



Henrietta

Marion Chesney, Ann Fairfax

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GROOMING THE GROOM

In Nethercote, it was universally agreed that Henrietta, the Vicar's sister, was a hopeless spinster. Yet no one could deny that she possessed a magnificent pair of hazel eyes--and a high-stepping spirit.

So when Aunt Hester willed her an unexpected fortune, plucky Henrietta set out to take the fashionable world by storm. But, all aglitter for the Season, London society scoffed at the green girl in its midst. Especially when the bold country minx announced her intention to wed its most prized bachelor, the irresistibly roguish, delectably heartbreaking Beau Reckford himself.

Henrietta Details

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Damaskcat says

Henrietta is the downtrodden sister of a country vicar who believes she is doomed to a life looking after her brother and visiting the poor and sick of his parish. Then her great aunt leaves her a fortune and she decides to take London by storm and find herself a husband.

Her friend, Mattie – an elderly spinster goes with her to act as chaperone but Henrietta soon finds society goes to Mattie's head and she is having to restrain her wilder flights of fantasy. It soon becomes clear to the reader that someone has it in for Henrietta and after many strange and unpleasant happenings she starts to wonder whether she really is going mad.

This is an entertaining and fast paced story with many twists and turns and many ambiguous people who might be friend or foe. I enjoyed reading it and laughed out loud at some of Henrietta and Mattie's escapades. I thought all the characters were very well drawn and I liked Henrietta especially with her fighting spirit concealed behind her calm and quiet appearance. Mattie is a marvellous example of the middle aged or elderly women who this author does so well.

Jamie says

This man kidnaps her, holds a gun to her head, facilitates and covers up several murders, treats her like shit in general and has absolutely no regard for her as a person - aaaaaand yet this woman wants nothing but to love him and complete her life by honoring --- herself--- with his name and the gift of bearing his heirs.

I often think "if only men would read women's books, they'd understand what women value in a man instead of getting their pointers from violent pornography." But Jesus, this isn't any better.

Dear Marion Chesney, this is a DELIGHTFUL era about which to write. There is romance ripe for the picking and all kinds of naughty fun to be had and yet you INSIST on writing violent, rapey, misogynistic, ham-fisted BULLSHIT. Full. Stop.

No, please... Stop.

Grace says

A very early Regency by Marion Chesney. This was her 5th book, according to publication dates.

This one is one of her few ones featuring an older heroine (26), with the same plotline of being downtrodden by her vain vicar of a brother who also verbally abuses her at every opportunity. A legacy from a distant relative soon has her free just when her brother, Henry, has plans to kick her out, and she asks her friend Mattie to come live with her. Mattie is in her 60s and is flaky and dreamy and inappropriate but incredibly

funny. Henrietta had met one Beau Reckford at a county ball and fallen instantly for this 29 y/o man.

What follows is a London season comprised mainly of Henrietta and Beau gradually becoming very good friends, so good on his part that he doesn't seem to regard her as female and discourses with her naturally one night in her bed while he's naked. This scandalous scene only came about because, well Marion Chesney being who she is, has someone trying to make Henrietta believe she is mad, and thus they try to figure out who the culprit is.

The cast of villains are like so: Henrietta's vain and malicious brother Henry. The beautiful and spoiled Alice Belding who wants Beau at any cost. Mama's boy Mr. Ralston (the original heir of the legacy) and his beatifully malicious mother who will do anything for him. Actually Mr. Ralston and Alice Belding are somewhat the same character but of different genders.

Many things happen against the backdrop of the London season and the tumult of Henrietta's passion for Beau Reckford, including the friendship that springs up between Henrietta and Beau's best friend, Mr. Holmes. This is not to mention the many different eccentricities of Mattie, going from transparent muslins to wigs to dyed hair to assumed French accents. All is fun and light-hearted until Beau, in a flash of intuition, figures out who the villain is and-- he TELLS Henrietta, resulting in a quick marriage and consummation in a distant place so that Henrietta soon has another heir.

Ha-ha. No. That doesn't happen. Beau kidnaps Henrietta at a ball by first trussing up and gagging Mattie, and then he takes the two of them and imprisons them on his estate, whereby leaving Henrietta to suspect him as the culprit. Henrietta and Mattie (by ridiculous luck and comedic planning) escape and run back to their hometown, only to be imprisoned by the real culprit. Beau races to the rescue and -- they kiss and have HEA.

Ha-ha. No. That doesn't happen. Henrietta has a physical breakdown and the physician diagnoses her issue as fear of Beau, at which time she and Mattie take Lady Belding's advice and retreat to a small German village for a year. At which time Lady Belding + Alice soon descend upon them and the culprit also takes it upon himself to reside in a nearby village just at the time Henrietta decides to make her way back to England, but not before writing Beau an impassioned letter of her love. He isn't able to read it, however, before he hears of the threat on her life and rushes after Mr. Holmes to find Henrietta. He gets there seriously just in the nick of time as Henrietta is saved from the culprit by the wood floors of the church tower crumbling under the villain's dastardly feet. He murmurs affectionate nothings and -- they end up together and have HEA.

Ha-ha. No! That still doesn't happen, you silly reader you. He misconstrues (based on Lady Belding's nasty letter) Henrietta's friendship with a young man and leaves them to wedded bliss. Henrietta is crestfallen and soon after goes back to England to befriend a man who looks the same as the one in Germany. Beau confronts them at a ball one evening and then they have it out and make out in the conservatory behind some foggy glass and damp fronds. THE END.

Honestly, it could have done without the last three ending scares. The running away to Germany for a year was a bit much. Still, it was an early effort for Marion Chesney and maybe she was trying to insert as much plot as she could into a book. The writing style is unmistakably hers, but her plot-building definitely improves and tightens as she wrote more.

Tara says

I forgot how much I love all the shenanigans in these books. It's just the right mix of adventure and romance. The only bad thing is that it ends too abruptly for me.

Lisa says

This started out well enough. It was intriguing and hopeful. Somewhere along the way it changed tracks and became a silly story populated with ridiculous characters from an overly long melodrama.

Sharyn says

I got this on Book bub free, the whole series called "Daring Debutantes" and I read it on my phone. I presume the pen name is one of Chesny/Beaton's early names, and these are written very early in her life! It took a while for just "Henrietta" and I am something like 18% finished! I will continue to read the other eventually, because I like the author, especially the Hamish MacBeth series. Henrietta is a very annoying heroine, and maybe too many things happen in this story, especially when she runs away for a year to Germany!! And her most hated rival happens to turn up there. And the hero thinks she is engaged to someone else. While it is fun to read early works and see how an author can improve, I will take a break before the next one!!

Nancy Laney says

Regency Candlelight 2

Jane says

Marion Chesney/M.C. Beaton is a good writer and I find even her lesser efforts entertaining. This is not a great book but it was a light enjoyable read. Predictable but amusing.

Tylise says

Thoroughly enjoyed this book!

Holly says

I think this is one of my favourite Marion Chesney books. Like all of these Regency romances, the protagonist is a bit downtrodden and ultimately finds her love. But, in this case, Henrietta does not need saving. She is, at first, mistreated by her brother, Henry, a vicar, who controls all of the family money and ensures that Henrietta does all of the work. However, when Henrietta inherits a great sum of money from a

great-aunt, the tables turn, since Henrietta is now truly rich.

She goes to London, where she is determined to have her Season, even though she is already 26 years old. And, she already has her eyes set on Lord Guy Reckford, a famous Beau, whom she had met at a ball in her town.

The interesting thing about this book is that there is no real love triangle, which is the main plot in nearly every other of these romances. There are some side suitors, including a cousin who thought he was to inherit the money and a close friend of Reckford's who becomes quite fond of Henrietta. There are also the women, particularly young and pretty Alice, the daughter of the local lord of Henrietta's town. But, the plot really revolves around Henrietta herself. Someone is trying to make others think she is mad and possibly have her committed to the madhouse. And so, the book is one full of plots against Henrietta, and a mystery of who is behind them.

Though a romance at the core, the book has in equal measures a mystery. For that, it kept me engaged. A high 4 stars.

QNPoohBear says

Twenty-six year old Henrietta Sandford is the unmarried sister of a country vicar. Her brother takes every opportunity to remind her how much she owes him and to bully Henrietta. Henrietta falls instantly in love with Lord Reckford, a handsome Corinthian when he visits a country assembly and pays Henrietta more attention than the local beauty. When a hitherto unknown great-aunt leaves Henrietta a fortune, Henrietta sets out for London accompanied by her eccentric elderly friend Miss Mattie Scattersworth and declares her intentions of marrying Lord Reckford. London society snubs Henrietta and she thinks about returning to the country when Lord Reckford discovers her presence in London and takes her under his wing. Henrietta's happiness is marred by the fact that she seems to be going mad! Lord Reckford believes her sanity and is determined to figure out who is playing jokes on Henrietta. The joke turns deadly and Henrietta's life is in danger. She must rescue herself and her companion and figure out how to win Lord Reckford's hand in marriage before the story reaches the usual conclusion.

Henrietta is an admirable character. She is charming and spirited and doesn't act like a debutante, despite the fact that she is experiencing her first Season. Her companion provides the comic relief with wild romantic fantasies. However, I'm not a fan of gothic stories or mysteries and this one was both. It was not my favorite Chesney novel.

Mili Fay says

Writing: 5 Stars

Characters: 5 Stars

Plot: 3 Stars

Entertaining: 4 Stars

Read Again? No.

Total: 4 Stars

Marion Chesney's books are entertaining, clean romances. I love them, because I know I can enjoy the romantic comedy without having to go through pages and pages of intimate sexual details that, quite frankly, make me feel like a voyeur. Yet, in spite of lacking explicit sexual scenes that are a must for romances these days, Chesney's books have all the elements of great romantic classics.

Henrietta is not her best book. The plot has been pushed over exaggeration into ridiculous. It gets so convoluted and the classic misinformation between the characters' plot device at the end, I feel, is taken a bit too far. The melodrama... Let me just reiterate that I have listened to better books by Ms. Chesney.

As in her other novels, the characters are superbly crafted. Our "staid" hero and heroine, are surrounded by the plethora of Regency caricatures that made me laugh. In spite of the often ridiculous plot, I did enjoy spending time with them.

The performance by Lindy Nettleton, as always, is charming.

Kim says

Overall I enjoyed this more than 2 stars worth, but it was just a little overly long and complicated. Many romantic comedy worthy moments, but a lot that should have been cut out, too. Still fun and glad for the laughs it did give me.

P. says

Things I did not like about this book: A heroine who is almost TSTL, a labyrinthine, ridiculous plot, the heroine's appalling sidekick, a hero who is insufficient, the evil mad brother...etc etc etc. The book goes on for ever and will bore you to tears. Caveat lector.
