

★★★★★ PG Wodehouse for the twenty-first century

Reviewed in the United Kingdom on 8 January 2022

Verified Purchase

The Duke's Portrait is a comic novel set in 1937, mainly in a grand house in the English countryside. A young woman called Polly Capstan works there, and invites her hapless stepbrother Charles Goodgame to come to the house to paint a portrait of the owner, the Duke of Burfaughtonleigh (pronounced Burley) and at the same time paint a copy of a Van Gogh portrait owned by the Duke in order to steal the original. The resulting farce is worthy of PG Wodehouse, although it goes off in directions that the great man would never have dared to go. Charles is also reminiscent of some of Evelyn Waugh's characters, honest but weak young men who are easily manipulated by scheming women. There are subplots galore, involving an array of colourful characters, and twists in almost every chapter, plus more laugh out loud moments than I can remember reading in a novel for a very long time. Highly recommended if you want to forget about the modern world for a while.



Ingrid F.

★★★★☆ Tongue-in-cheek but absorbing

Reviewed in the United Kingdom on 26 February 2022

If you're looking for an absorbing and fun read, this fits the bill. But you need your brain and memory working as there are lots of characters and lots of backstories, hence the tongue-in-cheek Dramatis Personae at the front of the book. Convincingly set in the 1930s with wacky characters and a highly improbable story line, the author has an engaging way with words so you can't help being drawn into all the shenanigans. A commendable first novel - definitely enjoyable.

Helpful

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JILL FLORENT

★★★★☆ The Duke's Portrait review

Reviewed in the United Kingdom on 11 February 2022

Verified Purchase

A first novel, this is an enjoyable read. Set in 1930s with a large cast of characters and an engaging plot

One person found this helpful

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Fitch

★★★★☆ A feast of mischief

Reviewed in the United Kingdom on 22 January 2022

The Duke's Portrait is jam-packed with raucous and unruly characters engaged in multiple subterfuges resulting in a plethora of entertaining subplots. Set in 1937 and switching between locations in London, Gloucestershire and Norfolk, it traces a series of merging tales of deceit, swindle and incompetence which all come together through the unwitting actions and dithering inactions of the Duke of Burfaughtonleigh (pronounced Burley, of course). The novel starts with a list of Dramatis Personae which might seem a little odd until the reader realises that this novel is actually a farce in the Whitehall theatre tradition. It is as if Bertie Wooster has met a slightly potty mouthed Brian Rix, with all the improbable mix ups, scrapes and bumbles that that implies – with the addition of some swearing and sex. Above all, it's story about a riotous bunch of malcontents, often pretending to be who they aren't and all unknowingly on a collision course as they try to hoodwink each other. It's a veritable feast of mischief.

2 people found this helpful

Helpful

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JEANNE

★★★★★ **Carefree, affectionate and fun!**

Reviewed in the United States on 19 February 2022

Verified Purchase

A carefree, affectionate story, full of scrapes, frolics and fun and a cast of wonderfully eccentric and colourful characters. Can totally imagine this as a theatrical production too - would love to watch it!

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From other countries



Amazon Customer

★★★★★ **An Absolute Delight to Read!**

Reviewed in the United States on 27 February 2022

Verified Purchase

This is author Ken Wilson's first work of fiction. I sure hope it won't be his last! (He's a prolific writer of non fiction.) The Duke's Portrait has a charming and engaging cast of characters. I could definitely see this as a live theater production. on stage. It would be a smash hit! I'd also like to listen to an audiobook version of The Duke's Portrait, having binge read it! I highly recommend for your next great read!