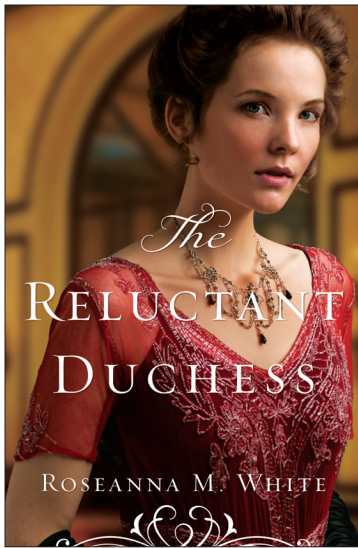




QUESTIONS & ANSWERS WITH ROSEANNA M. WHITE



The Reluctant Duchess

LADIES OF THE MANOR

by Roseanna M. White

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1. How did you come up with the idea for *The Reluctant Duchess*?

The idea for the LADIES OF THE MANOR series first came to me as a middle school student. Way back then, I finished the first book—what eventually became *The Lost Heiress*—and sat down to write the sequel, which I decided to call *Blue Skies in the Morning*. I wanted this one to be DEEP. To have a heroine who had suffered in her home life, so that my amazing hero could sweep in and make it all better.

The thing is, my life has been blessedly boring and peaceful and completely filled with love, and at the age of fourteen, I had no idea what a suffering heroine would act like. It took some more life experience—though granted, much of it has been second- or third-hand—to be able to plumb the depths of the character who is now Rowena Kinnaird. It's taken a lot of revisions to make her who she was meant to be, but I love how she turned out: someone with hurt and pain and suffering . . . and also strength and hope and faith.

And of course, a swoon-worthy hero to swoop in. He can't just make it all better, but that's part of the beauty too.

2. What was the most challenging thing about writing this book?

Each novel has its own challenges, and in this one, it was finding the right balance for Rowena's father. Douglas Kinnaird is a hard man . . . but I didn't want him to be two-dimensional, a cookie-cutter bad guy and abusive father. I wanted the reader—and Rowena—to eventually understand him, even if that didn't mean respecting or liking him. But man, it was pretty tough asking myself, "Why would a father hurt his child?" and finding any answer to fit that bill! But it helped to realize that Douglas had been hurt too, and that deep down, he acted out of misguided love.

3. What are the spiritual themes of *The Reluctant Duchess*?

I debated this myself as I was writing. I'm never quite sure what God's going to whisper to me as I develop a story, but He always shows me something new. In this one, He brought to mind the story of a missionary I'd read about to my kids a few years ago. George Müller was famous for living on faith, not funds. At one point, when his orphanage has no food, he sits down at the breakfast table and prays a prayer thanking God for their empty plates—because he knew it was an opportunity for God to provide in miraculous ways. Which He did. Empty plates, empty places became a theme in *The Reluctant Duchess*. Because when we recognize them as opportunity for God to work, we see everything around us in whole new ways.

4. How did you tackle the Highland dialect?

I was so nervous about trying to capture Rowena's family's Highland speech! So I watched videos on YouTube about the area, taking frantic notes on speech patterns and words the natives seemed to favor. I read other books that did it well, and listened to the audio versions too, so I could get it in my ear. And then I created rules for myself and stuck to them.

5. What's coming in the final installment of the series?

Well, I hope readers of *The Reluctant Duchess* really love the hero's little sister, Ella, because she's taking center stage in the last book of the series! Ella is a romantic, a lover of adventure, and also a complete optimist. And when she decides to solve the mystery of the Fire Eyes once and for all, the villains—and the wary hero—had better watch out, because there's no stopping her.

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