



How to Tame Your Duke

Juliana Gray

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Three intrepid princesses find themselves targets in a deadly plot against the crown - until their uncle devises a brilliant plan to keep them safe...

England, 1888.

Quiet and scholarly Princess Emilie has always avoided adventure, until she's forced to disguise herself as a tutor in the household of the imposing Duke of Ashland, a former soldier disfigured in battle and abandoned by his wife. When chance draws her into a secret liaison with the duke, Emilie can't resist the opportunity to learn what lies behind his forbidding mask, and find out what adventure really means...

The duke never imagines that his son's tutor and his mysterious golden-haired beauty are one and the same. But when the true identity of his lover is laid bare, Moreland must face the demons in his past in order to safeguard both his lady - and his heart.

How to Tame Your Duke Details

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From Reader Review How to Tame Your Duke for online ebook

Desi says

The book was quite well written overall in terms of use of language and touching flowery romantic speeches but I think the main issue I had with it, apart from the incredibly far-fetched plot was the protagonists. I did not like her, and I really didn't like him.

Occasionally I might dislike the hero or the heroine but never have I felt so completely unattached to either of them.

The author told us they were in love, there was no slow development of attachment. The rather boring heroine was obsessively jealous and supposedly in love after one viewing of the Hero's maimed manly physique. There was no discovering facets of personalities. Probably why they seemed like cardboard cutout characters.

I found the sixteen year old son of the hero more interesting, delightful and engaging than the very carefully constructed 'wounded hero in need of love' the author tried to sell us in the hermit like hero. I wish the book had been about the precocious teen.

As to the princess, she quite frankly seemed a ditz playing at being smart. I never felt her supposed intelligence, academic or otherwise, was displayed to the reader. And she was really quite careless beyond any common sense for someone whose life was supposedly in danger.

As to the plot, the logic of how the duke was using his monthly 'hotel room with a whore' sessions was just way too stupid to be for real. I literally laughed aloud in disbelief at that 'convenient for our virgin heroine' scenario the author decided on. It was probably around then that I thought "this is just too much", and I could no longer take the book even half seriously as I finished.

On the nitpicking side I also want to address the Emily vs Emilie issue. When she's in disguise at the hotel she uses her real name with the duke and, as she says it aloud to him, he can't actually know that it is not spelt traditionally. So the book then proceeds to have him, when speaking to or thinking of her, picturing the name quite naturally as "Emily".

But then (and this might be an editorial issue) they forgot this distinction and had him using "Emilie" with an 'ie' in both speech and thought. Then they have him going back and forth between the spellings once again to "Emily". All this was before he had even learnt that the true spelling of her name was actually "Emilie". A spelling he would not have thought of on his own.

This was very distracting to me. And it could have likely been overlooked, except that later, when he discovers her identity, the author makes a point of stupidly emphasizing the two spellings which just makes the lack of consistency/ mix-up seem very careless: "He couldn't quite believe this was Emily. His Emily, whose supple body had risen up so eagerly to meet his own. Not Emily anymore. Emilie."

Honestly, Emilie's time as a man was barely explored and the freedom she was given in that guise was glossed over and not taken advantage of. Point being I couldn't bring myself to read the second book in this series. I quit this author.

willful says

3 1/2 stars. Full review at Dear Author: <http://dearauthor.com/book-reviews/ov...>

Monty Cupcake ? Queen of Bloodshed ? says

The plot of girl in disguise is always a fun one. This one sort of has a double disguise plot. I liked Emilia and especially her interactions with Freddie, who's adorably funny. The Duke is true to the scarred and damaged hero ways, quiet and gloomy. Sad the plot of whodunit wasn't solved in the end, but this is the first book in the series. Perhaps I'll have to read all three to find out the culprit.

Michelle says

4.75 stars

When I first started this book I kept blanking out and stopped paying attention here and there. I wasn't completely into it at first and was wondering if I should continue reading or not. Let me tell you, it is so worth continuing on. I absolutely loved this book. This is my kind of book. A **princess in disguise**, a mysterious and attractive **duke**, danger lurking around the corner, a **secret liaison** (although not exactly in the conventional sense), lovable characters and a beautiful romance that I really got into. Once the story picked up I couldn't stop reading. I'm a bit sleep deprived because I stayed up late to read. Really worth the dark circles under my eyes.

First the plot wasn't just a bunch of masked men trying to kill or kidnap our heroine, Emilie, chapter after chapter. She first learns about and grows closer to the Duke and his son, Freddie. She is Freddie's tutor, dressed as a *Mr. Grimsby* and has to keep her disguise intact. When she finds herself accidentally being escorted to the Duke's private hotel room one night she ends up having a **weekly liaison** with him. Now, this liaison isn't what you think and kind of threw me a curve ball because I expected just sex but it wasn't like that, at least not at first (I mean this is a romance after all. ;)). Later on there is more about the plot against her and her sisters which was pretty intense and I was like "Are you the traitor?" "Is there actually a traitor?" "Why is everyone screaming?" "Where did she go?" Those kinds of questions entered my mind a lot towards the end.

I need to talk about **Freddie** first. First, he provides the wonderful and unexpected humor in this book. I absolutely love his witty, fun and laid-back personality. He is a great balance to his father's rougher personality. I also love Emilie's uncle the Duke of Olympia. He has some surprises up his sleeve and is a great addition to the cast of characters. The **Duke of Ashland** or just Ashland is probably one of my favorite heroes in the romance books I have read so far. He is mysterious, like you know he is holding something in but can't put it in so many words with the fear of losing his calm and controlled self. He is so lonely after his wife left him (for reasons I can't say because of spoilers but he wasn't at fault). I mean I just wanted to give him a hug after **he seemed so broken and lost**. Then comes **Emilie**. She is the sun on a cloudy day. I love Emilie's strength, her desire to be **independent** and free of people's constant regulations of her life and her love she has for Ashland and everyone in her life. There were so many **wonderfully intense** (and quite hot,

if I may say so) scenes between Ashland and Emilie. There is so much emotion between them even if emotion may just be their enemy and may lead to many complications in their lives. They fight, they struggle, their relationship is **pretty complicated** you know, but they are just so perfect for each other. I also need to say I love Ashland's wicked humor and his unexpected naughty side. ;)

I **definitely recommend** this book. The very beginning moved a little slow for me that's why I couldn't give it a perfect five out of five but this read was so worth the wait. I still need to know what is going on with the behind the scenes plot against the princesses so I'm off to the next book very soon.

Sarah says

20/2 - I thought *How to School your Scoundrel* was an average imitator with a very outlandish plot (there are better examples of this subgenre out there). That book has an average rating of 3.74, this has 3.80. Hopefully that extra .6 of a point will lead to a whole extra star from me. To be continued...

SPOILERS THROUGHOUT!!!

21/2 - Sooo much better than book three (despite the fact that that only translates to one extra star). I think I just didn't connect with Luisa and Philip like I did with Emilie and Ashland (Anthony, but she never calls him by his first name). I had a number of chuckles reading this last night, especially if the scene involved Freddie. He was like a breath of hilarious fresh air compared to the minor characters in *How to School you Scoundrel* - mostly more appearances by the Duke of Olympia, Miss Dingleby and Somerton's first wife. Freddie's personality easily outshines all of them. The absence of the Duke of Olympia really helped the plot, removed the absurdity of having a drag queen duke popping up in random tea rooms to impart updates on the progress of finding the murderer. I definitely think this is a series that **needs** to be read in order. Because I read the last book in the series first, I knew how it all turned out in the end and that Dingleby really was a traitor. Plus when I was reading *How to School your Scoundrel* some of the things they said in relation to who the murderer was didn't make sense because the full discussion had already been had in one of the earlier books and Gray didn't go over it (again) in full (something which I would be pleased by if I had indeed read them in the correct order).

The romance and feelings between Emilie and Ashland was so much more apparent and realistic feeling than what was (or wasn't) between Luisa and Somerton and I thought the idea of paying a woman to read to Ashland was quite novel and gave me a higher opinion of him (I like the thought of a man who thinks watching/listening to a woman reading to him is sexy). This one has changed my opinion of the series so much that I will now be on the lookout for Stephanie's story, rather than picking it up only if I happen across it by chance.

PopSugar 2015 Reading Challenge: A Book Set in a Different Country

The Window Seat says

There has been a lot of chatter in romance circles about Historical romance being a diminished commodity. I have yet to officially throw my opinions into the fray, but to me the new release *How to Tame Your Duke* best illustrates some of the well-loved tropes found only in Historical romances. Where else but in a

Historical can you have a princess in disguise as a young tutor in the household of a scarred and jaded English nobleman and we fall for their story hook, line and sinker. We are eager to see them fall in love despite all the outlandish challenges to their relationship. It is precisely this kind of fantastic storyline that keeps me turning the pages and is a highly entertaining read.

With the next century in sight, the nations and kingdoms of Europe are in a constant state of upheaval. The latest principality to fall to the will of the people is the smaller Germanic holding of Holstein-Schweinwald-Huhnhof. The assassination of the Prince and his heir forces the three crown princesses to flee to their mother's homeland of England and into the protection of their uncle the Duke of Olympia. Fearing that agents of the group responsible for the Prince's death may have followed from the continent, Olympia suggests a most unusual way of hiding the princesses: he will separate them and disguise them as men to throw off their pursuers. With the duke's scandalous plan causing a division with the sisters, it comes down to the pragmatic Princess Emilie to break the tie and agree to change all of their fates. Sent to Yorkshire under the assumed name of Mr. Tobias Grisimby, Emilie finds herself assigned as a tutor to the young Freddie Russell and employed by his father the imposing Duke of Ashland.

For the full review, please go to <http://www.thewindowseat13.com/2013/0...>

Ursula says

This was an ok read for me. The hero-Duke was a good guy who had suffered a lot but was still a kind, decent person. The heroine, Emilie, was also a nice person. Can't complain.

But I felt the sex kind of took the book over, so that it became such a focal point for their relationship it detracted from the emotional element of the story. This in turn reduced the character development, which became static and a bit boring, tbh. Indeed the sex scenes ended up sort of OTT, with the decent, faithful Duke even becoming a dirty/smatty talker during the sex (he is not quoted, she just says he does it). The sex scenes were well-written, although I am always a bit wary of the virgin becoming the sex goddess after one experience- it just doesn't work that way! Just too much sex...

I will continue with the rest of the series, but it has really only been the first book by this author that I found original and very entertaining, which is a shame, because I find her actual writing very good.

Mrs Giggles says

Say what you want about Juliana Gray, but she's certainly not going to let anyone call her stories boring. For How To Tame Your Duke - the first in her new series - she decides to lasso in the cross-dressing heroine trope and add in stuff that reminds me of everything from Jane Eyre to The Phantom Of The Opera. Too bad the glue holding all these things together is nowhere as strong as it should have been.

In 1889, there is still a kingdom called Holstein-Schweinwald-Hunhof, which I guess was either laughed out of existence or eventually forced by the UN to change its name to something simpler, like Lithuania or Andorra. I would refer to that kingdom as Huffaw-Huffaw-Guffaw from now on, because I refuse to short-circuit my brain by trying to remember how to spell that name.

Anyway, like all fictitious tiny kingdoms are wont to experience in romance novels, Huffaw-Huffaw-Guffaw is currently in throes of political instability because the king and the eldest daughter's husband were killed. The only natural thing to do is for the princesses to flee the kingdom and hide in England, as we all know that England deliberately screws up these nations England is the benevolent defender of all that is good in the world. That way, the villains would, instead of focusing their resources on establishing a dictatorial playground like only idiots would, sensibly channel their finances and energy into tracking down the three women and kill them.

The princesses - one good and proper, one quiet and studious, one adventurous and feisty - and their baggage flee to the protection of the Duke of Olympia, leaving behind their country which would stagger from the loss of the three stereotypes. The Duke is not only a dabbler of family curses and cunning matchmaker of wayward children (if you have read the author's previous series), but is now a dabbler in secret agent stuff as well. I'm sure the third book in this series would bear the revelation that space aliens from Mars are behind the whole Huffaw-Huffaw-Guffaw conspiracy thing, and the Duke of Olympia would reveal that he is also the head of UK's secret Men In Black division and teaches the hero of that book how to use a photon cannon like Iron Man.

So, the Duke of Olympia has a plan. To protect the princesses, he would separate them and send them off - in disguise, of course - to places and situations that they have never been in. Without anyone to watch their backs 24/7, because clearly discretion trumps common sense. So, our heroine Princess Emilie - the studious and cautious one - ends up pretending to be a guy, Mr Grimsby, and is sent by Olympia to be the tutor of Freddie Russell, the son of Anthony, the Duke of Ashland. Emilie earns the friendship of Freddie when they end up on the same side in a tavern brawl shortly after the story begins, and Emilie continues to work her magic, charming her employer and the household staff. She clearly has impressive princess genes that program her to perform wonderfully in situations that a typical princess rarely finds herself in.

No one can tell that she's a woman until she accidentally loses some whiskers that she has glued to her chin, so either those must be magical whiskers pulled out from Olympia's very talented rear end, or Emilie is one, er, homely woman whose charms are on the masculine side. Since Emilie manages to convince Ashford that she's the hottest bunny this side of the country, merely by reading to him (don't ask), it can't be that she has an Adam's apple or a natural tendency to grow facial hair. It must be those magical whiskers.

So, can Emilie and Ashford find love despite the fact that he believes her to have a penis and he is badly scarred on one side of the face? Would the villains from Huffaw-Huffaw-Guffaw find Emilie and delete her from the gene pool before she has the chance to bear Ashford's baby? Would Emilie ever come to a right conclusion throughout the course of this story? Would the author switch things up in the third book with aliens, ghosts, or werewolves? Stay tuned!

Everything about this story is a hot mess, but I have to give the author credit: the story still manages to be pretty entertaining. Very little makes sense, but the author delivers a bouncy narrative and comedy that works most of the time. Ashford is also a very appealing hero - he was been dumped by the wife after he came back from India with his scarred face, but he held on to memories of better days with that woman and even remained faithful to her. I don't understand why he holds on for so long and for so hard, but there is a rather romantic "okay, he's probably dumb to do that, but it's actually quite sweet, really" feel to the whole thing.

His romance with Emilie is very superficial, though. He wants her because she's the first woman that doesn't run the other direction after seeing his face. As for Emilie, she wants him because he's so hot, scarred face and all, and she's looking for a hot train to get a ride on as her way of showing the world that she is an

independent woman. Take that, people who expect her to remain demure and virginal just because she is a princess! She doesn't consider the implication of riding on that train - not even the possibility of bearing a brat out of wedlock - so her determination to be Her Own Woman, unfortunately, is just the latest of the overused "I just wanna go wild" excuse used by romance authors to get their heroines to put out to the hero and then spend the next few hundred pages wailing that they can't marry those guys.

Perhaps this would be tolerable if Emilie is as smart as she is said to be, but this creature is incapable of coming to even one correct conclusion about anything. She's just carried along by other people, and when she does do something - putting out to Ashford, for example - she'd spend the next few pages feeling various degrees of regret. The romance is already so superficial, and now I have a heroine who shows little sense of maturity. These two may just drift away from one another after the whole novelty of shagging the hot married scarred guy whose wife is MIA is gone.

I'm also not sure why the author has to include a scene to confirm that the hero's previous wife is absolutely, positively, 100% slut incarnate. Perhaps this is to kill off any leftover warm feelings Ashford may have for that woman, but this also seems like a rather contrived effort to get me to see Emilie is a better light. I've never liked the "let's turn the heroine look better by making all the other women she is competing with into sluts and whores and worse" thing, so this moment has me rolling up my eyes. Ashford's previous wife must be a harlot, but Emilie is still dumb.

The author also, for some strange reasons, ends the romance arc earlier than expected, and spends the remaining chapters of the book padding things up with external drama involving people wanting to kill Emilie. The drama is pretty pedestrian and even predictable, and Emilie, already in a dingbat in my eyes, becomes an even bigger dingbat when she starts accusing the wrong people of being the enemies. Her role in the story is reduced to being "that thing everybody must protect from the bad guys". I wait for her to use even once that keen intelligence she is said to possess, but Emilie remains that sack of potatoes everyone must carry, protect, and save all the way to the last page.

To conclude: nice hero, nice comedy. Everything else is a mess and the heroine is a dingbat. I hesitate to call *How To Tame Your Duke* a good romance story, but still, its flaws are often unintentionally hilarious, adding to the general merriment of the tale. Like I said, at least it's not boring.

Kimberly says

Emilie is the quietest of the three princesses of Holstein-Schweinwald-Huhnhof, but beneath the calm façade is a woman who wants more than the staid life of a princess. When her father is murdered and she and her sisters are forced to flee Germany, Emilie gets the adventure she's always yearned for. Separated from her sisters and disguised as a man, Emilie takes a position as tutor to the Duke of Ashland's son. Her new position is not without its cost, however, and the price of playing a man is not being able to give into her feelings for her new employer. Ashland bears scars inside and out and the temptation he presents is too much for Emilie to resist. After a chance meeting with Ashland when she's dressed as a woman, Emilie gives into her feelings for the duke and the two begin an affair that could cost Emilie everything.

It's a risky game, playing both tutor and seductive stranger, but Emilie succeeds in capturing the duke's heart. But what will happen when he learns that his mystery woman is not only a member of his household, but a princess being targeted by assassins?

Juliana Gray has constructed a plot worthy of the Bard himself. Disguises, intrigue, danger, and romance fill the pages of *How to Tame Your Duke* and I, for one, could not be happier.

Emilie is the scholarly middle sister of the three Holstein-Schweinwald-Huhnhof princesses. All her life she's been defined by her role as princess, but now that she has a chance to break free, Emilie truly comes into her own. I loved that she was a mix of bluestocking, adventurer, and romantic. She was the perfect match in every way for Ashland. The duke in question is a man who deserves all the happiness that comes his way. He's honorable and caring, but his time on the battlefield has left him deeply scarred outside and the abandonment of his wife has left its own marks within. He's a good man, but not fully alive until Emilie comes along, and watching his interaction with Emilie both as his mystery woman and as "Grimsby," his son's tutor, was a delight. And speaking of his son, Freddie might just be my favorite character in *How to Tame Your Duke*. The young lord is a teenager too smart for his own good, which made him a wonderfully entertaining character. Indeed, it's Freddie who brings the bright spots to *How to Tame Your Duke*, ensuring there is humor mixed in with the seriousness and suspense.

How to Tame Your Duke is the first book in a trilogy featuring Emilie and her two sisters. Though we don't see much of Stefanie or Luisa, I'm eager to learn more about them and the fate of the German principality they call home. I finished *How to Tame Your Duke* a well-satisfied reader, and I can't wait to read Stefanie's book, *How to Master Your Marquis*!

Reviewed for Joyfully Reviewed.

Mary - Buried Under Romance says

Posted on: Buried Under Romance

This is a fantastic introduction to Juliana Gray's new trilogy, and one that does proud to tropes in both *Jane Eyre* and *Beauty and the Beast*.

The premise: The three princesses of the German principality of Holstein-Schweinwald-Huhnhof, Luisa, Emilie, and Stefanie, are forced to disguise themselves as males and secure employment in England while their uncle, the Duke of Olympia (who was a minor character in Gray's *Affairs by Moonlight* trilogy), ferret out the assassins that are trying to kill them, post-assassinating the king and Luisa's fiancé.

When Emilie bravely saved a young man in a taproom brawl (using a chicken leg no less!) she had no idea that was Freddie, son of the Duke of Ashland, who is to be her future employer. Upon meeting the duke in her guise of a male tutor, she gradually becomes infatuated with the deeply wounded man who turned her normally intelligent brain to jelly, but could she come to unlock the secrets of his heart?

Juliana Gray writes like no author I've ever read. She spins a tale of such astounding warmth and heart to melt the forbidding coldness of Yorkshire, filled with sensual and mesmerizing imagery and superb characters. The dialogue is amusing and witty, paid with exacting details to not only the British language, but also to the political and social climate of the time; it feels like reading a minor treatise on philosophy and history but with much more humor and fun. The greatest selling point of this book is, however, the complexity of its main characters and the way they come to life and enchant readers with so much thought and feeling.

I cannot say whether I liked Emilie or Ashland more, as both are very genuine in their own right. However, as true strength goes, Ashland is quite amazing. Having been tortured while serving as an officer in India (his right arm is amputated; his face and body severe scars), he came home only to find his beautiful wife deserting him for another, leaving him to raise his young son alone. For the following twelve years, he continued to send her money, not divorcing her, and not devoting his heart to another, because he believed to do so would be akin to betraying his son, who was born from her. Though he does not speak of love, the love he has for his son is deep and sentimental, and so is his unyielding love for Emilie.

Emilie has been credited with the wise eyes of an owl, bearing the wisdom of one far beyond her age. Her wisdom allowed her to see past Ashland's hideous scars and truly appreciate the man inside, a man who, despite bearing physical and emotional scars, is more like a big, warm bear instead of a beast. Emilie has always been the demure one, the bookish one, but for the first time she is able to have the grandest adventure of her life - to fall abjectly in love, proving true the adage "love conquers all."

The secondary characters have their own personality and often served as comic relief; from the suspiciously omniscient matchmaking Duke of Olympia to witty and hilarious Freddie, they were a treat to meet. The same goes with the teaser from Stefanie and her hero, the Marquess of Hatherfield.

Characters aside, the pacing was also well done, mixing action and intrigue on the side, while keeping the main focus on the budding romance of the Emilie and Ashland. The plot twists are unexpected but revealing; Gray has nicely moved the central plot forward in this story, surely to have the last book of the trilogy conclude the assassination plot.

Watching Emilie and Ashland fall in love despite their myriad disguises was a great pleasure, but seeing them conquer all the obstacles in their path was an even greater one. I do not want to spoil any more plot, but towards the end was there some redundancy of scenes and heightened drama, though without it, I feel the characters would have seemed too perfect in their own ways. I have come to love both the story and the characters, and it was an absolute delight to read this book. To the readers, I can only impart the pure fact that this is quite an incredible historical romance, in hopes that you will graciously fall under the spell of Juliana Gray's superb writing.

Lover of Romance says

Princess Emilie, is the middle sister, and has always been the quiet and reserved one, and relished her books. But when their father is murdered, they are on the run for their lives. They make it to England, with the aid of their governess to reach their uncle's home. Who hatches a plan to hide them in the countryside posing as men. Emilie, is to be a tutor for a young teenager, with an overbearing Duke as the man she answers to. She will have to cut her hair, and put on a mustache and act the part. At first it doesn't seem too difficult but the attraction she feels for Ashland, is overwhelming and she starts having feelings she never expected to have for him. Then when she learns of him having a supposed mistress, who he sees every week, she can't contain the jealousy and even envy she starts to feel. When she heads to the village, she is mistaken as the women of the evening for Ashland, and soon she is drawn into a web of desire and passion, and she begins to live two lives, and wonders if she could ever share with Ashland the truth of who she really is, or would he hate her forever...

How To Tame Your Duke is the first book in the series, and the first book I have had the pleasure of reading from this author. Now I will say I had no idea what to expect when I started this one. When I start a new

author, I either know I will love it or not love it....I love Juliana Gray. This was such a delight to read and it was quite a full depth romance, which was something I wasn't expecting. There are many intricate patterns in this story that casts a spell over you as you read. Now I will say, that I wasn't used to the authors writing style, so it did take me a little while to adjust, and really get fully involved in the story. I do love the way that this author created a flawless story for the reader, and there was quite a bit of substance.

It begins with the hero dressing and acting as a man, and the hero a wounded beast, who just wants his solitude. This story is about two that need affection and love and passion more than anyone, they need that trusting relationship, one only dreams of. Emilie has been forced from the only home she has ever known, and lost her father and now separated from her sisters, feels more isolated than ever. Ashland, was wounded and tortured in the war, and has come back disfigured, wears a mask, and hides most of who he is from the world. But when these two collide, you see the instant spark. I loved the little hidden identity theme, and it creates quite a lovely conflict to the story. I really loved this element to the story, not every author can write it in such a way as Gray has done for us.

Overall an enriching, steamy, and beautifully crafted romance...exquisite in every way!!

kris says

A 3.5 star read.

Absolutely there is a semi-huge suspension of disbelief needed to follow the adventures of 3 German princesses in exile as they fall in love and what have you. Parts of this were great; parts of this were...not so much.

1. I enjoyed the development of the relationship quite a bit. My god, the scenes with Emilie and Ashland at the hotel KILLED ME. I was all revved up for a solid 4/5 star read! I wish there had been more use of Grimsby to explore the non-physical side of their relationship? It just felt like a dropped story-line once the hotel visits started.

That said:

2. The sex scenes. They were just so--overwhelmingly pornographic that it was difficult to read. At one point, Emilie and Ashland are having sex in a carriage (like you do), and the prose is like "she came down hard, lifted herself, and slammed down again with an inhuman growl of satisfaction at the pleasure-pain of it, the sweet bruising heat of cramming herself full of Ashland."

"Cramming", to me, kind of throws me out of the story. I don't see two people who have developed an emotional attachment getting their sexy freak on; I see two bored porn stars plugging away.

THIS IS AS AWKWARD A REVIEW TO WRITE AS IT PROBABLY IS TO READ AND I APOLOGIZE FOR NOTHING.

3. The spy / assassin / anarchist plot got very convoluted and dull.

4. FREDDIE. I loved how earnest Freddie was and how boisterous and convinced that his father and Emilie would figure things out and how readily he accepted her, and how he didn't angst about his long-gone

mother. ALSO HE CALLS ASHLAND 'PATER' AND IT'S JUST THE BEST.

Caz says

I ended up giving this a B- for both content and narration over at AudioGals, so let's call it 3.5 stars overall.

Narrated by Veida Dehmlow

Every time I look at Audible's list of new/upcoming releases, I see more and more new names listed among the narrators. Like many listeners, I'm fairly cautious about trying out new narrators, but fortunately for me, because of my association with AudioGals, I'm able to give some of them a try, and, I hope, to enable others to decide whether to try them too.

Ms. Dehmlow has a handful of titles to her credit at Audible, and as her name has popped up as narrator on a couple of recent historical romances, I thought I would listen to one of them.

How to Tame Your Duke is probably not the sort of book I'd usually choose to read, because it contains one of my least favorite tropes in historical romance – that of the woman who dresses as a man and manages to perpetuate her disguise for some length of time without arousing any suspicion. But I'd seen a fair number of positive reviews, and that, combined with the desire to listen to a new narrator, made me throw caution to the wind and request a copy. On the whole, it proved to have been a good decision.

The story is set towards the end of the nineteenth century with the three princesses of a little-known (and completely imaginary) German principality escaping their homeland with their lives after the assassination of their father and the eldest sister's husband. Their uncle is the powerful Duke of Olympia (an odd appellation for an English duke which immediately made me think of a tube stop on the District Line!) and he arranges for each of the sisters to be hidden away while he makes inquiries, tries to find out who is behind the murders, and bring them to justice. As the story progresses, it emerges that Olympia is more than just a member of the British aristocracy; he's some kind of 19th century "M", a spymaster with fingers in many pies and contacts everywhere.

The heroine of this book is middle sister Emilie, the bookish, bespectacled one who secretly longs for adventure. Well, she certainly finds it when she is packed off into the wilds of Yorkshire to serve as tutor to the sixteen-year-old Marquess of Silverton, the son of the reclusive Duke of Ashland. And yes, I did say "tutor" and not "governess". The fact that the sisters have survived and are still at large is widely known, and Olympia hits upon the idea of disguising them as men to keep them hidden while he makes his investigations.

It's at this point that my interest would normally be flagging as I started to wonder what on earth would cause a supposedly intelligent man such as Olympia to believe that a pair of trousers and some glue-on whiskers will make his nieces turn into nephews in the eyes of everyone else. But the setup was intriguing enough for me to want to continue, and I admit that I did enjoy the scene shortly afterwards in which Emilie meets her charge for the first time as by then, I'd decided to allow the large stretch required of my credibility and to go with the flow.

You can read the rest of this review at [AudioGals](#)

Hasnamezied says

The problem I had with this book that I kept saying

SERIOUSLY.

all the time.

Jacob Proffitt says

The first $\frac{3}{4}$ of this was pretty good. The last quarter was painfully stupid when it wasn't simply dull.

First off, though, you have to give the book its premise in having a fictional German principality (with a laughably stupid name that threw me out of the story every. single. time. it. appeared.) so that the girls can be princesses on the run. And thus pretending to be boys. So you have the cross-dressing suspense that sometimes works and mostly doesn't. In this one, it works, but only because the main couple falls in love through a really bad contrivance of clandestine meetings that I accepted at the time but that seem really silly now. Indeed, the whole story is pretty silly, really, as I reflect on it. But that didn't matter for the first $\frac{3}{4}$ so I'm not sure what's up with that.

So I'm having a hard time justifying my eventual three stars. I dunno, I liked Emilie and Ash was kind of sweet and I wanted them to be together. Also, Freddie (Ash's son) was awesome and his relationship with Emilie (both before and after he found out her real identity) was outstanding. So I'm going to go with that I liked the main characters and some of the side characters were fun. But the rest of the plot had holes that could accommodate the birth of a new universe. It didn't help that the last quarter had both main characters finding excuses not to talk with each other and that got old fast. So I admit I skimmed that last quarter and I'm probably happier for it.

A note about Steamy: There were three or four explicit sex scenes and more explicit fooling around. And they went on for pages and pages. And while initially interesting I wondered after a while if they weren't filming this somewhere for a pay-per-view channel aimed at frat houses. So yeah, the upper end of my steam tolerance and it didn't exceed it only because I started skimming those, too.
