



Duke of a Gilded Age

S.G. Rogers (Writing as) , Suzanne G. Rogers

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When American-born Wesley Parker inherits a dukedom in 1890, he must learn to be an aristocrat. Assigned to the task is his attorney's daughter, prim Belle Oakhurst. As they travel to England together on a luxurious ocean liner, their tempestuous relationship encounters more than rough seas. Although Wesley is increasingly attracted to Belle, she is already engaged. While Belle begins to regret her hasty promise to marry, she is bound by honor and duty to keep her pledge. Furthermore, a thoughtless fabrication on her part threatens to expose her as a liar. Neither Wesley nor Belle can foresee that their voyage across the Atlantic will be fraught with peril, and will cost more than one man his life.

(Same book as ASIN: B00DO5DAPK, but with new cover)

Duke of a Gilded Age Details


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From Reader Review Duke of a Gilded Age for online ebook

Cheryl L says

Rogers took a huge risk with this "poor street-wise American discovers he inherited an English dukedom and must find his way" story line. But she pulled it off beautifully! Set in the late 1800's, she captured the feeling of the era, crafted characters of originality and tossed out plot surprises without seemingly contrived effort. This is a fun, well written and well paced feel good story.

LadyCalico says

This adorable little romance about a grown-up Little Lord Fauntleroy falling in love with his priggish mentor proved to be more entertaining and engrossing than I expected it would be. The hero had more depth and character, the heroine was less perfect, the love story had more complexity, and there was also more more action and danger than I expected. A most pleasant surprise.

Candace says

Wesley Parker is the Duke of Mansbury. Belle Oakhurst is the daughter of Wesley's solicitor, Mr. Oakhurst. He asks Belle's help instructing Wesley, also known as the American Duke, in being a member of the English nobility. During their association, Belle and Wesley fall in love. There is one person standing in their way, Belle is engaged to Sir Errol. Can Belle follow her heart or will she be forced to marry Errol?

At first the internal dialogue of the main characters irritated me. I came to realize the author used the internal dialogue to advance the plot and to round-out the main characters. This novel is a story of misunderstandings. I found this book a quick, easy read. I give it 3.5 stars.

Renee says

This book is a fun, clean romance full of action and plot twists. It is so much more than your typical historical romance. The wide variety of well-written characters (both heroes & villains) made this book very interesting and kept me turning the pages. The way the author described the various settings made it very easy for me to picture. One of the characters turned out to be more than I expected and I hope to be able to read more about his story. (I don't want to mention names, but it's one of the young men in the story.)

This is one of the most enjoyable historical romance books I have read.

I received this book in return for an honest review.

booksthrubifocals says

Sweet, enjoyable Victorian romance

His grace is dead, long live his grace. Septimus, the tenth duke of Mansbury dies before knowing that the search for his long estranged, younger brother has born fruit. His solicitor, Mr. Oakhurst and daughter, Belle, travel by ship to America to inform Frederic of his change in fortune. They arrive to discover an impoverished widow and her adult son, Wesley, who is all American and not impressed with the British society and class system. His mother however is homesick for England, and to please her Wesley accepts his title. Belle and her father undertake preparing Wesley for his new role and responsibilities. As they sail back to England, Belle fights her emerging feelings for Wesley. She realizes her brief courtship and recent betrothal to the fiance awaiting her return to England was based on little more than a crush induced by a story tale romance spun by a smooth, handsome but unworthy suitor. The trip is full of adventure, mystery and romance. The plot is sufficiently complex to hold the reader's attention while both the main and secondary characters are rounded and engaging. The protagonists attempt to stay true to their moral code and indeed grow stronger in character. Happily every afters were readily available leaving the reader with nice warm fuzzies. Girls, middle school aged and older will find the story sigh-worthy.

AntKathy says

Beautifully written and impeccably researched, "Duke of a Gilded Age" by S.G. Rogers is an exciting story about a young American who finds out he is an unexpected heir to a title and estate in England, left to him by his estranged uncle.

Belle Oakhurst and her father, solicitor to the Duke of Mansbury, travel to New York City to give the news of his inheritance to the deceased duke's brother, Frederic. Unbeknownst to Mr. Oakhurst, Frederic has passed away, and his son Wesley will now shoulder responsibility for taking on the title and estate left by his Uncle Septimus. Wesley, having been raised in America, is completely unaware of aristocratic life and graces, and initially rejects his new role. But with the help of the lovely Belle, Wesley becomes tutored in the ways of the gentry while crossing the Atlantic to Great Britain.

Teeming with fascinating details of New York City during its "gilded age", the delights and difficulties of sailing on a luxury liner, as well as unexpected romance and adventure, "Duke of a Gilded Age" is a wonderful tale that keeps the reader riveted to each page!

Meg Mims says

I believe this is author S.G. Rogers' best book so far. Her deft handling of the Victorian era details shines in every scene. The characters - poor boy Wesley who inherits a fortune, lawyer's daughter Belle who helps polish the diamond in the rough - are well-matched and Belle's status as affianced to another lends the right touch of conflict to their growing romance, especially in the tense midpoint scene of a boat rescue, which was incredible. I couldn't put the book down! Minor characters also shine, from the roguish Stephen to the valet Cavendish, whose secret past kept me intrigued till the end. Definitely recommend for historical romance lovers who prefer a clean, fun and suspenseful read.

Alisa says

Mr. Oakhurst, the solicitor to the 10th Duke of Mansbury, Septimus Parker, has taken his daughter with him across the Atlantic to let the 11th Duke of Mansbury, Frederic Parker, know that his brother has died and he has inherited everything. When he and his daughter, Annabelle, find the new duke's residence, they learn that he died several years ago and that the new duke is, in fact, his 20-year-old son Wesley. They are further surprised to find that 20-year-old Wesley has been raised in poverty and does not want a title - or to leave America. But he sees how much it means to his mother for him to be the duke, and so he agrees to it.

This story takes place in three parts: New York, the boat to England, and England.

When Annabelle first meets Wesley, she is not impressed. She finds him to be a disgusting delinquent, but to help her father she agrees to teach Wesley the rules of gentlemanly behavior -- and to teach him to dance. Wesley thinks Annabelle is stuck up and feels bad for her fiance back in England, Errol. While they are waiting for the boat to leave from New York, they spend time together and become good friends.

On the boat, they meet Louise, Stephen, Stacy, Eva, Carl and Horatio. They form a dancing club. Belle finds herself thinking a lot less about Errol and a lot more about Wesley. A lot happens on the boat and she is able to see how wrong her first impressions of Wesley were. Wesley was not what she expected, but now she finds that he has "far surpassed anything she could have imagined."

When they get back to England, she hopes to break off her engagement to Errol, who she had barely known before she left for America. Where Errol was attentive and tender before she left for America, she now finds him to be demanding and almost cruel to her. He demands that she honor their wedding contract and threatens to ruin her father if she doesn't.

There is definitely a mystery in Errol's behavior, and Wesley isn't willing to give Annabelle up so easily. He is determined to discover what Errol is covering up so he can free Belle from Errol's blackmailing grasp.

This was a great story with great secondary characters. I think my favorite character in the whole book is Wesley's valet, Cavendish. Wesley hires him because he got dismissed from his last job for drinking, and so Wesley figures that once they get on the boat Cavendish will ignore him -- and the very American Wesley doesn't want a valet! But with Cavendish he got a lot more than he bargained for... Bartholomew Xavier Cavendish is a lot more than he appears! It was fun to see him get his happy ending, too!

Very clean romance.

Gwynn White says

3.5 stars

I really enjoyed this book. The characters are fun, the plot intriguing and the pace fast. There are enough misunderstandings to satisfy those who love wading through romantic angst. What I didn't like are the author's insistence on using internal voice to state the obvious - that had my eyes rolling a few times – and

the long, unnecessary descriptive passages. I can very easily imagine what the furnishings of a lavish ship will look like, or the style and fabric of a dress. I found myself doing a lot of skipping. That said, it's a fun, clean read and I would recommend it.

Carol says

Not Your Grandparents' Lord Fauntleroy

Like the 19th Century book, *Little Lord Fauntleroy*, SG Rogers' book, *Duke of a Gilded Age* tells the story of an American boy of British heritage who suddenly finds himself with a British title -- and the fortune that goes with it. There, though, the stories diverge.

Wesley Parker is a twenty-year-old when he inherits his uncle's title. Rather than being taught by an irascible uncle, he is tutored by a surprisingly accomplished butler and a lovely English young woman -- his new lawyer's daughter. The final difference? Wesley has heard of Burnett's *Fauntleroy* -- a new and popular book at the time -- and detests any comparison of his story and Burnett's.

Belle, the lawyer's daughter, has agreed to teach Wesley society manners. During the trip to England, she comes to admire him, and to compare him to her fiancée. To her chagrin, she finds that her fiancée does not compare well. . .

Anything more would spoil the plot. I will say, though, that S.G. Rogers has obviously done a great deal of research prior to her writing. The book is full of fascinating period detail, from the hotel elevator (or "vertical railway") to details of Central Park and the newly opened Statue of Liberty, to the "shovel board" games aboard the ship.

I heartily recommend this book to anyone who enjoys historical romance.

I received this book free of charge, in return for an honest review.

InD'tale Magazine says

An adult retelling of *Little Lord Fauntleroy* with a romantic twist, lovers of Victorian romance will enjoy Roger's newest work.

Read full review in the 2013 September issue of *InD'tale Magazine*.

Gaufre says

DNF 20%

Pleasant and everything is ok but it lacked this something to make it interesting to me, either more tension, better characterization or great writing.

Juli says

Our hero, Wesley, is something of a young scamp; he cares for his mother's well-being and his friends, and that's really about it. Then news comes from England that Wesley's uncle—the Ninth Duke of Mansbury—died, leaving his father a fortune. Unfortunately, Wesley's father too has passed leaving Wesley the only remaining candidate to become the next Duke of Mansbury. While he'd rather stay in New York with the friends and life he loves, when Miss Annabelle Oakhurst and her father show up announcing this blessing, he has no choice but to return to England with them and take the position. They board a ship for England, make friends of the people on board, and step into an adventure none of them could've seen coming. And that's even before their ship docks in British waters.

Belle doesn't know what to make of the Duke who sports more black eyes and bruises than lordly airs. She only came along for the trip to put some breathing room between she and her eager fiancé. Her first sight of Wesley tells her she and her father have their work cut out for them. But even without a cultured upbringing, something about Wesley screams as much about honor as it does charm. Added to their voyage is a charming assortment of fellow passengers, as well as a little intrigue, a daring rescue, and close quarters and how could Belle and Wesley not come to be friends or a little more? And all this before Wesley ever sees the estate he has inherited—or Belle's intended.

Just like Wesley's bruised exterior, *DUKE OF A GILDED AGE* is charming, and holds more than at first meets the eye. Ms. S.G. Rogers' first foray into the Gilded Age of 1890s New York was a bit of a risk, but she, as ever, proves herself to the task. If you are a fan of historical fiction or any storytelling set in the last decade of the 19th century-first of the 20th *DUKE OF A GILDED AGE* may be right up your alley.

HR-ML says

This story took place in America, then in England in 1890. I found the first half better than the second.

Wesley (hero) & his mother (born in England) held mostly menial jobs in Brooklyn after the death of Wesley's father. Wes presented as nice but no push-over. Heroine Belle (daughter of a solicitor) first met hero (in US) after he'd engaged in fistfights. The 4 took an ocean voyage to England. Wes believed all people equal, so his adjustment to being a new Duke, came with challenges.

Sir Errol, her fiancée back home, knew her but a short time. Was Errol too good to be true? On the voyage she started to 2nd guess her choice. Stephen, recent Harvard grad (natch) & son of a wealthy American, also on the ship, admitted his attraction to Belle. Several times Wes overreacted about Belle's behavior toward men. Belle did

not act coy, but needed to learn to assert herself away from unwanted attention, w/o causing a scene (she feared the latter).

Mysterious Mr. Cavendish became the hero's valet. Cav (as I called him) had so many hidden talents and skills. Toward the end, the author revealed Cav's true nature, and I did not buy it for 1 minute. The author could tell a story, but IMHO, she needed to refine her choices & work on credibility issues.

Kristen McQuinn says

Duke of a Gilded Age was a very entertaining read. It starts with a young man from Brooklyn, Wesley Parker, who learns that he has become the sole heir to a vast estate in England, the homeland of his parents. The plot moves through his discovery through his acclimation to his new role in English gentry and nobility society. The characters were all rather well developed, particularly Wesley. The action, while sometimes coming a little too quickly, was fun and exciting. It very quickly grabbed my attention and kept it engaged through the whole book.

In particular, the descriptions of the locations, travel, clothes, accommodations, were lush and vivid, something I really admire. The idea of "don't tell me, show me" was displayed in this novel throughout and added real knowledge to the reader's experience. I especially liked the way we could see the change from Wesley's poverty-stricken life before he inherited, to the transition period of living in a luxurious hotel but having worn and outdated clothes, to becoming a very suave and desirable young nobleman.

Some of the discoveries, rescues, and resolutions happened a little too conveniently. But they were not so convenient as to totally defy reason. If the book had been a little longer, it would have worked in perfectly, and I doubt it would have been as noticeable. The book's fairly short length was really the only reason some of the actions seemed a bit too easy. It was certainly not something that could have ruined my enjoyment of the book, though.

The real success of this novel comes from the Rogers' grasp of human desires. Is there really anyone who hasn't wished they were really a princess or duke or someone with lots of wealth and power? I doubt it. Rogers tapped into that common human trait and produced an uncommonly fun and well written novel as a result. Her approach was not canned, nor was it too derivative from other stories of a similar nature. That the majority of the novel was set on board ship, and in the space of just a few days, was, I felt, pretty unique. That approach gave the novel a fresh feel, not the tired, musty sense that you've read this already. It was a terrific way to do it.

Overall, I would certainly recommend the book to those who love a good intrigue, some romance, and who are, like myself, hard core Anglophiles.
