

The Duchess by Danielle Steel

I usually try to review books by less known authors. Fans of author Danielle Steel, who has written over 160 books, will find her books without my reviews. This time I made an exception. I read and loved *The Duchess by Danielle Steel*.

The story is set in the 1830's starting in England then takes the reader to Paris, France and across the Atlantic Ocean to New York. The Duchess referred to in the title is Angelique Latham. She is not a Duchess but the daughter of the Duke of Westerfield. She is the much-loved child of her father's second marriage to a French woman who was the daughter of a French marquis. Angelique loses her mother at an early age. Her father adores her and sees to it that she is well educated, learns French and is trained in managing their grand estate, Belgrave Castle.

Her two older half-brothers from her father's first marriage resent her from the time she is born. According to English law they will inherit the estate when her father dies. Angelique's father is aware of this but there is little he can do about it when his end comes. The night before he dies, he gives Angelique a substantial amount of cash. He wants her to spend this money wisely and make it last the rest of her life. Knowing this, she locks the money in a secure case that she keeps with her wherever she goes. This money comes in very handy in her future needs and much sooner than she had anticipated.

After her father's death her brothers oust her from Belgrave Castle and send her off to be a nanny for friends of theirs. They even go as far as to pretend she is a distant cousin and not their own blood sister. Working as a nanny is tough at first yet she is willing to do her best, becoming attached to the children in her care. But something happens that is not her fault. She is let go abruptly without any references and is therefore unable to secure employment elsewhere without having connections and no references.

Angelique has a keen mind and does not give up easily. With her father's money she makes her way to Paris. Here she rescues a young woman who was abused by a madam who ran a brothel. Being resourceful and always on the lookout to make money she opens an elegant house of pleasure with beautiful women. She has screened these women very carefully. This house will only serve the richest and best clients. With her upper class breeding, her beauty, her sophisticated style and her father's inheritance she is able to create *Le Boudoir*. Soon this establishment attracts powerful politicians, lawyers, bankers and others. She is able to make a lot of money and even pay her women well. But after sixteen months this adventure also falls apart for Angelique. Can she survive all the tragedies, the injustices done to her and reclaim her rightful place in this world?

Danielle Steele has captured the struggles of women in a male dominated society in the eighteenth hundreds with this captivating portrait of a strong woman, namely *The Duchess*.

You will find this book in the Adult Fiction section of the Tilden Public Library.

Happy Reading