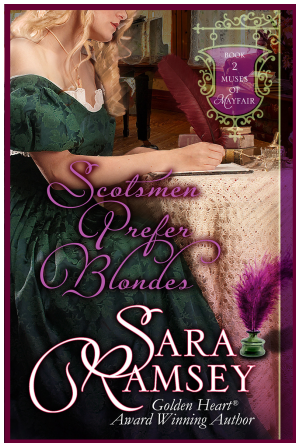
I originally intended for **HEIRESS WITHOUT A CAUSE** to be the sequel to **SCOTSMEN PREFER BLONDES**. However, when **SCOTSMEN** didn't get a traditional publishing deal, I put it aside and wrote **HEIRESS** as the first book in the series. The rationale was that we would try to sell **HEIRESS**, and then do some rewrites for **SCOTSMEN** and sell it as part of the same deal.

As it turns out, I love having **SCOTSMEN** as the second book – Amelia, the heroine in **SCOTSMEN**, plays a key role in **HEIRESS** that she wouldn't have been able to play if she were minding her own business as a newlywed. **SCOTSMEN PREFER BLONDES** should be out by the end of March 2012.



We meet Madeleine in **HEIRESS WITHOUT A CAUSE**, in which her muse calls out to her and she (gasp!) ends up performing on the London stage. Will you tell us a bit about the three friends who are the other Muses of Mayfair?

Madeleine is an actress, but at the start of **HEIRESS** she's unhappy because she can't pursue her passion in private – an actress must have an audience, after all! The other muses are able to conceal their identities, even though there's always a risk they'll be caught. Madeleine's cousin, Lady Amelia Staunton, writes Gothic romances under a pseudonym – and there are times in **HEIRESS** when Madeleine wishes that Amelia had stayed holed up with her characters rather than trying to rewrite Madeleine's story. Amelia stars in the next book, **SCOTSMEN PREFER BLONDES**.



The next muse is Ferguson's sister Ellie, the widowed marchioness of Folkestone. A painter, her artistic expression has been blocked since her disastrous marriage to her former husband. But his cousin and heir is about to return from a spying mission in India, and Ellie's encounter with him will unlock everything. They star in **THE MARQUESS WHO LOVED ME**, which will be out sometime in June.

After that comes the story of Miss Prudence Etchingham, a bluestocking with an interest in history. She has been corresponding with other scholars who think she's a man, but when she gets caught up in an investigation into an ancient artifact of mysterious origin, she'll find a passion that goes beyond anything she's read about in the history books. Her book is still untitled, but it should be out by early fall 2012.

—continued—

Who were some of the other stars of the theater at the time Madeleine was on stage? And, in addition to Shakespeare's work, what other sort of plays were commonly performed?

Sarah Kemble Siddons was the most acclaimed actress of the age; she retired in 1812, the same year that Madeleine made her debut. She was most famous for playing Lady Macbeth, although she played many of Shakespeare's other heroines to great acclaim. Her family consisted of a number of great actors and actresses, including her brother John Phillip Kemble, and her niece, Fanny Kemble.

Dorothea Jordan wasn't the greatest actress of her generation, but she was one of the most famous, if only because of her long-lasting affair with William, Duke of Clarence, who later became King William IV. She had ten children with him while acting on the stage, often playing "breeches roles" in which she wore men's clothing and played a male part. She couldn't marry the duke and eventually died in poverty, but her children were given titles and/or married well, and her descendents include David Cameron, the current British Prime Minister.

There were a lot of plays written every year for the stage. Only a few theatres were allowed to stage drama, but many smaller theatres staged comedies, musicals, and pantomimes. It was also possible to attend opera and ballet performances.

What attributes do you share with your protagonists—especially Madeleine and Ferguson—in HEIRESS WITHOUT A CAUSE, and Amelia and Malcolm in SCOTSMEN PREFER BLONDES? Humor? Resilience? Intellect? Feeling disenfranchised?

I think all of my books deal with the issue of finding a path that feels true to oneself regardless of society's expectations. My heroines are all trying to pursue their artistic passions even though they should be thinking of marriage, and my heroes tend to be unconventional and rebellious, too. However, I also feel pretty strongly about honor and loyalty, which makes things interesting for my characters – how can they be true to themselves without betraying those around them?

Beyond that, all of my main characters tend to be some combination of smart and funny. They tend to laugh a lot. I guess I feel that no matter how bad things are, there is always something to laugh about, and I think their humor makes them feel more real than if they were dark and brooding all the time. (Although they do their fair share of brooding too!)

What compels you to write?

I absolutely love to tell stories. I make up stories in my head all the time. I'll see someone on the street and create a whole back story for them without ever having a conversation. Writing is a better outlet for my storytelling tendencies than making up stories about me. In an effort to keep my friendships, I put my fictions on the page rather than in my relationships.

I also think writing is a deep act of connection. Writing lets me connect with readers, makes me feel like my voice has been heard, and gives me a way to show myself to others. It's also cathartic; even though my characters aren't autobiographical, I learn more about myself through my writing than anything else.

Your writing has been called fun and feisty—is it?

Ha! I hope so! It would probably be more accurate to say that my characters tend to be fun and feisty, and their interactions with each other are meant to be entertaining. But my books aren't entirely light romps – there's emotional depth in them, too, as the characters learn more about each other and dig deeper into their own souls.

Will we see Madeleine and Ferguson again? Are you working on your next book? Do you have anything else being published this year?

*Madeleine and Ferguson play a supporting role in **SCOTSMEN PREFER BLONDES**, and may make an appearance in Ferguson's sister Ellie's story, **THE MARQUESS WHO LOVED ME**.*

***SCOTSMEN PREFER BLONDES** is in the final editing stages and will come out in March. I'm working on **THE MARQUESS WHO LOVED ME** and have written the first part already. It should be out later this year. I have a glimmer of an idea for Prudence, the fourth member of the Muses of Mayfair – if she cooperates (uncharacteristically!), her story will come out in fall 2012.*

Please recommend a few books to put on my winter reading list.

If you read paranormals, the book at the absolute top of my list is Kresley Cole's Lothaire, which I've been looking forward to for years. I predict that it will be the hot paranormal book of the season.

In the Regency/historical world, I can't wait for A Rogue by Any Other Name by Sarah MacLean. I'm also looking forward to Anna Randol's debut novel, A Secret in Her Kiss— it's set in the Ottoman empire, which is a refreshing change.

www.sararamsey.com

HEIRESS WITHOUT A CAUSE, *Muses of Mayfair, Book 1*

Sara Ramsey

Spencerhill/Fiction/E-book/Original

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Golden Heart Award Finalist **HEIRESS WITHOUT A CAUSE** is a Nook First title available exclusively on the Nook until February 24 when it launches on all other major e-book platforms.

The buy the Nook book link is

<http://www.barnesandnoble.com/?url=/search/0?isbn=9781411229400&usri=sara+ramsey>

Review copies available via NetGalley. <http://www.netgalley.com/index2.php?module=catalog&page=1&genre=24&sdir=2&sflid=1&type=1&txt=Sara+Ramsey>

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