



The Duke and His Duchess

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Percival and Esther Windham had to beat the odds and face down gossip when their brief courtship resulted in marriage. Five years later, they have four children in their nursery, a ducal estate to care for, ailing family members needing care, and more trouble on the horizon than even a strong marriage might endure.

The Duke and His Duchess Details

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From Reader Review The Duke and His Duchess for online ebook

Jackie says

3.5 As usual with Grace Burrowes, lots of lovely family interplay and warm family feelings, and for those familiar with her earlier Windham books, it's fun to see the heroes as children. I really liked that this is a mid-relationship story, where an already-in-love couple has to deal with the difficulties of maintaining their love after the initial HEA-- a real rarity in romance. I also appreciated the way it incorporates the historical fact that many women became physically and emotionally drained by the constant childbearing and birthing of the period. Not wild about the evil courtesan mother plotline; as the child's father, wouldn't Percy have had the right to take his daughter away?

Astoria says

I enjoy reading this series because of the friendships and close relationships between the Windham children and their parents.

Romance Reader says

Out of all the Windham books I've read (about 7), this is my favorite to date. I'm slightly in love with their Graces now and see them as something more than meddling elderly parents. The short format works well for the Windham stories although I would have liked a little more character development on His Grace's part. I would love to see another short format story about Their Graces somewhere around their 15th anniversary mark when the household is in full swing and Percy has almost ten years in Lords. There has to be some political intrigue that threatens his marriage....

Like all Burrowes books, humor and tenderness abounds throughout which slightly sets this series apart from others in its period and class. And while the historical details aren't that accurate, especially the speech, but it doesn't distract from the story. What struck me most while reading this book was the development of Ms. Burrowes' writing from this book as compared to *The Heir*; it's phenomenal. I now look forward to many more Windham stories.

Lindsey says

How can one not love the Windham's? I devour all of Grace Burrowes books about the Windham's I cannot seem to get enough of this large charismatic family.

It was interesting to read how Devlin and Maggie entered into the family. Yes, we know why by reading their books, but to see the personal development between His and Her Grace was interesting. Also, I adored reading about young Bart and Gayle so cute.

The Windham series is special. I love reading every book about them.

Kat says

I loved this book, though I found it difficult to read. I've never had children and therefore never suffered from post-partum depression; however, I do suffer from depression and understand the pain that Esther felt. The book was quite angst....is that a word? But one felt the deep love between Percy and Esther even as they wondered about the future of their marriage. There was an enduring love throughout the entire Windham series.

Danae says

Written as a background filler to the Windham series where we met Percival, Duke of Moreland and Esther, his Duchess and their numerous offspring, this novella neatly fills the gaps about what made the seniors turn out the way they did. With a slowly deteriorating father and elder brother, Percival doesn't look forward to inheriting the dukedom nevertheless does his duty while worrying about his wife's health and whether she still loves him enough. The novella opens with Esther having borne her fourth son and suffering post partum depression. Parliamentary duties make the couple and their kids remove to London where awaiting them are Percival's son and daughter from his premarital indiscretions. How the couple contend with this unexpected twist and the maturation of their love forms the heart of the story.

I enjoyed this novella much more than The Courtship; the characters came alive in a manner I could recognise from other books in the series. Recommended reading for those who've already been introduced to any of the younger Windhams.

Sommertime says

[2 kids from 2 different former mistresses. I thought mistresses are supposed to know how to prevent these things in romance-land. Why is it authors can have the H whore around London for years with no consequences but when it adds a zip of drama to the plot we have 2 illegitimate kids? Then, when he was contemplating taking a mistress to satisfy his "needs" so he wouldn't keep knocking up

Rebecca (everyday reader) says

Esther and Percy have been happily married for five years. He has ever growing responsibilities: four boys under 5, ducal and estate priorities, ailing family members, and he is not quite sure what is ailing his wife. Her body needs some recovery time from having four babies in five years, and melancholy is taking over as well. She is afraid that her husband is going to take a mistress, but finds out something entirely different. Changes in station, more mouths to feed, and contentment with their family make this a Great read!!

Beverly Diehl says

4.5 stars. This is a couple that we seen in the full-length novels, as a long married pair. Although I believe this works as a standalone, even if you haven't read any of the novels, because I have previously read many of the novels, I can't say that for sure.

One problem right off the top, is the cover; The Courtship has the same problem. It's hot, but as I recall from high school biology, blond hair is a recessive trait. There is no way that two blonds can produce a family that is not also all blond, and several Windham offspring have dark or auburn hair, as I recollect, not just the bastard branch. This is a minor point, and not one the author has any say over; still, it distracted me.

One of the things that makes this great is that this is a couple already in love, already with children, going through a rough patch. Why this period in coupledom is considered any less worthy of coverage in the romance genre, I don't know, but it's not traditional romance novel or novella material. It's certainly a time for any married couple that is filled with drama, and a happy ending is not guaranteed.

Things I really liked about this novella:

- 1) They're relatively poor. Percival is still second in line to the Dukedom as this opens. The Duke his father is widowed and in poor health; his older brother is also in very poor health, but what this means is though Percival will almost certainly inherit, eventually, at this time he gets all the burden, but not all the power or the money. He's just ASSUMED to have bundles of money.
- 2) Esther is suffering from postpartum depression, after bearing four sons in less than five years. She loves her sons, her babies, but she's exhausted, and probably anemic. This is not the best time for her husband to bring complications into their marriage.
- 3) The children are wonderfully drawn, each with their personalities. One of the things that bugs me about the romance genre, is often the stories end with an engagement or marriage. In real life, couples do continue to have a romantic life, even if they are parents of children.

What I didn't like so much about this novella:

- 1) I thought the idea of Percival consulting an ex-mistress regarding possible herbal remedies for his ailing wife seemed lame.
- 2) In previous novels, it's mentioned that the oldest brother, Peter, theoretical heir to the Dukedom, has two daughters. They become invisible here. Because this novella is so very centered around family, I wanted them mentioned at least in passing. They're away at school, they're married, they're dead, something.
- 3) Cecily, former mistress of Percival, is a bit too evil and two-dimensional. I would've liked to have seen her drawn a little more fully, to show one or two good qualities.

All in all, though, I really love this novella; it's steamy and interesting. Even knowing from the novels that yes, they find a way to work things out, I was kept wondering, but how?

Brandy says

This is about the parents. They've been married for years and have children already so an unusual, but sweet novella. Percy does something I'm still quite upset about, and I didn't quite figure out why Esther was so

melancholy in the beginning, but the two obviously love one another and it ends well.

Jan130 says

A reread of the second prequel novella to the Windham series. My original read was in a boxed set of novellas, but I'm recording it here cos I'm not going to reread all of the novellas this time around. Just wanted to get in the zone again before BOTM The Heir.

I enjoyed this one again and now feel like I'm back in the world of the Windhams.

? Irena ? says

The story takes place five years after *The Courtship*. It features one of the worst things you could put in a story about an established couple. Don't worry, no cheating but the *thing* left a really bad taste in my mouth. I just wanted it to be over with.

It is still an okay story if for no other reason but to see where the two characters from *The Courtship* are at this point.

And another thing, there are way too many children in this story.

Mariana says

Re-read:

I did not enjoy it as much as last time and would probably have rated it three stars now. However, it was still a unique story and much of it hit home.

Previous:

This was an interesting romance novella because it was about a couple who had already been married for five years and had four children. I enjoyed it.

Marilyn Rondeau says

This was a total delight to read. Actually, it was two novella's turned into one complete beginning to the Windham Family series. It sets the stage for a plethora of stories regarding the prolific progeny that Percival and Esther Windham's marriage produced. But what THE DUKE AND HIS DUCHESS did for me was to show two people who were not perfect but whose love and respect for one another through thick and thin; gossip; betrayals; family sickness was so strong and so enduring that it is a love story for the ages.

Back from the Canadian and American wilderness, Percival (Percy) and his brother Anthony met Esther Himmelfarb at a house party where if gossips were correct their mother the Duchess of Windham had ordered her two younger sons to find themselves suitable brides. With Percy, known as something of a rake, he had noticed the girl without a title or dowry and was intrigued by her down to earth attitude and absence of the usual arsenal of feminine wiles of trapping a nobleman. Easy to talk to and lovely to boot Percy moved

fast and their romance was brief and a whirlwind marriage followed.

Part two was the marriage five years later with Esther and Percy producing four children in the nursery and the reality of living along with others in the ducal estate with an aging duke on the verge of senility and the heir apparent (Percy's brother Peter) not well. It was interesting that all was not sugar plums and fairy tales but Ms. Burrowes showed real life where the issues of not enough help would plague a mother (Esther) who was overloaded with the responsibility of four quick births, the exhaustion of nursing (they couldn't afford a wet nurse), and keeping track of four rambunctious young boys.

Ms. Burrowes not only writes the most wonderful love stories but she does this with reality as well as great emotion. She shows where Esther is still in love with her handsome dashing soul mate, but truthfully is just plain exhausted. She also portrays Percy as loving and caring to the point where he visits an ex-mistress to question her about his wife's health. Strange yes, but a proud man and very much in love with Esther that he would go to a source he knew Esther, should she find out, would be very upset.

Bottom line: Again Ms. Burrowes writes real and beautifully described romances with more than fluff and sex scenes. Every Burrowes book I've read is a keeper and resonates in my heart and mind long after the last page is turned. Simply a marvelous beginning to a fabulous series and family dynasty.

Marilyn Rondeau

Rachel says

Another lovely tale

This second prequel novella is just as sweet and heartwarming as the first. I adore Percival and Esther and loved this brief glimpse into the early years of their marriage.
