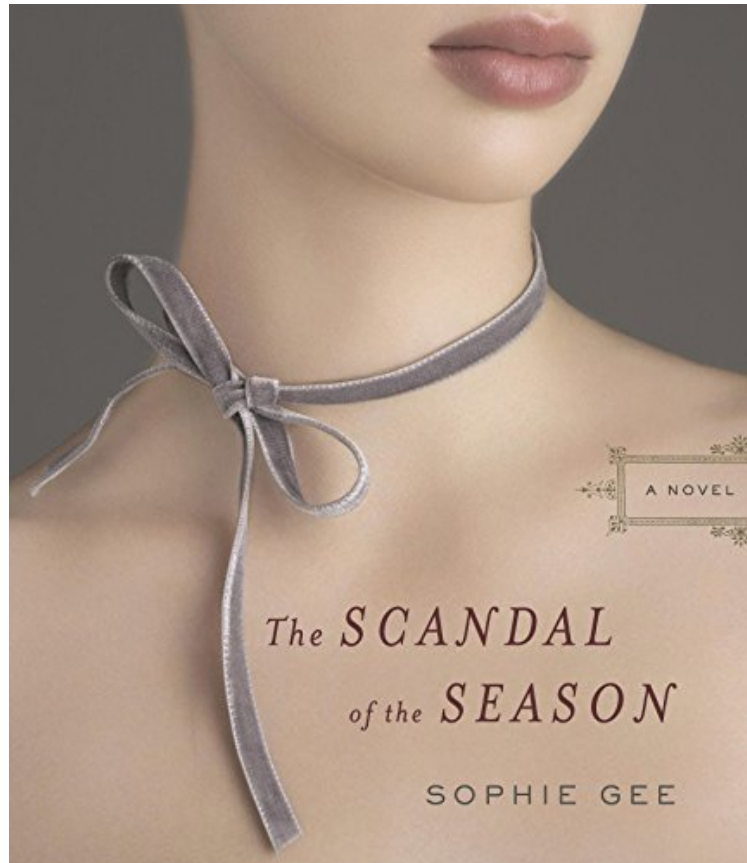


[Download pdf] The Scandal of the Season

The Scandal of the Season

Sophie Gee

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Sophie Gee : The Scandal of the Season before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Scandal of the Season:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Interesting Story, Weak Characters, But Worth the Read By Hockey Skate Laces I enjoyed "The Scandal of the Season" but it could have been better. The storyline was interesting, kept me turning the page but I think the characters were flat. The only one I even felt remotely invested in was Alexander Pope, probably because I was already familiar with him. The author missed the opportunity to recreate 1711 London and the rest of the characters in a way that would appeal to a larger audience. Especially given that a lot of the characters actually existed and the story is based on a true story. Sophie Gee clearly knows her subject, but assumes that everyone who picks up this book is as passionate about Pope as she is. "The Rape of the Lock" was required reading during my Sophomore year of high school, it would have been fun to have this book then. I am glad I read "The Scandal of the Season" but wouldn't put it on a list of books that I'd want on a deserted island of 6 people found the following review helpful. A fun read, but a little disappointing in the end By B. A. Chaney I received this book as a Christmas gift, and I was anxious to read it because I usually really enjoy historical fiction. Unfortunately I felt like

this book was more romance than history. I mostly enjoyed the romance, and at times the book really was a page turner. But in the end the novel felt a little flat. The characters were quite flat, and there was little of the historical element that I had been expecting. The author writes well, so I hope if there is another novel it has more of a historical slant. 2 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Smart, fun, historical read
By Ellen McRae
I read this book for my book club, and we all really enjoyed it. It didn't give us a ton to discuss, but it's definitely a fun read. I had a hard time putting it down!

Jane Austen meets Philip Roth in a sexy, sparkling debut novel reconstructing the real-life scandal that inspired Alexander Pope's famous poem "The Rape of the Lock." London, 1711. The rich young offspring of the city's fashionable families fill their days with masquerade balls, opera engagements, and clandestine courtships. Leading the pursuit of pleasure are the beautiful Arabella Fermor, with her circle of beaux, and Robert Petre, seventh Baron of Ingatestone, a man-about-town with his choice of mistresses. Small, sickly, and almost penniless, Alexander Pope is peripheral by birth, yet his dazzling wit and ambition gain him unlikely entrance into high society. Privy to every nuance and drama, he is a brilliant and ruthless observer. As the forbidden passion between Arabella and Lord Petre deepens, fortunes change and reputations—even lives—are imperiled. Pope transforms their affair and its demise into a risqué poem, "The Rape of the Lock," that catapults him to fame and fortune. A witty, provocative tale of intrigue, seduction, and betrayal, *The Scandal of the Season* captures a time when marriage was a market, sex was a temptation fraught with danger, and a costume could conceal a dandy or a murderer.

.com This witty novel feels nothing like a debut; its seasoning is due to Sophie Gee's erudition--she is an assistant professor in the Department of English at Princeton--and her sophisticated approach to the story she has to tell. It is 1711 in London, when beautiful wealthy people spend their time at masquerade balls, levees, assignations and evening performances in the endless pursuit of pleasure, gossip, political and social advantage. Alexander Pope is a poet of some repute who leaves his country home to spend "the season" in London. He is a Catholic and, as such, is aware of the Jacobite plot to return James VII of Scotland and the House of Stuart to the throne of England, which has been usurped by Mary and William of Orange, Protestants who have instituted harsh rules against Catholics. This is one thread of the plot, as Alexander, the canny observer, puts two and two together and deduces who is involved with whom. Three families have long been associated with the Jacobites: the Fermors, the Carylls, and the Petres. More to the point is the intrigue between Arabella Fermor and Lord Petre. The beautiful and haughty Arabella attracts Lord Petre instantly and they spend no time consummating their attraction--with everyone privy to it. Naturally, the expectation is that they will marry, even though Arabella is not wealthy enough to be a really good match. Alas, Lord Petre is prevailed upon by his family to give up Arabella and his doomed Jacobite intentions, marry another and save the family name. Further, he must make a public display of terminating the affair with Arabella. All of this leads to Alexander Pope writing "The Rape of the Lock," in which a lock of "Belinda's" hair is cut--in public! In language and cadences reserved for 16th century novels, Gee has created a delightful and plausible romp through the practices, plots, romances, posturing and superficiality of Pope's time. It is known that his epic poem was concerned with the three families aforementioned; the rest might also be true, but almost three hundred years later what really matters is how much fun this is to read! --Valerie Ryan
From Publishers Weekly
Hunchbacked satirist poet Alexander Pope finds inspiration in the foibles of 18th-century London's young, rich and arrogant in Gee's shrewd debut, an erudite period piece filled with outrageous flirtation, social maneuvering and contests of wit. The low-born Pope is permitted entry to London's upper echelons after some of his poems gain a gilded readership, and his literary ambitions and adventures in the city with childhood friends Martha and Teresa Blount are offset by the passionate but clandestine romance between the beautiful Arabella Fermor (who happens to be related to the Blounts), and the haughty Lord Petre, whose involvement in a plot to assassinate the queen lands him in a tight spot. The stories intersect when Pope immortalizes the lovers' high-class intrigue in a scalding poem. The novel is sprinkled with literary cameos and jokes English lit majors will appreciate, while crackling verbal one-upmanship and crude double entendres should keep the hoi polloi turning pages. Gee's take on the Paris Hilton-like figures who pranced through London 300 years ago manages to be simultaneously tabloid bawdy and academy proper.
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From *The New Yorker* "My office is to charm those who charm the world," Alexander Pope declares at the start of this lively novel, based on events that inspired "The Rape of the Lock." In the elaborately narrow world of early-eighteenth-century London society, the most charming inhabitants are the beautiful Arabella Fermor and the dashing Lord Petre. Their scandalous and, in Gee's telling, heartfelt affair gives narrative thrust to rich historical details from Pope's early career. Crippled, Catholic, and of modest social station, Pope relies on influential friends, adroit flattery, and prodigious wit to gain access to the heady coffeehouses and fashionable drawing rooms on which his success depends. Gee writes with scholarly confidence, underpinning the racy intrigue of her account with a real understanding of the characters and their world, and of the ambitious young man who "laughed out loud, and wrote it down." Copyright 2007 Click here to subscribe to *The New Yorker*