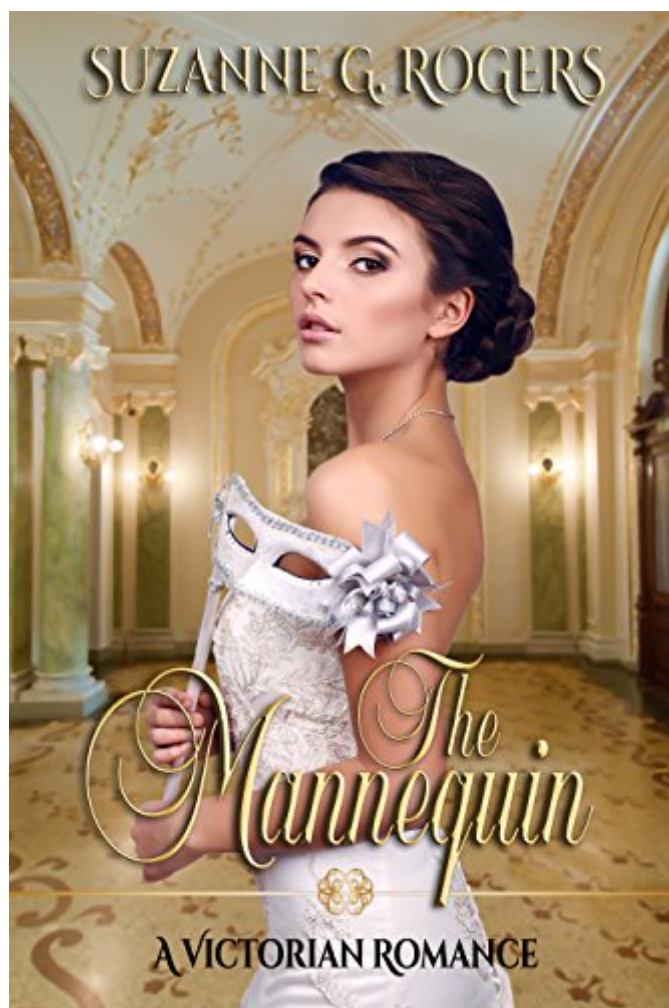


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The Mannequin: A Victorian Romance



Synopsis

When she was a poor country girl in a hand-me-down dress, Rosamund saved the Duke of Swanhaven from the brink of despair—only to fall in love with him. Now a celebrated mannequin for an exclusive London dressmaker, her glamorous life is empty without the man to whom she gave her heart. Can a beastly duke and a beautiful mannequin ever find a fairy-tale ending?

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Customer Reviews

"The Mannequin" by S.G. Rogers is a delightful Victorian romance novel for young adults, loosely based on several fairy tales. The story itself is unique. Rosamund is an orphaned poor relation living with her maternal aunt's family. Although she is the granddaughter of a Viscount as well, she is treated as an extra member of the household staff, rather than as a family member. Rosamund is left behind on the family estate when the others leave for the London Season. Her uncle arranges with the local vicar for Rosamund to "earn her keep" while the family and all their servants are in

town. But after the family leaves, Rosamund learns from the vicar that she is wanted at the home of the dowager Duchess of Swanhaven as a companion to her son the Duke. The duke is deeply depressed after the loss of his family in a disaster at sea. Slowly, she begins to bring the Duke of Swanhaven out from the depths of his despair. The Duchess decides to take Rosamund to London for the remainder of the Season, calling in the most fashionable modiste to create a suitable wardrobe for high society functions. However, when the Duchess takes Rosamund to call on the girl's grandfather, the Viscount refuses to acknowledge Rosamund's relationship to him.

Embarrassed to no end, Rosamund leaves the Duchess's London home to make her way on her own. After failing to find work, Rosamund reports to the fashion designer that she is unable to pay for the clothing that has been specifically designed for her, since her grandfather has refused to support her. Rosamund asks the modiste how she can settle her debt for the apparel the Duchess has ordered for her. Astonished at the cost of the clothes, Rosamund is enlisted to become a mannequin, or model, for the designer's shop. As a mannequin, Rosamund is renamed Miss Belle, and is escorted on the town by a fashionable gentleman, who introduces her to all the finest of society and takes her to spectacular London events. Her job is to show off the beautiful styles designed expressly for her, and generate sales for the modiste. A portion of her sales go towards paying off her debt to the woman. But of course, she runs into her family in the city, who seek to destroy her reputation and any chance at romance. Will Rosamund be able to find a way to support herself? Is a good marriage a possibility without the social connections needed to make a good match? All is revealed in the marvelous novel "The Mannequin" by S.G. Rogers. Enjoy!

Rosamund is taken in by her aunt & uncle's family after her parents die of Scarlet Fever. They treat her like Cinderella with disregard and contempt. Her cousins are rude as is her aunt with no respect whatsoever. Her family leaves her to fend for in their country estate to give their 3 daughters a season in London feeling no responsibility to her. A Duchess is desperate for the help of a companion for her grandson, Aubrey, who's whole family dies in a boating accident. He has become withdrawn from life into his own tortured mind, possibly never to recover. I loved this story! Suzanne G. Rogers wove a tale that pulls at the heart strings and brings a tear to the eye. Their HEA does come about but they will go through many trials along the way.

This is an easy read -- a sweet Victorian romance. The characters of Rosamund and Aubrey were quite well developed. I especially liked Rosamund. She always tried to avoid bringing harm or ill will to others, even to her own detriment. The nasty scene caused by Rosamund's two jealous cousins

was a necessary part of the story. Their inner characters had already been revealed throughout the earlier part of the story before the family went to London. Jealousy and envy are ugly emotions and result in mean and cruel behavior. After this, the story rushes to a finish. But all's well that ends well. I would recommend this book for anyone who wants to be entertained by a story without sex or violence. I very much enjoyed it.

While I thought this was a cute read, and a quick one, it reminded me of a historical Beauty and the Beast, also a reference in the book. The main character, Rosamund, is an assumed poor relation of the Viscountess but she has a very loving and forgiving attitude. Because of this, when her cousins, aunt and uncle head to London for the season, she is sent to the local priest to find work. As it turns out, the priest recommends her to the Duchess of Swanhaven to help rescue her grandson the Duke from the inner turmoil of losing his parents and sister in a boating accident. As the Duchess starts to see the impact of Rosamund on her grandson, she decides to take her under her wing and groom her for society, offering to take her to London for season. Things go bad when Rosamund is told she isn't really a relation and she takes it upon herself to leave the Duchess and Duke that she has fallen in love with. While trying to cancel an order of clothing the Duchess has ordered for her, she is hired as a mannequin to help sell the exclusive dressmakers clothing. She becomes a big hit, earning herself a glamorous life, but is unhappy because she believes she can't be a part of the Duke's life. However, through determination on the Duke's part, friendship on a cousin's part and sympathy on a cook's part, Rosamund finds she is truly a member of society and wins her prince. This was an enjoyable read even though it was predictable. I read this book in one sitting simply because I found myself unable to put it down to see if Rosamund and the Duke got their happily ever after.

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