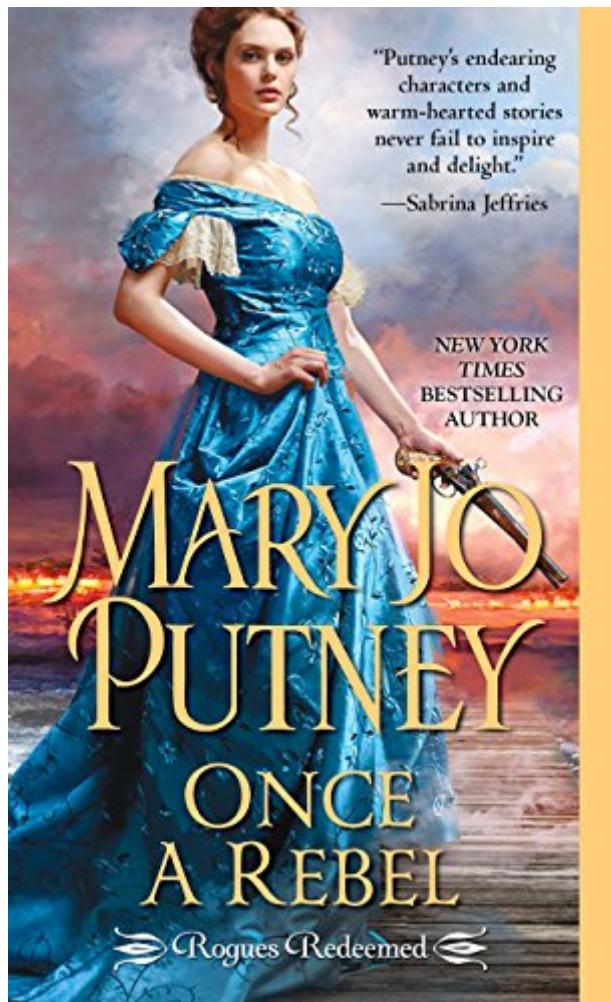


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Once A Rebel (Rogues Redeemed)



Synopsis

Putney's endearing characters and warm-hearted stories never fail to inspire and delight. • Sabrina Jeffries A ROGUE REDEEMED As Washington burns, Callista Brooke is trapped in the battle between her native England and her adopted homeland. She is on the verge of losing everything, including her life, when a handsome Englishman cuts through the violent crowd to claim that she is his. Callie falls into her protector's arms, recognizing that he is no stranger, but the boy she'd once loved, a lifetime ago. Lord George Gordon Audley had been Callie's best friend, and it was to Gordon she turned in desperation to avoid a loathsome arranged marriage. But the repercussions of his gallant attempt to rescue her sent Callie packing to Jamaica, and Gordon on a one way trip to the penal colony of Australia. Against all odds, Gordon survived. Finding Callie is like reclaiming his tarnished soul, and once again he vows to do whatever is necessary to protect her and those she loves. But the innocent friendship they shared as children has become a dangerous passion that may save or destroy them when they challenge the aristocratic society that exiled them both . . . Praise for New York Times Bestselling Author Mary Jo Putney's Rogues Redeemed series "RITA Award-winning Putney begins her new Rogues Redeemed series on a high note with an impeccably written book that realistically integrates the cost of the Napoleonic Wars into a compelling story that neatly balances dangerous adventures and passionate romance." • Booklist "A thrilling, romantic tale." • Bookpage, Top Pick of the Month Putney's multifaceted and well-developed characters add depth to this romance, which is complete with the trials of war and the promise of future series installments. • Publishers Weekly

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Customer Reviews

FINAL DECISION: Childhood friends who become lovers, this story takes place in an under-represented time period which makes the events interesting. The story is a slow burn and the romance develops more slowly than I would like.**THE STORY:** Callista Brooke is in the middle of the burning of Washington in the War of 1812. Widowed from the man her father forced her to marry, Callista is now raising her husband's illegitimate children. In danger, a man rides up to save her. Lord George Gordon Audley has taken the job of bringing Callista back to England. What Gordon didn't know is that Callista is his childhood friend. Callista is shocked by the appearance of her friend Richard who she believed died after being transported for "kidnapping" her. What had actually happened was the Richard had attempted to rescue Callista from her forced marriage, but the two had been caught by their fathers. Now Richard and Callista must make their way to safety during a war.

OPINION: I enjoyed the relationship between the hero and heroine here, but the actual ending seemed a bit wanting for me. This is a story of two people who are friends, are apart for almost half their lives and then find one another again. For Richard and Callista, there isn't a "wow, my friend is now a hottie that I want and love" moment. That was not only okay for me but felt natural. The two begin a relationship based on respect and friendship as they navigate the dangers that surround them both from the war and also the personal problems. But I really wanted something to click with them sooner than it did and something more passionate and exciting to happen between them personally. Instead, this is a "we gradually realize that we must be in love" story. I was a bit disappointed by this, because I liked these characters. They both have had difficult lives since they parted, but have made themselves survivors. This is an opportunity for them to finally find something joyous with one another. I especially liked the time and place of this book as it begins because not many romances are set in America during the War of 1812. This book gives a glimpse into a different time period. The characters also manage to move back to more familiar England and a whole new set of issues arise. Although the action in the last portion of the book happens really

quickly, I ended up loving the relationship between Richard and Callista at that point. The two have found some joy and peace with one another and the drama is the catalyst that brings them finally to the realization that they truly love one another. (But the relationship never seems like a deeply passionate one). **WORTH MENTIONING:** One thing that bothered me about this story is how Callista's step-children are so important to her but they characters are jettisoned part way through the book. I felt the story should have committed to them or excised them completely. **CONNECTED BOOKS:** *ONCE A REBEL* is the second book in the Rogues Redeemed series. While there are overlapping characters, this book can be read as a standalone without missing anything at all. **STAR RATING:** I give this book 3 stars. **NOTE:** I received an ARC of this book via Netgalley in order to provide a review. I was not required to write a review or to write a positive review. All opinions contained herein are my own.

...and I certainly did this time also. She usually fills every second with action and so I was a little disappointed when this one lagged about midway. But the pace picked up and Ms. Putney was back to her exciting genius after a few pages. Can't wait for the next Rogues Redeemed!

I have been a fan of Ms Putney for many years. I am sad to say not this story. The plot development was weak as was the development of the characters. I usually read a book in one or two sittings. I struggled to read this hoping it would get better.

I barely got through this book. The main characters lacked chemistry. There was no witty repartee. Every sticky situation was either implausible, too quickly/neatly resolved or both. There was more history IMO than plot! I'm a huge fan of historical romance but this one completely missed the mark.

I will give this series one more try and then I'm done. This book was sooooooo very boring and contrived.

4.5 stars If you like friends to lovers stories - you will love this book. Catherine Callista Brooke (aka Callie) and Lord George Gordon Richard Augustus Audley (aka Richard aka Gordon) have been the best of friends since they were children. So when Callie's father tells her that he has arranged her marriage to a much older widowed plantation owner and that she will be married immediately and go with him to Jamaica, she is frantic and turns to Richard for help running away. Richard is the rebellious third son of the Marquess of Kingston, when Callie comes to him for help, he doesn't

hesitate, he suggests that they go to Scotland to marry. When they are caught by their fathers, Callie agrees to marry the man her father has chosen if he will spare Richard's life. Her father agrees, but trumps up charges and has Richard transported to New South Wales. Fifteen years later, Richard is back in London (if you read the Lost Lords series, you might remember him as Gordon - a classmate and minor character in those books) and Lord Kirkwood has an assignment for him. He needs him to go to America and find the widow Audley and either return her to her family in England or ensure her wellbeing in America. This task will be dangerous as England is at war with America - but helping people is what Richard does best and he accepts the mission. Callie is now widowed and has moved her "family" to Washington and assumed the identity of the widow Audley to escape her vile step-son Henry. When her husband died, he made no final provisions for his two illegitimate children with his mistress. His children are quadroons and Henry considers them slaves and wanted to sell them, Callie has grown to love the children and fled to America rather than let Henry sell them. She has worked hard and established herself as seamstress, all is going well until the British invade Washington. Fearing for her family, she sends them to Baltimore and stays behind to protect the house. She is inadvertently caught up in skirmish, her house is burned to the ground and she is in grave danger when Richard arrives and claims that she is his wife. Callie and Richard are shocked to see one another again, Callie had been told that Richard died en route to New South Wales. Richard is overjoyed to find Callie and again offers to marry her. Callie politely declines but agrees to act the part of his wife to get to Baltimore. Richard decides that Callie is the woman for him and plans to use the time to woo her. They risk life and limb to get to Baltimore and arrive to find that Callie's extended family is safe and sound - however Baltimore is preparing for the British to attack - so there will be no easy escape for them. As they spend more time together, the more they begin to fall back into their easy friendship and Callie begins to realize that everything is changing, she is no longer quintessential to her "family" and she begins to think that marrying Richard and returning to England might be exactly what she needs. Just when it seems that her life might finally be looking up, she is faced with yet another challenge - her stepson Henry has found them. After a horrifying encounter with Henry and surviving the Battle of Baltimore - Callie agrees to marry Richard and return to England. Once they return to England, there are more shocks in store for our lovers, such as the identity of the sister that betrayed them 15 years and the discovery that both their fathers have passed and through the fickle hand of fate - Richard is now the Marquess of Kingston. Determined to make the best of their newly rewritten future, Callie and Richard venture to the Kingston family estate to confront Richard's younger brothers. All seems to be falling into place, when another tragedy strikes them and secrets are revealed and Richard is forced to do the

unthinkable to save the woman he loves more than life itself. This book was really well done, it has an almost epic feel to it and flows perfectly. It has a lot of history, surprising cameos, steamy love scenes, life and death moments, lighthearted moments and a truly lovely soulmate type of love. My only complaint is this book really needed an epilogue - I was left wondering what happened to her family in America and what became of her unresolved feelings with her sister. Other than that, which admittedly is very minor - I enjoyed this book and would happily recommend it. It is the second book in the series, but they are very loosely connected and there would be no reason this book could not be read as a stand alone title.*I am voluntarily leaving a review of an eARC that was provided to me by NetGalley and the publisher*

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