



Frederica

Georgette Heyer

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LONDON IN "THE SEASON"

Frederica Merriville and her three siblings have come to London for the glittering social season, in order to give young and beautiful Charis a chance to make a good marriage. Frederica herself, a witty charmer, believes herself happily beyond marriageable age -- she is twenty-four, after all. But when they are introduced to London society by their distant "cousin" Lord Alverstoke, Frederica is amazed to find herself, unknowingly, falling in love. Likewise, Alverstoke, a cold aristocrat, finds himself thoroughly beguiled by Frederica and her young rascal brothers.

Frederica Details

Date : Published 1965 by The Bodley Head

ISBN :

Author : Georgette Heyer

Format : Hardcover 384 pages

Genre : Romance, Historical, Historical Fiction, Historical Romance, Regency, Fiction

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From Reader Review Frederica for online ebook

Jessica says

Okay, how, HOW have I not read this until now? Not only that, as soon as I started to read it, about fifty people told me it was their favorite! Where have they been all this time?

Anyway. Yes. This just went into my top 5 Heyer novels, along with *The Grand Sophy*, *Venetia*, *The Convenient Marriage*, and *These Old Shades*. The thing with her novels is that you know from the first pages who will end up together, but the joy is in the characters, especially the supporting characters, and the various hijinks that occur. And this one had hijinks galore! Wild younger brothers, terrible older sisters, hot air balloons, unsuitable matches, and a large Baluchistan hound all add to the mayhem, and it's wonderful!

Ally says

Alverstoke never saw it coming - BAM, drop the Cupid's arrow

Setting / Time / Genre: Regency, London, mostly, with a few forays here and there-ish

Length: 450 pages

Series: Not that I can tell.

Sexy times: Clean as a plate after my dog cleared the dishes for dinner

Plan on reading more by the author: OMG YES!

Synopsis, quick like: Frederica, raising her young siblings, comes to London w/the intent of giving her beautiful but semi dull sister, Charis, a season. She appeals to distant relation, Alverstoke, who has just turned both of his sister's requests for a ball / money / coming out thing. He says yes, simply to rile up his sisters and what ensues his an amazing dash about London, flights in balloons, issues with a Baluchistan hound, steam engines, possible Gretna Green episodes and oh, so much more. At the end, Alverstoke and Frederica are perfectly in love and the world is good again.

Suffice it to say, Heyer's description of things like the ballooning is amazing! This is one of those pivotal elements in to the book where we see Alverstoke rise to the occasion becoming the sarcastic bad ass super hero.

Heroine: Frederica. Smart. Older. Spinsterish but not. Witty as hell. Stubborn. Fearless. She may not be full on gorgeous and it's her smarts that make Alvertoke fall in love with her.

Hero: Alverstoke. Here's the deal, at least it was apparent to me, this guy is bored of everything. I mean there is pretty much nothing in his world that is exciting, difficult, stimulating, meh-ness. Can you imagine living that way? So he becomes (and I am making a leap here) a sarcastic, shit. He's not terribly kind. He's not terribly helpful. He's not terribly positive about the future. But the man can raise a quizzing glass like nobody's business.

Why it did or didn't work for me: It worked. Really well. This is not just a love story between the H/h. No, it's a story about life, a family, trying to raise three boys: one who thinks he's ready to head the family (idiot), another who is determined to martyr himself and take everything so seriously and the last who is determined to explore the world willy nilly and find every adventure possible. It's the story of a beautiful woman and her season, sort of. There are plenty of secondary and tertiary characters who's lives the reader is catapulted in to over and over again.

Stand outs, of course, are the boys. I Whispersynced this and must say, the narrator's reading of both boys was awesome, and his Charis was hysterical. I adored this book. I laughed A LOT. And for a first Heyer, it was amazing. What have I been waiting on?

Tweety says

4 1/2

I love Frederica.

It's a lot of fun to be inside her head, she's always trying to give her family the best she can, but she doesn't always get it right. Her Cousin Alverstoke is baffled by her, she's nothing like the scheming females he is used to. Their conversations are hilarious.

But this time, I have to say that it is not the Hero and Heroine that make this book so fun, it's Felix, Frederica's youngest brother. He gets into scrap after scrap, rather like *Just William*. What with his keen mind for mechanics and his wanting to try things out for himself he pulls his whole family and Cousin Alverstoke into his troubles. Then his older brother, Jessamy also gets into scrapes despite his determination to be a Man of the Cloth.

Yes, I enjoyed myself completely. And I don't like books that toss kids in to make a plot or add 'humor' but in this book it felt natural and fun. Loved it!

The only things that stopped me giving this 5 were I found Charis boring, boring, boring. And I didn't care much for the social side of it. And I wish Frederica had realized how Alverstoke felt for her, I think it would have been more fun if she had. But, whatever, it was still wonderful.

G Rating a few swears and nothing else.

Lizzy says

Georgette Heyer's Frederica is an entertaining and charming read. So I give away my secret: sometimes I just need a silly and tender romance to forget about the hard realities of life. It could have been a thrilling science fiction as well. But now back to the classics...

Katie says

Whoever told me I'd love Frederica? *waits an ominous pause*

WAS RIGHT. It was so my kind of book - competent heroines who don't need the heroes AT ALL, but the heroes JUST WANT TO HELP.

OH GOD. When Alverstoke is all, "Oh my god, I don't love her, but I want to do everything I can to make her life easier. I JUST DON'T WANT HER TO WORRY ABOUT ANYTHING EVER, BUT I DON'T LOVE HER, OKAY?"

I love it so much. I was explaining it all to my family and they were all, "...yeah." And didn't understand how awesome it was that he was so full of ennui and then his fake cousins showed up who wanted to pay him back.

Frederica is a book about two families. One wealthy, greedy, and bored of EVERYTHING. This is Alverstoke's family.

The other family is the Merrivales - Frederica's brothers and sisters. They aren't penniless, but their estate has been mortgaged to the hilt and their eldest brother doesn't show a penchant for managing it well. So, their oldest sister, Frederica has taken charge of everything, including her siblings.

The cast is the Marquis of Alverstoke, who would spend the whole book like this if he could get away from the Merrivales long enough.

Frederica who is, as previously noted, competent, awesome, flawed in that occasionally she is SO FED UP with being a middle aged spinster aunt at 24. (or 22, I can't remember.)

Jessamy, the second son who thinks he wants to join the church and so is REALLY SAD whenever anything bad happens, and blames himself. Everyone else is like, "SHUT UP, JESSAMY. It was not your fault!" And then Jessamy makes a sad!Charlie Brown face and declares he's unfit for a life in the church. If Jessamy knew about global warming, he'd think that was his fault, too.

Felix who is obsessed with steam technology and stows away aboard a steam ship and then aboard a hot air balloon and convinces Alverstoke that it's an amazing treat (for Alverstoke) to visit a foundry that uses steam technology.

Charis whose angelic beauty makes Frederica think that all she needs is a season in London to land a good husband.

The whole plot is essentially:

Frederica and Alverstoke have flirty conversations and are interrupted by...

Jessamy!

Jessamy: I have done this TERRIBLE, AWFUL THING. I will pay you back when you tell me how much money it cost you.

Alverstoke: It is not that terrible.

Jessamy: It is the most terrible awful thing that has ever been done. Also, for real. Tell me how much money I owe you.

Alverstoke: It is not that bad. And stop talking about money.

Felix!

Felix: You want to take me to see machines!

Alverstoke: How about my secretary takes you?

Felix: But it is a TREAT. FOR YOU.

Alverstoke: Ugh. Fine.

Felix: =) =) =) <3

Charis!

Charis: I am participating in Romeo and Juliet with a guy who is also my pseudo-cousin, but it is SECRET AND NO ONE KNOWS.

Alverstoke: You are so boring. It's a pity you're so beautiful.

Charis: I am in loooooove. And it is traggic! Alverstoke is trying to deny our loooooove.

Frederica: Everyone knows, Charis, stfu and marry someone who can support you, not our penniless pseudo-cousin, ok?

Charis: You are trying to deny our loooooove. You are evil! No you aren't! But you're trying to break us apart.

Frederica: *facepalm*

If that has not convinced you, then let me remind you WHACKY FAMILY SHENANIGANS. 'nuff said.

Anne says

Warning! Beware of spoilers, hyperventilation, and reader who got way too intense

"She may not be a beauty, like Charis, but she's - she's"

"Worth a dozen of Charis!" supplied his lordship."

Oh. My. Goodness!! Where do I even start?! First of all, I just feel it incumbent to say that, screw having *one* favourite Georgette Heyer book, because that is simply impossible. Every time I finish one of her novels, I think that I will never read another one that was just as amazing...and I get proved wrong every time.

I **knew** I would love *Frederica* way before I started it. Countless Heyer fans kept recommending it to me and telling me it was one of the best, and the blurb totally sounded like something I would enjoy. Bored cynic becomes un-bored by the arrival of country cousins who get into scrapes right on his doorstep? Huh yes, I think so! But I had not anticipated that I would find every single page delicious, and that the ending would leave me desperately wishing there was a sequel. I just love this book SO much! It was so clever, brilliant, touching, entertaining and plain good FUN!

To sum it up in a nutshell:

Alverstoke: I AM SO BORED.

Merrville family show up.

Frederica Merrville: Will you please launch Charis and me into society? :)

Alverstoke: Argh, fine.

Frederica: Thank you! How much money do I owe you?

Alverstoke: Don't worry about the money.

Charis Merrville: Can you please take us all to the maze?

Alverstoke: Argh, fine.

Charis: Thank you, thank you!! Words cannot express how thankful I am! HOW can I thank you??

Alverstoke: Just don't.

Jessamy Merrville: Can you please help me?! I am in a shocking scrape!!

Alverstoke: Argh, fine.

Jessamy: Thank you! How much money do I owe you?

Alverstoke: Don't worry about the money!

Harry Merriville: Thank you so much for helping out my siblings!! How much money do I owe you?

Alverstoke: Damn it, was it is with you all and money and thanks?!?!?!?

Felix Merriville: Can you please, pretty, pretty please, take me to the foundry??

Alverstoke: Argh, fine.

Felix: YAY!!! And it will be such a nice treat for you!!

Alverstoke: Damn it, I love these people.

I must say, witnessing the downfall of a cynic is an oddly satisfying and pleasant experience. There is something so very endearing about a hardened, cold and self-centered man whose heart slowly gets softened in the most unusual ways by the most unusual family! Heyer is famous for her great characterization, and in this novel, her characters are not just people in a story, they became *real*, so real that you come to know them, love them and predict their every move as if you'd been acquainted with them for years. You feel as though you'd really met them, and not just read about them in a book.

The aforementioned cynic, Lord Alverstoke, is definitely one of Heyer's best heroes. Not only is he fascinating, awe-inspiring, composed, and magnificent, but he was so well-developed and his evolution was so believable, that I couldn't get enough of him. Redeemed rakes or semi-rakes were always my thing, and I was left more than satisfied with his story. *Plus*, he was jaw-dropping sexy. Let's take a moment to appreciate some mental eye-candy.

"That coat of blue superfine was moulded over magnificent shoulders; and those clinging pantaloons in no way concealed the swell of muscles in his lordship's powerful thighs which unmistakably proclaimed the athlete."

Just. So. Hot.

Indulged and pampered his whole life, the incredibly selfish Marquis never thinks about anyone but himself, and consequently finds everything and everyone a dead bore. His sisters bore him, social activities bore him, conventions bore him, political activities bore him, doing anything productive bores him. Even his dazzling bits of muslin bore him!

To do him credit though, he is a horse expert, a great athlete and is always dressed bang up to the nines without looking like a ridiculously dandified counter-coxcomb.

Basically, he's a total badass. And a really hot one at that.

What he needs is a distraction. A **good** one. Something that will make him want to bestir himself without having it feel like a chore. Something fun, pleasant, and just plain loveable. Something like...the Merriville family?

Passing off as Alverstoke's cousins, the Merrivilles are probably Heyer's most adorable family ever. I just need to give them all a hug. Felix is the most charming twelve-year-old, with his love and thirst for knowledge of all things machines, mechanics, steam-boats, aeronautics and I-don't-know-what-besides, and his habit of bursting into rooms making demands and looking like an orphan cast penniless upon the world to make sure he gets a positive answer. Never would I have imagined loving a kid of his age so much in a book, but he was the *best*. Jessamy was also extremely loveable, with his indecisive mind torn between preaching

and having fun, his deep sense of duty and his love of horses. He was a great character and had really good scenes. Then, the beautiful, dumb-blond Charis made a really nice foil for Frederica, because she was all looks and no brains, with a shy, too-good disposition, and a propensity for trying to please everyone all the time. And Frederica, the elder of the clan, is on the other hand only passably good-looking, but incredibly resourceful, brave, intelligent, witty, competent and simply wonderful. She always knows what to do, and she always has a laugh in her eyes. This is no green schoolroom chit who is on the catch for a husband and sulking and getting vapours for the merest trumpery. No way! Frederica is twenty-four, and considers herself as an old maid on the shelf, without charms or attractions whatsoever. She is old cattish.

"I don't recall his name: it was so long ago!"

'Ah, yes!' he said sympathetically, 'Before you became so old cattish!'

'Old cattish-!' She checked herself, and then said, with a rueful smile: 'Oh dear! I suppose that is what I am!'"

The point of coming to London is for Charis to make a great match, not her! **Frederica is not on the hunt for a husband.** She has no thought of marriage at all. Only of Pork Jelly. ;)

And before he fully realizes what is going on, it is already way too late and the Marquis is embroiled beyond recovery.

From their very first meeting, Alverstoke finds himself acting against all his usual principles (in other words, he sits down and listens to Frederica instead of dying of boredom):

Frederica: Oh, hello, Cousin Alverstoke!! I didn't actually think you would come, but thank you so much for coming anyways, and please will you sit down, we have a few things to discuss, like your relationship with my late father, Charis's season, our presentation to the ton -

Alverstoke: (What kind of female is this????) First of all, what kind of house is this???

Frederica: It's called shabby-genteel! No worries though, no one will care! By the way, I don't appear like a *managing* female, right!?

Alverstoke: Are you one?

Frederica: Well, I kind of have to be you know, the whole family depends on me! Anyways, will you please help us?

Alverstoke: We're not really connected for real, you know.

Frederica: Okay. I get it, you don't want to help. I'll manage.

"At these words, the Marquis, who had had every intention of bringing the interview to a summary end, irrationally chose to prolong it."

And there! In spite of himself he just can't tear himself away, and goes on having a lengthy conversation with Frederica, and then, I kid you not, they are interrupted by Felix, Jessamy *and* Charis, and he just sits there and chats with every body and finds that he likes them all, and as soon as he sees Charis he goes "I'm going to give THE BALL, after all!!" and it's like "Ooooh yeah, shit's about to get real!!!".

But before The Ball, there is this hilarious episode about Frederica bringing their dog Lufra to the Green Park, where she didn't know there were cows (because the deceitful guide-book forgot to mention it!) and Lufra starts chasing them and creates a crazy mayhem, so Frederica blurts out that the dog "belong to her cousin, the Marquis of Alverstoke!" and everyone is like :O :O no way, that can't be *his* dog, but they nevertheless all end up on his doorstep before noon and while they are all waiting for his lordship's convenience in the library, Heyer feels the need to stop all the action in this very climatic scene, to show us *exactly* how my lord Alverstoke ties his neckcloth. I'm serious. The footman hurries upstairs to Alverstoke's dressing-room, and the valet lets him in after telling him to stay put and not make a single noise, because their master is tying his neckcloth. They both watch him, completely awe-struck, as he lets his head fall

slowly, four or five times, in order to achieve beautiful yet unobtrusive folds. The scene is so completely unnecessary, but so awesome at the same time!

Then when he finally comes down:

Frederica: Ooh hey there you are, I brought your dog back!

Alverstoke: *cleverly goes along with whatever Frederica is doing* Well thanks, but what the heck happened?!?!

Random people that followed Frederica to make sure the dog was really Alverstoke's: It's your dog for real??? A Barcelonan hound???

Frederica: Yup, and I'm never walking it ever again!

Alverstoke: From Barcelona?? Frederica, how can you be so bird-witted! Baluchistan, not Barcelona! *Baluchistan*!!

Frederica: *can barely restrain her chuckles* Oooh that's riiiiight!!

Random hatchet-faced lady: Is Baluchistan even a place?!?!?

Alverstoke: Sure! Let me show you on the globe!

Hatchet-faced lady: How on earth did that beast even get here?

Alverstoke: Smugglers ;)

Hatchet-faced lady: WHAT! I NEVER- OMG! HAVE IT IMPOUNDED ALREADY!

Alverstoke: "I didn't smuggle the dog *into* the country; I merely caused him to be smuggled *out* of Baluchistan."

That last line is the actual line in the book. Is Alverstoke brilliant or what! He deserves some sort of improvisation medal or something. But the best part of that scene is Frederica completely cracking up at her own joke, after the random people leave and bursts out laughing saying "It's like Puss in Boots! 'My cousin, the Marquis of Alverstoke!'" and Alverstoke is all confused, then he gets it and they laugh together and it's super adorable!!

Then, even though it's mainly to enrage his sisters, Alverstoke gives The Ball, aka a splendid party thrown in his ballroom at Alverstoke House, in order to present Charis and Frederica to the Ton (while it looks like he's presenting his niece Jane and his cousin Chloe). Lady Jersey is there, and she's a great friend of the family and she was super hilarious because she understood everything at a glance and loved to see Alverstoke's sisters and his cousin Mrs. Dauntry, seething with rage. It was *so* funny, and everyone else couldn't figure out why Alverstoke would help the Merrivilles in any way, least of all invite them to the ball.

But then, he doesn't *just* launch them all into the Ton. His job could have finished right there, but no, he rescues their dog, brings Felix to all sorts of places, lets Jessamy drive his horses, drives Charis around, all the time trying to convince himself that he's not falling for Frederica.

"The Marquis believed himself to be hardened against flattery. He thought that he had experienced every variety, but he discovered that he was mistaken: the blatantly worshipful look in the eyes of a twelve-year-old, anxiously raised to his, was new to him, and it pierced his defences."

Honestly though, who could resist Felix??

Felix: Cousin Alverstoke!! I have a super awesome idea!

Alverstoke: (Oh god, oh god, oh god!) Yes? What is it?

Felix: You and me should go together to the foundry!!!! To learn about steam-engines! Boats! Mechanics!

Alverstoke: (I honestly couldn't care less.) Dear boy, I know nothing about those things! How about my secretary takes you? He would looooooove it!

Mr. Trevor: (DON'T YOU DARE!) Oh, no, actually, Lord Alverstoke knows wayyyyy more than I do!

Alverstoke:(Dammit Charles you're not helping at all here!)

Felix: Cousin Alverstoke? Please? I want to go with *you* *raises melting blue eyes to him and makes orphan-cast-penniless-upon-the-world face*

Alverstoke: (WHY do you have to look at me like that!!!) Oh, alright, alright!

Felix: WOOHOOO, IT'S GOING TO BE AWESOME!!! Wait, you WANT to come right??

Alverstoke: YES, YES, OMGGGGGG YEEEESSSSSS!!! (Maybe I exaggerated a little too much.)

Felix: You're the best!!

Mr. Trevor: (Thank God, allelujah!)

Alverstoke: (You are so paying for this, Charles).

Alverstoke's interactions with the whole family are just priceless. He's completely loveable when he talks to the boys, super in control when he deals with Charis, and just completely heart-melting whenever he talks to Frederica. They had so many awesome, lengthy conversations, and you can so see him falling for her because she's so awesome and entertaining, and it is just all so WONDERFUL!!!

The last half of the book was even better, when Felix coaxes Alverstoke into bringing him to watch a balloon ascension, and Alverstoke honestly couldn't care less, once again, and prays there will be a snowstorm or something in the middle of June, to save him from his terrible fate. :P Then his valet wakes him up bright and early, pulling the curtains and letting the sunshine in and "GOOD MORNING MY LORD, WHAT A BEAUTIFUL DAY!!" and Alverstoke is all "FML", and even once he actually gets there and he sees there isn't a lot of wind, he goes "YAY, IT MIGHT BE CANCELLED! Woop, Woop! Wait. OMG, no! If they postpone it, FELIX WILL DRAG ME INTO THIS AGAIN ANOTHER DAY!! NOOOOO!".

It doesn't get postponed, but Felix grabs one of the ropes in an attempt to ride in the balloon (and succeeds, of course), but unfortunately when it lands in the country, they hit a tree and Felix falls unconscious, breaks a few ribs and contracts a rheumatic fever, which forces him to stay at a local farm for a few weeks, where Alverstoke and Frederica take turns nursing him, and fall madly in love with each other. Frederica doesn't realize it however, but Alverstoke certainly does, and one day, as they are taking a walk together, he "recklessly decided to take the plunge":

Alverstoke: *takes a deep breath* (come on man, you got this!) Frederica!

Frederica: *is too absorbed in her thoughts and doesn't hear him*

Alverstoke: (dammit this is not going well!) FREDERICA!

Frederica: RESTORATIVE PORK JELLY!!

Alverstoke:

ABORT THE MISSION!!!

Lord Buxted: *Proposed to Frederica at a super inopportune moment*

Frederica: WHO THE HELL WOULD BE DUMB ENOUGH TO PROPOSE RIGHT NOW? (to Alverstoke) You'd never do that, would you?!

Alverstoke: Noooooooooooooo!!!!!! Neeeeeeveeeerrrrr!

I felt SO BAD for him!! By that time he's so hopelessly in love with her and just wants to propose, but right moment never seems to present itself. :(When they get back to London, Frederica nearly has a heart attack a few days later, because Charis has eloped with Endymion, Alverstoke's super-handsome cousin, who's as brainless as Charis. Alverstoke and his sister Eliza (the only awesome one!) are trying to comfort Frederica, when Charles Trevor bursts in and tells them that they are **not** married, because he saved the day.

Charles: THEY ARE NOT MARRIED!!!

Frederica:

Charles: Okay so, I got there in time for church and-

Alverstoke: Was Charis crying?

Charles: Maybe, I don't know, anyways, I waited until the "speak now or forever hold your peace part", then I yelled "THIS MARRIAGE CANNOT TAKE PLACE!" and-

Alverstoke: Now Charis was crying right?

Charles: Yeah, probably, anyways then we all went back to Endymion's house, then he freaked out, his mom freaked out and-

Alverstoke: Charis was crying!!

Frederica: SHUT UP, ALVERSTOKE!

Charles: Anywayyyys, as I was saying, they are not married and everything is okay now!

Alverstoke: You really are awesome!

Frederica: Yes!!

Charles: *blushes*

Eliza: But heeyyy Vernon, speaking of which, when is your engagement, no, YOUR WEDDING going to happen already?

Alverstoke: Eliza, no, stop!

Charles: I was gonna say though...

Alverstoke: OH WERE YOU?! (that's the actual line from the book!)

Eliza: Well propose already!

Alverstoke: Can you let me do my own proposal omg!

Eliza: Okay, but Vernon, stop waiting for the perfect moment! TAKE THE MOMENT AND MAKE IT PERFECT! *leaves with Charles*

Alverstoke: I HATE SISTERS!!!! But for real though, Frederica...

Frederica: *has been there all this time*

You don't really want to marry me...

Alverstoke: No, but my sisters, my friends and my secretary think I should! *wink*

Frederica: But I have no thought of marriage! (actual line)

Alverstoke: Yeah, I know! All you think about is Pork Jelly!

Frederica: WHAT? You wanted to ask me THEN?

Alver: Well yeah, but then Pork Jelly happened. (actual line: "There is something very daunting about Pork Jelly!")

Frederica: BUT IT'S RESTORATIVE PORK JELLY!!!

No joke, she really says that.

It's not just Pork Jelly darn it, it's *restorative* Pork Jelly!

Frederica is so awesome though, Alverstoke will NEVER EVER, EVER be bored for the rest of his life.

"He wished to spend the rest of his life with her, because she was the perfect woman he had never expected to encounter."

Awww!! <3 <3 They are one of my favourite literary couples ever, so well-matched and you can tell theirs is a love that will last because its foundations are solid and...Frederica will become a She-Marquis!! Woohoo :D :D

Regency-fans and other people out there, do yourselves a favour and pick up this wonderful romp set in

England in the 1810's, it is SO good it's guaranteed to make you smile.

The audiobook, narrated by Clifford Norgate, is also highly entertaining, although Alverstoke sounds like he's 67 and not 37, and Frederica sounds a little too demure and not jovial enough. Her brothers are spot on though! I'm having a really good time reliving the story by listening to it. :)

"His lordship, in fact, previously ruthless on his own behalf, was now prepared to sacrifice the entire human race to spare his Frederica one moment's pain."

Goodness I love these people! <3 <3

Buddy read with Becca and Tweety!

Lady Wesley says

This is one of my top three Heyer titles, and the audio narration by Clifford Norgate is just spot on. His vocalization of the marquess is a bit stuffier than I would like, and occasionally he veers off into Winston Churchill territory, but he does a very nice job with all of the female voices and especially with the two cute young boys who, for my money, make this a standout book. As all too often happens with Heyer, the ending is cut too short, and I would have enjoyed seeing more of Frederica and Alverstoke as a couple. That, however, is just a risk the reader runs with a Heyer book.

All in all, I adored listening to this book and I highly recommend this audio version.

Jacob Proffitt says

This is one of my favorite Georgette Heyer books. I read it easily once a year. I'm afraid I'm going to gush all over this review, but I'll do my best to keep this coherent.

The winning feature of this book is the Merriville family, particularly as they enmesh themselves into the carefully ordered life of Lord Alverstoke. In stark contrast to his sisters, who value him mainly for his vast wealth, he finds himself captivated by these "mere connections" as they seem actually interested in him. Indeed, one of the recurring events is when one or another of the Merrivilles try to pay him back for something he has done for them—a novel experience for the Marquis.

Of the Merrivilles, Felix is the most engaging. His various London exploits are a charming background for most of the novel. But you end up liking Jessamy as well, for all he isn't half as charming as his younger brother. You can see how deeply important these two boys are to Frederica and it's clear that she couldn't possibly abandon them to their negligent oldest brother—which means that anybody who can't love them as well has no chance of winning her heart. It's a good thing, then, that Alverstoke becomes attached to them.

My favorite part of the book, however, is how little self-aware Frederica is. She is so caught up in her plans for her siblings that she truly doesn't see how Charis doesn't *want* the kind of marriage that Frederica plans for her. And the moment when Alverstoke points out to her what love is... such a great climax.(view spoiler)

Postscript:

This book will forever be known in our family as "the one with the dog". I know you're curious so here's how it went to the best of my recollection:

Me: I know the Georgette Heyer book I want to read, but I can't remember the title.

Melissa: You really liked Frederica and it's been a while since you read that one.

Me: No, not that one.

Melissa: Do you remember any of the plot?

Me: It's the one with the dog. The guy calls it a "Baluchistan Hound".

Melissa: ... That's Frederica ...

Me: Are you sure?

Melissa: ...

? Irena ? says

After *Faro's Daughter* and *April Lady*, I realized that my (personal) issue with Heyer's characters is that I want them to be more passionate. Well, I certainly got that here and *not* in the way I expected. The whole Merriville family is lively, each member with a distinct voice. The dog too.

All Frederica Merriville wants is to marry her beautiful, albeit not very smart, younger sister. She wants her to be happy and she knows she deserves it. They come to London with their aunt (not very important character), a twelve-year-old Felix and sixteen-year-old Jessamy, and their huge dog Lufra.

Being bored out of his mind, Lord Alverstoke agrees to introduce them to the *ton*. Soon he realizes that there is nothing boring, ordinary or deceitful about the Merrivilles.

I get bored with Heyer's descriptions of clothes, but here they are balanced with the craziness the Merrivilles bring into Lord Alverstoke's life. Even if he is described as selfish, cynical and overall not very pleasant person, he is never dishonest with Frederica. She knows his reasons for helping them from the start.

What Lord Alverstoke didn't expect is that they would completely change him without even trying. After so many grabby siblings and cousins, he was unprepared for the family that only needs an introduction to the society, nothing more. The way the boys capture his heart is lovely.

“The Marquis believed himself to be hardened against flattery. He thought that he had experienced every variety, but he discovered that he was mistaken: the blatantly worshipful look in the eyes of a twelve-year-old, anxiously raised to his, was new to him, and it pierced his defences.”

Anyway, the changes in both Frederica and the Marquis happen gradually and slowly (but not painfully slow). Not even Alverstoke realizes what's happening at first, but others do.

“Then Frederica went towards him, holding out her hand, and he raised his eyes from Felix's eager countenance, and smiled at her, causing Mr. Moreton to suffer a shock. It was not at all the sort of smile with which his lordship beguiled his flirts, but something warmer and more intimate. 'Good God!' mentally ejaculated Mr. Moreton. 'Sits the wind in that quarter?'”

There are other characters that make this story worth reading. Some are horrible (one of Alverstoke's sisters and a hypochondriac cousin), others wonderful (his secretary, the third sister, Chloe and so on), some funny (Endymion) and that's only the ones that have greater roles here. There are many others the Merrivilles encounter throughout the story.

Nitpicks: it annoyed me that Alverstoke called Frederica 'my child' and that they didn't get more time

together.

Emma says

Another highly enjoyable offering from Heyer. This is not an original story line for her- I believe in Venetia, the love interest also takes on unruly/ lovable siblings of an older sister left in charge. The real stars of this book were Luff, the unmanageable dog, and Felix, the youngest brother. The one off putting element of the romance was Vernon calling Frederica 'my child'. But maybe that's just a modern sensibility...it would be off putting to me, at least!

Andrea says

This is one of my favourite Heyers: it's both funny and completely inverts the usual taming the rake tropes. We spend a large amount of time in Alverstoke's point of view, watching him being besotted and having him fret over the question of whether his feelings are returned.

And, really, we need more cultural eras that are willing to show men as so entirely vain about their appearance. Not just the dandies, but people like Alverstoke, who seem to treat tying their cravat with High Church reverence.

The narrator of this audiobook, while adept at producing a variety of voices, produced simply *_terrible_* voices for the characters. I swear if Felix actually spoke in the near-lisping Little Lord Fauntleroy accents used here, he'd have been shoved under the wheels of a carriage long ago. And the less said about the already fairly intolerable Charis the better.

I a i n e y says

"A man need not be dull merely because he is respectable!"

"No, he need not be, but he often is"

I am afraid Heyer was *biased* in writing Frederica. In that she seemed to try to cram as *many loveable characters* as possible in this one novel!

The cast here, to me, were **extraordinary**: Frederica, His Lordship, Jessamy and Felix. **Oh Felix you adorable little genius thing you..**

LOL

Even minor characters like Mr. Trevor or even Mrs. Jersey who was on screen no more than 5 times. they too were intriguing. It did appear to be unfair to her other works, no? I mean after this, my expectation will be

unusually high whenever I pick up a Heyer book.

Frederica was a spectacular lady lead: sincere while never boring, naturally spirited without being over the top, compassionate yet extremely practical. As close as perfect in Regency setting, I think.

Oh what I have to mention is that **the book was hilarious!** The banTERS were witty and realistic, especially between Frederica and His Lordship. But also with her duo of *huggable little bros*.

I am just *charmed* by them, I must have smiled all throughout reading this. Ahhh~ Good Times.

i would definitely recommend Frederica for readers who want to pick up their first Georgette Heyer book.

Diane says

I'm going to use my two favorite words to describe this novel: Charming and Delightful. This is the third Georgette Heyer book I've read this summer, and I'm so glad I still have more than 30 of her Regency romances left to enjoy. Her books are a tonic, and I plan on saving them and bringing them out when I'm in high dudgeon.

Frederica is a smart, no-nonsense heroine who has been saddled with the raising of her younger siblings since their parents passed away. At 24, she considers herself too old to be married and her only hope is to find a suitable husband for her younger sister, who is very beautiful. Fortunately, the dashing Marquis of Alverstoke is a distant cousin and agrees to help Frederica launch her sister into society. Along the way, the Marquis falls in love with Frederica. (And if anyone complains about a spoiler alert, then they've clearly never read a romance before.) There are the usual obstacles and a near tragedy that brings our lovers closer together, but rest assured that it will all come 'round in the end.

One of the things I especially like about Heyer's books is her emphasis on historical details -- she was known to do tremendous research for her novels. This one is fun because Frederica's youngest brother is keen on machinery, which in the early 1800s included steam ships and hot air balloons, and it was interesting to read old-timey discussions of those devices.

Some people call romances a guilty pleasure, but I read enough serious stuff that they become a necessity to help lighten the load. Besides, I don't want to be accused of being a bluestocking.

Hana says

I loved the book and hero and heroine. I read it just after reading Northanger Abbey and the contrast between ditzzy, romance-addled Catherine Moreland and Frederica could not have been sharper. Frederica has shouldered extraordinary burdens ever since childhood--and has done it with good humor, equability and love. At four-and-twenty she is a delightful, funny, mature and completely admirable young woman--no wonder Alverstoke falls head over heels!

The boys she has raised virtually single-handed could have been so messed up, but instead they are healthy, happy and vibrantly individual; and Charis is unaffected and far from being a Tiffany-Wield-style spoiled brat (though she is still a hopeless airhead). Frederica pulled her family's fortunes back from the brink of disaster, got the estate producing a solid income, kept everyone out of debt, helped keep her oldest brother

from going the way of their dissolute father. Alverstoke will win a true partner if he can win Frederica's love.

Kathleen says

Quiz about Frederica. For me, this book is one of Heyer's best historical romances.

Frederica is a lovely story — fun, heartwarming, and plausible. It's set primarily in London, about 1817, during an era of mechanical advancement: pedestrian curricles, hot air balloons, hydraulic pumps, steam engines (all woven into the story).

A jaded nobleman is beguiled by two thoroughly likable boys and their witty, warmhearted, and devoted sister. Frederica may not be a diamond of the first water, but she never bores Lord Alverstoke, not even when pondering restorative pork jelly.

Characterization is top notch. Heyer thoroughly endeared her two adolescent boys to me (loved their dog, Lufra, too). Even better, she masterfully transformed the initially cold, cynical, and self-interested Marquis of Alverstoke into a total luv — a man who would sacrifice the world to keep his Frederica from worry. Well, not the whole world. Not quite. (Note, he grows a heart, but never becomes a pushover.)

Heyer slowly develops relationships, and her style is subtle. For example, we learn from the POV of a minor character (Mr. Moreton) that Alverstoke is falling in love:

“Then Frederica went towards him [Alverstoke], holding out her hand, and he raised his eyes from Felix’s eager countenance, and smiled at her, causing Mr. Moreton to suffer a shock. It was not at all the sort of smile with which his lordship beguiled his flirts, but something warmer and more intimate. 'Good God!' mentally ejaculated Mr. Moreton. 'Sits the wind in that quarter?'”

QUIBBLE: I only wish Heyer had allowed the new lovers more time together at the end, and a little more intimacy (but so it goes with Austen and Heyer).

FORMAT: I have read this novel several times over the years. Also, I listened to **narrator Clifford Norgate**, who has a deep voice with an English accent — quite good, especially his take on Alverstoke and the boys. Another audio version is narrated by Kate Reading, which might suit the female roles better.

CAST OF CHARACTERS: (collapsed, but NOT a spoiler) (view spoiler)

RECOMMENDATIONS: Some of my favorites by this "leading lady of Regency Romance" are These Old Shades (hardened old bachelor falls for young street waif) and its sequel Devil's Cub. Also these stand alone novels, in no particular order:

Arabella the cynic and the spirited vicar's girl

Venetia older black sheep falls for charming country girl

Sylvester cold "dook" falls for plain "sparrow"

The Convenient Marriage old rake falls for young wife

The Corinthian a runaway, an escapade, a robbery

The Spanish Bride Harry and his spitfire vs Napoleon

Faro's Daughter. Cool casino owner ties lordly lord in knots

Heyer also writes some decent mystery novels, sans romance, or slight romance. I've read a few, long ago. Titles escape me.

Vivian says

Charming and delightful regency romance.

Heyer's plucky heroines make for enjoyable reading. Frederica is the penultimate eldest sister who has inherited the mantle of family matriarch after her parents' deaths. Juggling four siblings' needs is time consuming for as soon as one is settled, another needs sorting out.

While I liked this one, I didn't enjoy it as much as Cotillon. This one was rife with responsibilities which I don't have issue with, but the conversations between Alverstoke and Frederica were repeated over and over again:

F: I shouldn't impose, but the situation is dire.

A: Nonsense it's nothing. Talk no more.

F: Really, it was a dreadful overstep.

A: You're boring me with this talk.

A great deal of this is tongue-in-cheek, nevertheless--Tedious.

That said, Felix, the youngest brother and scamp extraordinaire saved this and facilitated the entire relationship. Quite easily the most entertaining member of the Merrivilles. Anyway, this story was more about watching Alverstoke become a pillar on which Frederica leaned than a romance. It was very pleasant, but not my favorite storyline.

3.5 stars story from a mysterious FIVE STARS' FRIEND.

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The stockings weren't even hung...

AND a GIFT! Sneakily and mysteriously sent to me. My thanks for the kind wishes and thoughts to my secret Elf.

Carol ?? says

[* I get that Alverstoke disliked his sister, Louisa & wasn't crazy about the parasitic Lucretia. But his method of punishing them was to be cruel to their daughters. Yes Jane is unlikeable but she is only a child &

Tadiana ☆Night Owl? says

The Marquis of Alverstoke is bored.

He's especially bored with family and friends who try to get him to do things he doesn't want to do, like, say, put on a massive ball to launch his nieces in society. So when a distant, not-wealthy relative, Frederica Merriville, shows up, introduces herself and asks him to help introduce her beautiful younger sister into London society, he's really not inclined to help.

But then Frederica's young brothers show up, and 13 year old Felix quizzes the Marquis on the latest fascinating technology, like locomotives and blast-pipes and pneumatic lifts, and after that her sweet and gorgeous (if rather airheaded) younger sister Charis appears, the epitome of all that is Regency-era loveliness, and it occurs to Alverstoke that it would be quite amusing to hold that come-out ball and launch Charis into society along with his nieces. Charis's beauty will outshine his nieces' and that will give his bossy and insistent sisters absolute fits. Hah--serves them right!

The Merriville family is lively and likeable and a little bit crazy, and as they get into one scrape after another and Alverstoke somehow ends up being the one who rescues them, time after time, he finds himself getting more and more attached to all of them. Particularly to Frederica herself, who is so busy trying to keep all of her younger brothers in line and rescue them from their escapades and get Charis married off to a sharp and well-off man and keep her away from the men with pockets to let (i.e., not rich), that she never notices Alverstoke is gradually getting very interested in her.

Or if she does notice, he can't tell if she really likes him in a romantic way or not, or if she'll accept his suit. And suddenly the bored Marquis of Alverstoke is no longer bored.

This is a delightful and charming novel! The Merriville family is the best, adventurous and lovable and a little off the wall. The romance is pretty understated (typical for Heyer). Some interesting history about hot air balloons and other technology of the time, brought to you courtesy of Frederica's young brother Felix.

Additional fun adventures courtesy of the noble if occasionally ill-behaved Baluchistan hound.

4.75 stars. My only quibble: (view spoiler) Even if she does kind of have tunnel vision about her family concerns. :)

Update: Feb. 2018 reread, just because I needed a literary pick-me-up. This solidified *Frederica* as one of my top 3 Georgette Heyer books. The main characters are intelligent, a little older (24 and 37), and their dialogue as they tease each other is hilariously witty. Frederica doesn't try to play Alverstoke; she just wants to be friendly, and he finds her so unusual among his acquaintances that he can't help being intrigued. And then ... well, read it for yourself. :)

Amy says

Read in 2017

Sometimes you encounter a fictional character and the experience changes you. Perhaps in this character you find someone you want to be, or you discover someone you already are, or maybe you simply return to them so often they become indistinguishably part of you.

Frederica, and to a lesser extent Alverstoke, represent that to me. I read my review from 7 years ago with some bemusement. Could I have guessed at that point how indispensable the works of Georgette Heyer would become in my life? I think I had an inkling, but certainly no real idea. I had no idea I would read *Frederica* every year and enjoy it more each time. But you know, the traces are there.

17-year-old Amy saw in 24-year-old Frederica a role model. Frederica remained calm in times of stress, but knew when to laugh things off. She selflessly cared for those around her. She observed life with a wry smile and a frank glance. She was charming and well-behaved, yet also independent and determined. And I wanted to be her.

Now as 24-year-old Amy looks at 24-year-old Frederica, I find I still very much want to be her. I love Frederica for her self-possession and sense of humor. Whether I radiate those things like I wish to those around me, I don't know! However, I certainly have internalized them.

I love Alverstoke. Though other Heyer Heroes rank higher in my personal regard, his affection for Frederica holds a special place in my heart. She is the only woman who could never bore him! If that isn't an attribute worth having in a spouse, I don't know what is.

The Grand Sophy will always be my favorite Heyer novel, but *Frederica* will always come delightfully close to usurping it. Sophy is unattainable; Frederica is not.

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### Read in 2011

If there is one thing I've discovered from reading Georgette Heyer, it's a vast new vocabulary. I can now roughly speak/translate "nineteenth century slang". What I find so amusing about that is how quickly you start using the words, like telling someone they're "doing it a little to brown" or referring to a young man as a "foppish dandy in the peticoat line". My poor, bewildered family would probably not mind if I took a break from this particular author...

And as I started *Frederica* that is exactly what I felt like doing: taking a break. How could I have convinced myself to get yet another Heyer book from the library? The Nonesuch had proven to be a bit of a disappointment, and I didn't feel up for another stupid regency-romance. But, I figured, I had the book and a few minutes to spare and might as well start it...

With trepidation I began it...only to be pleasantly surprised.

**Plot**

Lord Vernon Alverstoke is immensely wealthy (are there any Heyer heroes who aren't?), constantly sought after in the marriage market, and bored. Very bored. Spoiled since birth, his relationship with his three sisters could be deemed tempid at best, downright antagonistic at worst. He is a flirt and a rake and as irresponsible as the day is long. When some distant relations show up and ask him to call, he's quite certain they are, like everyone else, after his money.

24-year-old Frederica Merriville is at her wit's end. Determined to usher her stunningly beautiful younger sister into London society with a glorious season, her plans look to fall short when she discovers her "fashionable London aunt" really lives in a poorer part of town, and doesn't know anyone of real consequence. Calling on Lord Alverstoke was almost a last-ditch effort...

Struck by how amusing it would be to con his sister into thinking he was giving a coming out ball for his neice (like she had been begging him) while also foisting on the unsuspecting party his "new cousins", Lord Alverstoke gives in to Frederica's request that he play guardian. But what was once a perfectly tame and boring life turns rather unexpected and topsy-turvy as Lord Alverstoke finds himself drawn more and more into the Merriville family.

Determined, clever Frederica who had played mother, father, and sister to her three younger siblings since their parents death, and watches over her other brother at Oxford.

Harry, the impetuous Oxford student, with his Father's vices and a loyal heart, only to willing to hand over the responsibility of caring for the family to his older sister.

Stunningly beautiful, sweet tempered, but not to bright Charis, whose loving heart can't bear to rebuff anyone, even as she can't think of anything clever to say.

And finally Jessamy and Felix, the two younger brothers who steal Lord Alverstoke's heart as they tumble in and out of scrapes, mad-cap plans, and hot air balloons.

**Thoughts (also known as why I fell in love with this book)**

I really ended up loving this book. I'd rank it just after *The Grand Sophy* but above *Cotillion* in Heyer awesomeness. It carried what I've come to expect of her - memorable characters, humorous language, an interesting plot line. It didn't leave me sitting there giggling. But it did posses something a little bit deeper.... Well, anyway, I loved Frederica. I think I can relate to her more than any other Heyer heroine so far. And its not just that she is the oldest of five...there is something about her outlook on life I can connect with. I loved how she didn't fall ga-ga for Lord Alverstone on chapter 2, and go on rambling about how amazing he was until the last page. No, siree!! She discovered love like I think its supposed to be, without the "his broad cheast" and "her fair lips" mumbo-jumbo thrown into most romance books. It started with a deep friendship. <3 (yes, I know, sappy of me, but it was such a *relief!* )

Lord Alverstoke, *on the other hand* ....well. Frankly, I wanted to hate him. He was a slacker and a major flirt and cynical....but the more vocally I announced my dislike for him, the more I *liked* him. He really does experience a remarkable character change, very well done. I *couldn't* hate him by the end, and I challenge you to try! I loved how he didn't just "fall in love" with Frederica, and put up with her family because of it. No, he enjoyed her family and *liked* being around them. And the boys liked him back. And unlike most Heyer heroes....he didn't just instantly fall in love with the heroine and "woo" her because she didn't like him or any such nonsense. I felt like it was gradual....and even setting up a "flirt" so he wouldn't attract attention to Frederica when he talked to her was incredibly....sweet! Charles from *The Grand Sophy* and Freddy from *Cotillion* may beat him in Favorite-Heyer-Guys, but he is certainly up there.

Tired of my rambling yet? Well, I have one more thing to note. The dog xD A "Belusian hound". Almost every goodreads reviewer has made a mention of him, so I figure I might as well join the band-wagon. Very humorous character that I wouldn't have minded more of in the last half. Though I am in doubt, would a country-bred dog really just start scattering a herd fo cows in the middle of a park....?

The scraps the boys (and even Frederica) go into were funny, the characters well done, and overall....I liked it. I can't excuse Lord Alverstone's past immoral behavior, and I will make a mention of it for more particular readers, but it is handled delicately, and unlike Arabella, I didn't feel like Frederica "walked in" on the engagment/marriage blind to his character.

Plus, the ending wasn't all that flupperry "everything-works-out-perfectly." Ha! We don't know exactly what happens to everyone. And I'm glad of it. It leaves room for the imagination, without offending or irritating any attachments you might have developed for the characters.

So hip-hip-hooray for Georgette Heyer and a delightful story that took me by surprise.....

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## Kelly says

One of the better realized Heyers. A mature romance, *Frederica* follows the trials and tribulations of the slightly older (mid twenties, oh no, over the hill!) long suffering title character as she tries to give her beautiful (and silly, of course) sister a London season and keep the rest of her siblings under control- with the help of her "cousin", the Marquis of Alverstoke. Let the hijinx appropriate to a tale full of young, enterprising boys, an emotional, silly sister, and a Marquis *quite* unaccustomed to putting himself out for anyone ensue!

This book feels more modern than some others. It is similiar in tone and presentation to *Venetia*, another of her mature romances in which the eventual happy lovers become very believable friends first. In fact, in *Frederica*, were I not already aware that I was reading a romance novel, I would have very much doubted, up until about 200 pages in, that *Frederica* and the Marquis were going to get together at all. It was a refreshing surprise to experience that. Much appreciated. Heyer also indulged herself in a way unusual for her- as the novel progressed, we got long trips inside the characters' heads to see their feelings developing. Heyer almost never does this- her novels are social comedies, and they are accordingly very outward. We must deduce everything we know about the characters from what they say and do alone. And I really have to say, I think I prefer her writing that way- her experiment in writing thoughts tended to make her writing a bit melodramatic, and remind me of the run of the mill romance novels I generally consider Heyer to be far and away better than.

The Marquis was irritatingly perfect, and it did feel like Heyer indulged her fantasies of perfection just a little bit much with him. He always knew *just* the thing to say, and he was always *just so*, just enough this, and not /that/, and if he had flaws, well! so understandable, even admirable! The same thing goes with the mischevious younger brothers. Well, if they get up to possibly life endangering escapades... of course one wishes they wouldn't.. but not really, how could one wish boys without spirit?! And they always seem to have such a talent for getting out of things just right, as of course everyone likes them and wants to help them!, and in a socially acceptable and excellently resourceful way! At least it would seem so to those of the company who are "right ones," and know the proper way of viewing the world! Heyer's ceaseless, tireless categorization of everything that is said and done as right or wrong, not /quite/ one one would wish, etc,... did get a little tiresome. It felt like she was more pushy with it in this one than others. Maybe its also just that I've just read too much Heyer, though!

But! That all said- I adored *Frederica*, and her siblings were really quite amusing, and I appreciated the different view of the London Season, where all the balls and parties were secondary, not the focus of things, and we saw another, more domestic side of life. I appreciated the adventures that all the minor characters got, and the great big slice of London that we got- Heyer showing off her historical research in a wonderful way. Well written, witty and warm, I certainly do recommend it to all Heyer fans.

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