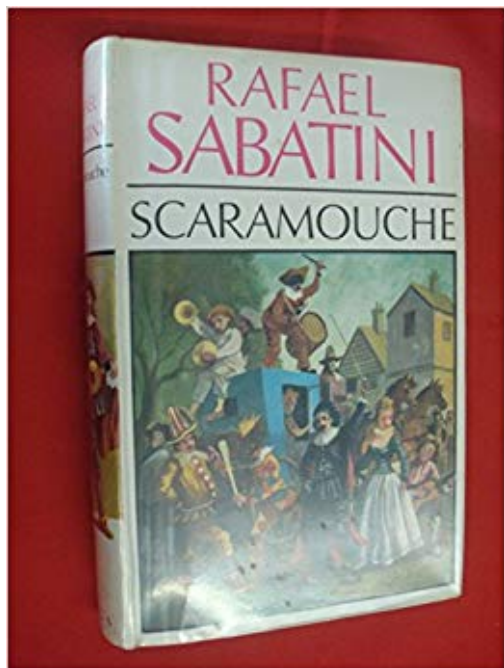


Scaramouche *by* Rafael Sabatini



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Reviews of the *Scaramouche* by Rafael Sabatini

Hucama

I have known of SCARAMOUCHE all my life, and I am in my seventies. I own a copy of the 1952 MGM film with Stewart Granger and Mel Ferrer. I had read a couple of author Rafael Sabatini's other books: CAPTAIN BLOOD and THE SEA HAWK. None of this prepared me for SCARAMOUCHE, the novel. The movie skates over the surface of the much deeper lake of this story. The character Andre-Louis Moreau, driven by a dark desire for revenge, has a scheming soul, an agile mind, and a talent for doing anything he tries at the supreme level. We follow him into revolutionary politics, the theater, and finally to becoming Paris's reigning fencing master. We share in his obsession for avenging the murder of his friend by the hand of a proud, even arrogant, marquis. These two cross each other's paths from the earliest days of the French Revolution through the debates, the uprising, the Bastille, and to the beginnings of the Reign of Terror. (By the way, I do not believe I have ever read a novel of the French Revolution before in which the revolutionaries are the good guys.) SCARAMOUCHE has not picked up any rust in the ninety years since its publication. It is a splendid adventure and a provocative read.

Qudanilyr

My father had the entire Sabatini collection, beautifully bound, but I read and re-read many in dogeared paperback. Just like the kid who wants to hear the same bedtime story over and over, I never get tired of this one, or many others he wrote.

It took a few decades for me to realize how accurately Sabatini nailed the beginnings, middle, and end of a revolution, any revolution. I used to think the United States kept itself immune to the kind of ferment, head-in-the-sand timidity, and pandering to the mob that characterize revolution, and was thus immune from the rage and despotism and dark age that follows. Now I only hope we are.

Romance and derring-do; sly humor and vivid description; assumption he has an educated reader; enlightenment of the uneducated. Never boring. Sabatini.

Gavinranara

Scaramouche is one of the most famous historical adventures stories to emerge from the early twentieth century. The book was published in 1921 followed in 1922 by *Captain Blood*. These two novels were the most famous works of fiction by Rafael Sabatini (of mixed Italian and English parents). The author was a prolific author of novels, screenplays and plays. His father was a Italian opera singer. This book was filmed in 1952 and starred Stewart Granger.

The plot is set in the time of the French Revolution. A. Moreau is a young attorney whose best friend is killed in a duel with a rich, feckless, cruel and amorous aristocrat. The conflict between the two enemies makes this a revenge novel. Moreau escapes from his small village where he has been accused against sedition. He takes up with a troupe of traveling players becoming the character of Scaramouche (a clown). He also serves as a delegate to the National Assembly of France and runs a dueling academy. He is love with two lovely women; one is an aristocrat and the other is an actress also being courted by Scaramouche's arch enemy.

The book is filled with escapes, irony, adventures and oratory calling on the French people to support the new French Republic and cast off the yoke of the monarchy in the form of Louis XVI. This novel is the most famous ever written by Sabatini and has become a classic. I have read and reread the novel several times and enjoy it. A good read!

in waiting

Published almost a century ago, *Scaramouche* is well worth reading even now -- for one thing, unlike some more recent novels, it actually has a plot. A good one! Andre-Louis Moreau is supposedly the illegitimate son of a local seigneur; witty, cynical, and intelligent. He is indifferent to the revolutionary rhetoric around him at the close of the 18th century in France until his close friend is provoked into a duel with one of France's greatest swordsman, M. le Marquis de la Tour d'Azyr. His friend's murder (the poor victim, a seminarian, was clearly maneuvered into a duel he could not win) changes Andre-Louis into a passionate revolutionary, whose mission is to seek justice for his friend's death. Forced to flee after he tries to accuse the Marquis of murder, Andre-Louis joins up with a *Commedia dell'arte* troupe, where he becomes the stock comic character "Scaramouche." More importantly, he makes the company's fame as its "writer" and falls in love with the troupe director's daughter. Once again, M. le Marquis is a problem, making Andre-Louis's fiancée his mistress. Disillusioned, Andre-Louis goes to Paris, where he goes from actor to swordsman in this tale of "the best of times" and "the worst of times." Though my own opinion of the French Revolution is closer to Edmund Burke's than it is to Andre-Louis's, Sabatini is fair both to the upper-class "aristos" and the common "sans-cullotes." If you like romantic passion and first-rate swordplay in a novel with more than one twist to the plot, this is your book.

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