



## The Duke's Holiday

*Maggie Fenton (Pseudonym)*

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The Duke of Montford, cold, precise, and more powerful than the Prince Regent himself, wants things the way he wants them: cross-referenced, indexed, and at his beck and call. And he always gets what he wants.

Until he meets Astrid Honeywell. And a giant pig. And a crooked castle in the middle of Yorkshire.

Astrid Honeywell, staunch bluestocking, has struggled for years to keep her family together by running the estate and family brewery after her father's death. She is not about to let the tyrannical Duke of Montford steal away all she has worked for because of some antiquated contract between their families. So when the priggish Duke comes to call, she does everything in her power—including setting the family pig on him—to drive him away.

She didn't expect him to be so... well, infuriatingly attractive. Every time he scowls at her, she has the most improper desire to kiss him—and a whole lot more.

Montford can't decide whether to strangle Astrid or seduce her. The one thing he knows for a fact is that he must resist his powerful attraction for her at all costs. He has a very proper, very demure fiancée waiting for him back in London, after all. But when Astrid is kidnapped by a disgruntled suitor and whisked off to Gretna Green, Montford will do anything to get her back.

Will these two drive each other to Bedlam... or can they make it to the altar without killing each other?

Includes a fiery heroine, mistaken identities, errant livestock, pompadours, drunken declarations, a touch of smex, and enough witty banter to sink a ship.

NOTE: This is a sexy historical romance. Recommended for 18+ due to adult content.

## **The Duke's Holiday Details**

Date : Published April 7th 2015 by Montlake Romance (first published May 7th 2014)

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Author : Maggie Fenton (Pseudonym)

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## From Reader Review The Duke's Holiday for online ebook

### Ian says

The Duke of Montford likes everything to be neatly lined up. A place for everything and everything in its place. The one blemish on his ordered ledger is a small unprofitable estate in Yorkshire. An estate which was swindled out of the family 100s of years earlier and will only return to him after the last male descendent of the swindlers, the Honeywell's shuffles off his mortal coil.

When Montford discovers that the aforementioned Honeywell did in fact pass on many years earlier he immediately smells a rat. Someone has been sending him reports from the estate and it's lack of funds and signing them "A. Honeywell".

Astrid Honeywell has been managing the estate and the family brewery since she was a child. Unfortunately as a woman she isn't a legitimate heir and by rights the estate should be returned to the Duke of Montford. After Montford sends his right hand man to investigate she realises her number is up, but she won't go down without a fight.

Astrid is completely wrong for Montford. Everything about her is wrong. Her hair is an unruly mess of red tangles. Her eyes are different colours, and not only does she wear a man's clothing she insists on riding her horse astride. She definitely won't fit into his ordered life.

But despite driving him crazy at every turn, she is also the first person who has been able to make him come alive...to enjoy life, to get drunk and to make a fool of himself.

*The Dukes Holiday* is a complete romp. It's great fun from beginning to end, one of those rare perfect books that I can't fault in any way.

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### Christine says

#### **4½ got-me-in-a-happy-mood STARS!**

The perfect novel to make you smile and fall in love. JUST PERFECT!

You ever feel like escaping those intense or dark reads? Well this is the read for you! It was absolutely hysterical. It made me smile, chuckle and at times had me on the floor rolling around. Trust me this novel will put the whammy on you.

This was a brilliant historical romantic comedy. Mix in a spirited and strong-willed Astrid Honeywell and an attractive Duke Montford, who has no idea what he is getting into, and you will instantly love this read.

Astrid and Montford suited each other so well, it was a match made in heaven. When someone can handle a whole lot of crazy, the chemistry is definitely alive.

**He couldn't be near her. She made him do crazy things.**

You wouldn't believe half the craziness that goes in this novel. It will catch you so unaware you will double over in laughter.

This novel sure lived up to its sexiness in all ways possible. I definitely recommend this to any reader of any genre! Superb!

*ARC kindly provided via Netgalley in exchange for an honest review.*

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**Christina ~ Brunette Reader says**

***4,75 Stars, just some polishing on the writing and we're there, straight to the moon and beyond.***

Paraphrasing the introductions each chapter begins with, this charming and endearing romance could have been titled:

*In which the Duke discovers that True Love thrives on Imperfections*

or, *In which the Duke discovers that, through allowing some asymmetries, life and the world might show nicer perspectives.* And while the duke lets go of starchy cravats and perfectly aligned snuffboxes in order to fall in love with the heroine and finally see beauty in chaos and mayhem too I, the reader, fell in love both with the characters... and a little bit with the idea of love all over again.

A contended inheritance, consisting of a crumbling Yorkshire castle with attached brewery, and a centuries old family feud prompt the Duke of Montford, of the many embarrassing names and the most fastidious nature (by his own admission), to take the Great North Road. Those detestable Honeywells are, as usual, up to something fishy and it's time, once and for all, to make them understand who's going to call the shots from now on. Leaving his rigidly organized life and a fiancée of convenience behind, he sets himself on resolving the plaguing situation in the span of a blitz-like-holiday to return as soon as possible to what he *thinks* he needs most.

But on arriving at destination, what his mind refuses to acknowledge at first, his heart recognizes at once: that, strange as it may be, his salvation from eternal unhappiness has the semblances of a giant male pig named Petunia, a pre-1789 Versailles dotty aunt with dead-poodle-like wigs, vile plebeian swills, messy libraries, rumpled clothes and above all Miss Astrid Honeywell's mismatched eyes, one brown and one blue, the earth, the sky and everything in between.

Check your historical-accuracy-radar at the door, get in the right mood and enjoy the ride. Pedantic tantrums would be out of place here and quite pointless. This is one of those cases where the author shows the rare ability to not taking the story too seriously without losing an iota of intelligent humour. A quirky and smart narrative that doesn't know dull moments, a smoothly ticking comical pace, spontaneous sensuality and bubbly banter complete the picture.

Yes, the language is often anachronistic. Yes, most of the characters' behaviours are implausible for the time period. Yes, the details of the historical setting verge on the wallpaper-ish end of the spectrum. And yet... and yet... the author has nailed a more important aspect, I think, which ascribes to the roots of the Regency genre itself: if the form is modern in tone, style and content, that typical, essential and magical bond between

romanticism and farce is there... and it makes for a totally enjoyable romp.

Impatiently waiting the next in the series.

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### **Joanna Loves Reading says**

DNF @32%

I hate to stop, but it wasn't turning around for me. I think I was put off by the very beginning, where the Duke hates his name Cyril Algenon ... It seemed too much of a modern sensibility. I would have understood if his name was common, like Joe or Bob, but it wasn't. I basically stopped when the dislike of his name became a relevant plot point with a horse named Cyril. It was just too much. I think it was trying to be too funny, or too many types of funny. Like the Three Stooges and the Importance of Being Earnest rolled into one.

The heroine was a pathological liar, and I didn't warm to her. She insisted on lying when the truth clearly would serve better. The Duke was too stiff and boring. I could have eventually liked him, maybe, but it's doubtful.

I dunno, maybe I wasn't in the mood, but I tried unsuccessfully twice and that's plenty.

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### **Julie LeMense says**

STRAIGHT TO MY KEEPER SHELF (and I'm very picky about that shelf!)

Let me start with the two things I did not like about this book...

- 1) I had things to do over the last day and a half. Laundry. Cleaning my kitchen. Making my family dinner. And none of that got done because of this novel.
- 2) I too am a debut author of Regency romance, with a book, *Once Upon A Wager*, out this week. And I really liked my book, until I read this one.

Here is the bald truth. If you buy only one book today, it should not be mine. It should be *The Duke's Holiday*, because it is a laugh-out-loud, frolicking fun fest.

Ms. Fenton has crafted a completely original and unpredictable story. Her hero, Lord Cyril Montford, starts out as one of the biggest prigs to ever grace the Regency stage. He has OCD, faints at the sight of blood, and vomits every time he gets into a carriage (although he has a heartrendingly good excuse.) Her heroine, Astrid Honeywell, is "utterly, completely hideous, with ungodly eyes and horrible spots" (and that's quoting Cyril.) Yet by the end of the story, I loved them both dearly. Layer by layer, they become more complex, more insecure, and more human.

And the story surrounding them was just hilarious. Any author who can seamlessly interject the word codswallop into their work has a gift, so I will let Ms. Fenton's words speak for themselves. Here are few of my favorite quotes:

"It is one thing to read scandalous verse, quite another to disguise it behind lofty pretense. Thomas More indeed." (Cyril, upon finding a racy tract Astrid had tucked into a book by, you guessed it, Thomas More.)

"His eyes surveyed her as he would some rare species of poisoned fauna."

"Oh God...she was about to become the hapless heroine in her own personal melodrama." (Astrid, upon being abducted)

"The vicar was a stutterer. It made Sunday mornings a true test of Christian fortitude."

"His hands fell away, and he stepped back, out of the circle of her skirts, and the heat of her body. It was like stepping out of an enchantment." (This is a romance, after all.)

"A bounder of a French aristocrat had picked her up in Marseilles, where she'd washed ashore, and introduced her to the bawdy Bourbon Court, where she had thrived on petty intrigue and decadence until the peasantry began chopping off heads." (This from dotty Aunt Anabel.)

That last one was my personal favorite. Honestly, I defy any author to pack a better character sketch into a single sentence.

This book is a crazy mix of Jane Austen and Oscar Wilde stirred up in a cocktail shaker, with a shot of Monty Python thrown in for good measure. I wish I could be a British citizen for just today, so I could say "this is bloody brilliant" with some measure of authenticity.

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## Ursula says

A clear 4.5 stars.

This was so much fun! No wonder it is called the Regency *Romp* series :)

The hero, Cyril -he had several other funny, nerdy names- was a bit of an OCD poker-up-his-arse kind of duke (yes, a mofo-duke, Joanna!). He preferred to call himself Montford and was pretty shut down emotionally, mostly due to a very traumatic incident when he was four years old. Then he meets Astrid, who is basically his antithesis. She has been running an estate that should have reverted back to him after her father died without male issue a year back, but she neglects to inform him of this and continues to live there, looking after her several siblings and managing a brewery as well. He finds out, and eventually travels into the darkest wilds of Yorkshire, as he sees it, to sort things out. Oh, and she has been cooking the books so that it looks like the Estate is quite unprofitable, thus allowing her to pay *him* very little and allowing her to distribute the profits amongst the tenants in a very Robin Hoodesque, Socialist fashion.

I loved that Astrid was capable and intelligent, and that she never changed into that simpering, boring chit who suddenly realises her life is empty and all she needs is a man and babies to fulfil her. (It happens so often in HR. You sit there and ask yourself: where did she go? Who is this person? Set up as intellectual, independent and strong-willed, the heroine ends up falling into so many TSTL moments you want to scream. Thank God this does not happen here.)

As you can imagine, the sparks fly and the adventures, or *misadventures*, of the poor, beleaguered duke are very funny. Just wait till you read about the foot and ale race at the village fair. I could not stop smiling and chuckling as the duke's dignity gradually dissolved into the mud through which he ran/staggered. Hilarious! So suspend your disbelief and settle in for the ride :)

Plenty of articles flung at said duke by indignant and furious heroine. Plenty of nasty but amusing banter. And ultimately, plenty of passion and action. An entertaining, funny tale with a warm heart. I'm definitely going to read the next one in the series, as we meet the two protagonists in this book and I am already interested in their story.

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## Ingela says

*Written May 27, 2014*

### 4 1/2 Stars - A lovely hilarious fun historical "tall tale"

A 15 hrs audiobook narrated by Sue Pitkin.

*The promising book-blurb:* « Includes an OCD Duke, a fiery heroine, mistaken identities, errant livestock, pompadours, drunken declarations, a touch of smex, and enough witty banter to sink a ship. »

### I'm impressed. Well done. Simply great!

*The Duke's Holiday* is Maggie Fenton's first HR and there are a lot of happy reviews. Should be amusing, fun and a historical in the light genre. — And it was. Woot!!

‘But did she like him? Yes, she suspected she did, just a little bit. ....

Not that Montford was a devil. Far from it. He was a bit of a prude, really. He'd actually blushed when she'd come across him in the river. He was no doubt the sort to drape fig leaves over statuary to preserve their modesty.

Although when he kissed her . . .’

# **Cyril Halbert Algernon Monk, the Duke of Montford**, a powerful stiff man that wants things the way he wants them, and he always gets what he wants. ~ The Duke now wants what's rightly belong to him, the old *Yorkshire* estate.

# **Astrid Honeywell**, a tough young 26 years old miss who has struggled for years to keep her family together by running the estate, the crooked castle *Gretna Green*, and the family brewery after her father's death. ~ Astrid can't accept an (antiquated) contract that says a tyrannical *London* Duke now again has the right to her family's home and brewery.

This will be short and simple. ~ Gosh! I'll not even try to explain what's happening here. Just hang on... not a boring or tedious minute. Full speed and adventurous. It sparkled between these two "enemies to lovers" at once.

‘Would he kiss her again? That was her concern. Would he kiss her again, in public? Or . . . Oh God! She'd just thought of something even worse. What if he should kiss someone else? And then she thought of something even worse than that. Why did she care if he kissed someone else?’

### **So much fun, a "chuckle story"**

I have only praise for this wonderful story. In my opinion the best kind of historical romance. So much fun, so much comedic entanglements and outrageously wonderful characters. Sweet romantic and a piece of heat and steam.

Looking forward to more romances from this writer. Next part in this *The Regency Romp Trilogy* will be an auto-buy (in October 2015). I just want to know more about these men and the women they choose.

A very good narrator and audiobook edition as well. Recommended for HR lovers.

### **I LIKE - YES, yes I do!**

\*\*\*\*\*

*Added to my audio app in May 2015 from Amazon for just \$6 incl a kindle ebook copy.*

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### **Caz says**

**This was my "recommended read" for September's TBR Challenge entry. It's a very long review, so be warned! But many of my friends here really loved this book and I... didn't, so I felt compelled to go into detail about why it didn't work for me.**

**As I was writing the review, I revised my grade, so I'm going with a D+/2.5 stars.**

**The Duke's Holiday** is a light-hearted “romp” (the cover even boasts that it’s part of the author’s *Regency Romp* series – just in case I hadn’t realised) in which a very handsome, very rich, very proper, very aloof and very lonely duke (although he doesn’t actually admit the lonely part, of course) has his comfortable and orderly existence completely overturned when he travels to Yorkshire in order to investigate the goings-on at one of his properties there.

Cyril, Duke of Montford (and yes, he’s been given a very un-romantic-hero-like name on purpose) likes everything to be Just So. His pens have to be lined up in a certain way, his boot tassels must face one way and not another, and at meals, no food on his plate can be allowed to touch another food. The book synopsis indicates he has OCD, and clearly this is what the author is getting at, but at the risk of being a party-pooper, I used to know someone with OCD and it wasn’t quite like that.

But anyway. Dramatic license.

The duke dislikes travelling immensely, but circumstances conspire to force him to travel to Rylestone in Yorkshire, an estate he owns, but which has been inhabited for the last two hundred years by the Honeywell family, whose principal occupation is the manufacture of the popular and rather splendid Honeywell Ale. There is some kind of family feud dating back a couple of centuries, too, which I imagine is supposed to prime the reader for the ensuing conflict.

The story is a simple one – Astrid wants to get rid of the duke as soon as possible. He is immediately aware that all is not as it should be and wants to know what’s going on. Astrid tries to pull the wool over his eyes several times and discovers he’s much more canny than she’d given him credit for. And all the while, the pair are fighting a reluctant attraction. The author manages that part of the story quite well – the sexual

tension bubbles along nicely, although the sex scenes themselves are nothing special.

(view spoiler)

I confess that I didn't enjoy the book as much as I'd hoped or expected to. The author certainly has potential, and I may be tempted to seek out the next book in the series, as I liked the way the two principal characters were being set up – but when it comes down to it, this book is a comedy and I didn't find it all that funny. And in some places, what the author no doubt intended as humour was actually rather crass; for example, Montford finds the fact that Astrid has one blue eye and one brown one to be very unsettling, and in his extreme annoyance one evening, finds himself thinking that he'd like to gouge one of them out with a soup-spoon and replace it with another of the right colour. (Eeeew!) Although, of course, the problem is deciding which one to keep...

I've seen the book likened to a screwball comedy, which is a genre I adore. But I can't see the similarity, because **The Duke's Holiday** completely lacks the sophistication one would find in the best screwball comedies. This is **slapstick** which is completely different. There are a couple of faintly amusing set-pieces in the book, such as the foot-and-ale race, and late on, an abduction and rescue, but nothing that really made me giggle.

But my biggest problem with the book is this – I just couldn't warm to or like the heroine. She's a woman in a man's world, trying to run a business, a home, bring up a family and support the local community, which are all laudable things. But I couldn't reconcile that woman with the one whose behaviour is so frequently infantile, childish and downright stupid that she quickly becomes intensely annoying rather than charmingly eccentric. For a woman whose intelligence is mentioned frequently (clearly a case of TELLING rather than SHOWING), she is disturbingly oblivious to the fact that the duke has the law completely on his side and no matter of moral right or obligation gives her the right to behave in the way she does.

If she'd been as intelligent as the author claims, Astrid would have tried to charm Montford and work out a compromise – which is when she would have discovered that he actually had no intention of throwing her and her family out of their home. After all, he's got 27 (or is it 37?) houses in England alone, so he is perfectly able to continue to let this one out; but he quite naturally wants to make sure that it's being properly run and cared for. And clearly, it isn't.

But no – intelligent Astrid decides to behave outrageously and repeatedly tries to throw him off his OWN PROPERTY. And then she refuses to show him the ledgers and account books – which, again, as the owner, he is perfectly entitled to see - which leads to an overly long scene in the library during which the pair engages in a heated tussle which Astrid seeks to end by putting the ledger in her drawers (yeah, must've been large drawers or a small book!) – which is very mature.

When everyone around her is pointing out the folly of her actions – they're all wrong and Astrid is the only one with the strength of purpose to do what must be done. Even when her sister Alice points out how Astrid's unconventional attitude and behaviour has affected her and everyone else, Astrid STILL can't be brought to see another point of view.

“I had no idea the opinions of small-minded gentry were so important to you,” she huffed.

Alice groaned in frustration. “You just don't understand, Astrid. You never think beyond this pile of stones. Whether you like it or not, the opinions of other people matter. You'll discover this soon enough when we're tossed out of here.”

“Don’t talk like that.”

“What? It’s true. The duke has the right. And the way you’ve treated him thus far does nothing to help our case. We’ll be lucky if he doesn’t put us all in the workhouse.”

[...]

“I don’t need saving. I am the one trying to save the lot of you!” Astrid cried.

“How can you do it when you won’t accept the truth? Rylestone doesn’t belong to us anymore.”

In this, (which is the next part of the scene I’ve quoted at length below), Astrid sounds and acts like a petulant child stamping her foot and sulking because they know they’re in the wrong but can’t admit it.

Astrid is difficult to like and is just TOO whacky. It feels like the author is trying too hard to make her funny and loveable, but for most of the time, I couldn’t help sympathising with the duke, who thinks she’s completely bonkers and out of control and, when he doesn’t want to shag her, wants to throttle her. I get that the idea was to take the most proper and aloof aristocrat in the history of historical romance and take swipes at him so that bit by bit, he becomes human like the rest of us, but the method of doing so just didn’t work for me. Astrid treats him as a pariah from the get-go, and while he certainly is a bit of a stuffed shirt who needs to loosen up a bit, being unreasonably hostile and downright unpleasant isn’t the way to go about it. And if Montford really does have a form of OCD, flinging him into constant contact with someone as chaotic as Astrid doesn’t seem to me to be the way to devise useful coping mechanisms!

Montford is rather more engaging, although he doesn’t really rise above the two-dimensional, and I actually found myself a little confused by the author’s description of him. To start with, he’s described as incredibly fastidious in everything he does, including his appearance, so he’s well-dressed and never has a hair out of place. This fastidiousness, combined with his tendency to swoon at the sight of blood and his distaste for travel because it makes him throw up, gave me the picture of him as a bit of a fop. But then Ms Fenton turns him into your standard tall, dark, handsome, well-muscled, well-endowed historical hero, and as a result, I found it very difficult to get a handle on him. He’s given a backstory of sorts that is never really fleshed out, which is a missed opportunity. We’re told that Montford lost his parents in a carriage accident when he was four years old, and this is clearly meant to account for his dislike of travel and the sight of blood. I confess, I immediately thought of Colin Sandhurst in Tessa Dare’s *A Week to Be Wicked* – who had to fend off wild dogs aged 8 when his parents were killed in a similar manner. But the big difference (besides *AWtbW* being a *MUCH* better book!) is that we are *SHOWN* how this event affected and continues to affect Colin throughout that story – here, Montford faints at the sight of blood and throws up in carriages. And that’s about all we get.

**The Duke’s Holiday** isn’t a *terrible* book by any means, but it would have benefited from some judicious editing and proof-reading. There is a lot of repetition within scenes which disrupts the pacing and delays the story progression, so there is a lot of pruning and tightening up needed. There are a number of typos and errors, the most obvious of which was the mention of a character wearing a crinoline in the Regency period. Also, Ms Fenton’s grasp of the conventions of the period is a little tenuous and the language and overall style is rather too modern.

I don’t have too much of a problem with that in certain circumstances. I enjoy books by Tessa Dare and Maya Rodale, for example, both of whom write romantic comedies which require one to check one’s “historical accuracy hat” at the door. But Ms Fenton isn’t in that league in terms of either her characterisation

or writing to bring out the humour.

I thought the best parts of the book were actually the more introspective and character-based ones. One scene which has stuck in my mind is the one in which Alice (younger than Astrid by three years) finally tells her some home truths:

“No, Astrid,” Alice cried... “I’m twenty-three years old and had no offers, and do you want to know why? Because of you. No respectable man dare approach me because they think my sister is a ... a hoyden. A shocking, forward, proselytizing hoyden.”

[...]

“You show no one the slightest deference, attend church infrequently, argue with the vicar. You curse in company, converse with the farmhands and *wear trousers*.”

“I never wear trousers in public!” she interjected. “Only around the castle. And in the garden.”

Alice gave her a doubtful look. “You ride about the country *astride*.”

“Sidesaddle is dangerous.”

“It is when you tear off hell-for-leather like you’re riding into battle. Which you do all the time.”

“I wear a perfectly respectable habit.”

Alice snorted. “Which comes up past your ankles.”

“What is so shocking about ankles? I’ll never understand it.”

“Nor I, but that is *just the way things are*. ...”

“What would you have had me do? Let our family starve?” Astrid burst out. “Someone had to run the estate when father cracked. Someone had to take care of you and the girls. Who else was going to do it? Aunt Anabel?”

Alice blanched at Astrid’s harsh tone. “You make me sound like an ungrateful wretch.”

“Perhaps that is because you are! I have done everything for this family, and you chastise me for it.”

“No! I am merely pointing out that your manner of doing things for this family is so very ... *blatant*. Do you really need to wear trousers to save the estate? Really, Astrid?”

“I wear trousers because they are comfortable and practical, and I ride astride because it is also eminently practical. All of these petty rules and codes restricting the behaviour for ladies are destined solely to subjugate our sex.”

Alice rolled her eyes. “Of course they are, but flaunting [I think the author means “flouting”] those rules is not going to earn you any friends. Or a husband.”

“I don’t want a husband.”

“But I do! And what of Antonia and Ardyce [younger sisters]? What’s to become of them when they’re grown? Your conduct reflects on all of us. It’s a wonder we’re still received as it is.”

In fact, re-reading that passage makes me think Alice would have made a far better heroine –one who also chafes against the restrictions imposed upon her as a woman yet who is clear sighted enough to see that she needs to work within them in order to get what she wants.

Anyway, this review is already very long, so I’ll finish by saying that although I like the “opposites attract” trope as a rule, Montford and Astrid are two are polar opposites in so many ways that it’s hard to see how a relationship between them is going to work long-term. It’s certainly true that Montford needs loosening up, but I like to believe that a couple in a romance has potential beyond the HEA at the end of the book; and if he really does have some form of OCD, Astrid is going to drive him up the wall.

Seriously, Felix and Oscar look like soul-mates compared to this odd couple!

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### ? Irena ? says

I loved this book. It's fun, it has great characters. The conflict and all the problems suit the story well. The romance is believable. It even has a villain and his actions move the story forward. A lovely humorous historical romance.

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### Tarsis says

Odié con todo mi ser a la protagonista: Astrid. Idealista, malcriada, horrible. No sé, no me gustó para nada y creo que desentona por completo para la época, no es más que una maleducada.

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### KatLynne says

There are times I love to escape with a fun, light, romance and **The Duke’s Holiday** fit the bill perfectly. Maggie Fenton has produced a Regency romp that’s filled with quirky, lovable characters, witty banter and enough slap stick humor guaranteed to produce many laugh out loud moments.

A sexy Romantic Comedy featuring a sinfully delicious Duke and a feisty, outspoken heroine. Loved it!

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### Susana says

More like... between 3.5- 3.999... because this ended up being wayyyyyy too long and insane.

I like insane -\_- and for about three quarters of it, the story was actually amazing.

An hero with OCD.

A woman determined to thwart him every step of the way. And by that, she means keep her own crooked castle in the family and get the Duke out of her hair.

But then the villain had to appear \_ no spoiler, since this appears on the synopsis \_ and between the attempted rape \_ thwarted of course\_ and insanities \_ like pigs, crazy aunts and flying wigs \_ the ending really took his own damn time to appear.

More coherent ~~insane~~ review currently on my blog and on my Booklikes page.

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### **Kathleen says**

Sorry. Call me a wet blanket, but I'm probably not going to finish this book. Not liking the heroine, Astrid. Not too crazy about the Duke, either. Definitely not my kind of comedy. Slapstick. Petunia the pig got too much coverage already, at only 25% into the book.

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### **Heather K (dentist in my spare time) says**

\*3.5 stars\*

At times VERY good, at times I was scratching my head; this book pretty much defines uneven for me.

The narration swung from expressive and fabulous to WTF is *that* voice?!?! I swear, some of the male side characters sounded like my 90 year old grandma. The "historical" aspects of the book have had great liberties taken with them. I liked the chemistry between the MCs and the sort of obsessive nature of the male MC, but the story dragged in odd places and the plot was out there.

Overall, I enjoyed this one. I think...

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### **Jill says**

**4.5 stars**

**A stuffy, uptight duke, with more than a touch of OCD, meets his match in a liberated, hard-working bluestocking who speaks her mind**

*"Aloysius Honeywell is dead, Your Grace."*

With this unexpected news, Cyril Halbert Algernon Monk, eleventh Duke of Montford, despatches his man-of-affairs to Rylestone Hall to make certain Aloysius Honeywell has indeed passed away. And to make

enquiries of the A. *Honeywell* who has been moonlighting as Aloysius Honeywell via their correspondence.

The Honeywells and the Montfords have had a long-running dispute dating back nearly two centuries ever since a contract allowed the Honeywells to become the proprietary tenants of one of the Montford estates in Yorkshire. With no direct male heir, the present Honeywells no longer have any claim to the estate.

When several weeks pass and the Duke of Montford does not hear back from his man-of-affairs, he decides to take matters into his own hands. Arriving in Yorkshire, Montford is met with a number of A. Honeywells. However, it is Miss Astrid Honeywell, the eldest daughter and manager of the estate and the family's Honeywell Ale Brewery, who catches the duke's eye.

This is my second reading of *The Duke's Holiday*, a brilliant combination of historical romance and sparkling comedy. Previously self-published, the story is due to be reissued with *Montlake*.

Readers looking for complete historical accuracy, may be disappointed. (A duke running in a village footrace seems highly unlikely!) But this is one of those well-written, and very funny historicals that despite the anachronisms, still manages to toe the line between implausible and fun.

Well-written and humorous historical romances in a similar vein that I have enjoyed include:

The Duke's Tattoo, A Regency Romance of Love and Revenge, Though Not in That Order by Miranda Davis

The Baron's Betrothal: An On-Again, Off-Again, On-Again Regency Romance by Miranda Davis

A Tryst with Trouble by Alyssa Everett

A Week to Be Wicked by Tessa Dare

Any Duchess Will Do by Tessa Dare

There are a host of secondary characters that round out this delightfully unexpected read. The duke has two friends whose stories make up the *The Regency Romp Trilogy*, which I'm looking forward to reading. For fans of historical romance who enjoy great romantic comedies. Highly recommended.

**Steam:** 2.5

*ARC courtesy of Montlake via NetGalley*

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