

Miss Newbury's List

Megan Walker

Shadow Mountain Publishing (Feb 7, 2023)

Softcover \$15.99 (320pp)

978-1-63993-052-4

In Megan Walker's wistful Regency romance novel *Miss Newbury's List*, a woman is faced with a choice between an aristocratic marriage or unexpected love.

Three weeks before her wedding to a duke, Rosalind feels overwhelmed. She's lukewarm about the cordial match: it would benefit her family's standing, but she's fearful that she'll miss her chance at a full life. Inspired by her aunt, she makes a list of ten dreams for her future. They range from learning to swim and eating sweets to changing someone's life. Her desires, even when they're whimsical, reflect her sense of longing for personal agency. Rosalind's best friend is cautiously supportive of her desires. Meanwhile, a family friend, Charlie, hides his family's secrets beneath a bruised façade.

As she works through her list with increasing delight, Rosalind faces classic questions about responsibility versus independence. She finds common ground with Charlie, who also confronts his fears about measuring up to other people's expectations. Peril and tangled motivations fuel big revelations that may enable the cast to make unencumbered choices.

Rosalind's clear affections for her loved ones contrast with her feelings of dread about the increasing social restrictions she faces. Her exchanges with her younger brother are loving and carefree; his sense of duty inspires her. And Charlie, an outcast because of his unconventional choices, ignites her curiosity. His gentlemanly concern for Rosalind's safety; his empathy about her reluctance to become a duchess; and his teasing encouragement to unearth the truer facets of herself result in a warm, playful connection. Their romance is both daring and restrained.

Miss Newbury's List is a gentle, moving romance novel that's inspired by kindred companionship and crossroad reckonings.

KAREN RIGBY (January / February 2023)

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