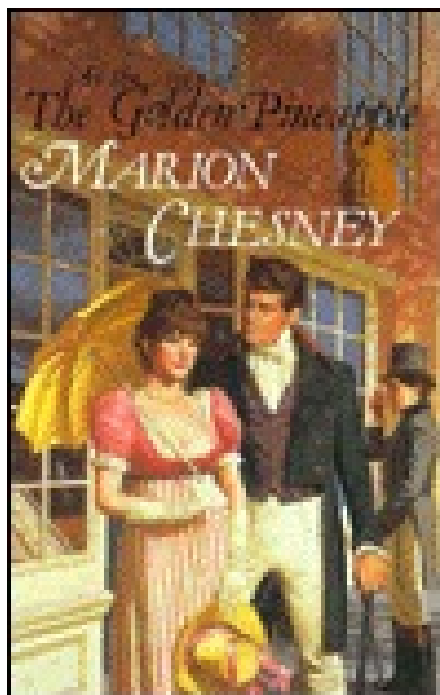




At the Sign of the Golden Pineapple

Marion Chesney

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"I DO NOT THINK I WANT TO BE MARRIED AT ALL. I WANT TO BE RICH. VERY RICH..."

Miss Henrietta Bascombe's bosom chums gasped to hear a well-bred lady talk of going into trade. For Henrietta was hell-bent on turning her pittance of an inheritance into a fortune by opening a London sweet shop to rival the famous Gunther's!

Undaunted, Henrietta proceeded to hang out the traditional confectioner's sign of a golden pineapple and soon earned the custom of the entire haute ton. That is, until the proud Earl of Carrisdowne took exception to his younger brother and his best friend ogling the girls behind Bascombe's counter. Miss Bascombe would have to be put out of business, and quickly.

But somehow, the earl looked forward to tangling with the fiery-eyed proprietor much more than he was willing to admit....

At the Sign of the Golden Pineapple Details

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From Reader Review At the Sign of the Golden Pineapple for online ebook

Amanda says

This was terrible I normally at least like Marion Chesney work, I think I have only really liked one or two books. But I at least like reading them they are normal quick, cute, and entertaining. They are light and fluffy which is sometimes just what you need in a book. I was soooo disappointed by this book. First off, why even have them go into trade and have that be such a big part of who Heneritta is if she is just going to abandon it as soon as she meets a man. Also, the characters seem completely devoid of true depth and character. He just decides to make her fall in love with him and after one smile at her she is his? And he suddenly magically loves her an can't stand to be without her after a terrible date. I was so disappointed with this. The reason I read her books is because the romance is sweet and budding until full bloom, but not this book. Also, the villians just came out of no where this lady was with him once the whole book then all the way at the end she goes made and murderous this was ridiculous. I hope the rest of the books are more like the Dreadful Debutante which was exactly what a regency romance should be like.

Angela Moore says

Good plot, poor delivery

The story was nice, but the whole thing read like a draft. It was stilted and poorly executed. As an outline for a book, I enjoyed it. However it was intermixed with historical lectures which while interesting were not fitting in a novel.

All in all it was hard to read and not enjoyable.

Damaskcat says

Henrietta Bascombe has been left some money by one of her late father's patients and she wants to put it to good use. She decides she wants to go into trade. Her three friends are at first shocked by her proposal and her offer to include them in the enterprise and to share the profits on an equal basis. Then as they realise how bad their current situations are they agree to her proposal. They open a confectioners in fashionable London. At first they do not do well until Henrietta hits on a way of making them fashionable.

Soon Bascombe's is the talk of the town and the four friends are rushed off their feet. But then the fashionable Earl of Carrisdowne decides for reasons of his own that they really do need to be closed down. This is an entertaining light hearted romp of a story which will make you smile and even laugh out loud at some of the scenes. I loved Henrietta and her friends and their determination to show that genteel ladies can make their own living.

If you want something entertaining but not too taxing intellectually and you like novels with a historical setting then you may enjoy this one.

Dawn says

A bit of Regency fluff that I listened to on audiobook while sewing and doing mundane work tasks. I enjoyed the period details and descriptions of middle-class ladies trying to set up a confectionary shop.

Michelle says

A quick and sorta cute story.

Mela says

Miss Hissop was the best part of this story. Her concentration on a preparing her own funeral was simply hilarious. I burst with a laugh a few times. Also, the scene with Charles' leather breeches, when they became too tight was marvelously funny ;-)

Besides it, the love story was nice.

The idea of a confectioner was original.

The characters were like they should be in Regency romance.

So, I liked the book but this time the fast pace of the story (so common in Chesney's romances) didn't work well. E.g. I can understand fast falling in love but I have doubts about how the confectioner business went.

The idea of this story could have been a basis for a really good (longer) novel (there were glimpses of such a novel, e.g. showing the way aristocracy did/didn't pay the traders, showing the lot of young women that should rather die than 'degrade' and work).

Bettye McKee says

Cakes and kisses

Henrietta Bascombe and Miss Hissop must pinch every penny to survive. Then Henrietta receives an inheritance of £500. She plans to go to London and open confectionery shop.

She solicits the help of two other ladies who need to be removed from their current circumstances. Through Henrietta's cleverness, the shop is a success. But the young ladies are now considered unmarriageable as they are now "in trade."

This is a wonderful story of overcoming hardship through effort and finding love only to see it slip away, of jealousy and vengeance, of truth and lies. And of happy endings.

Ivy H says

This is one of Marion Chesney's funniest novels with captivating characters and a storyline that always kept my interest. Marion Chesney's biggest talent, in my opinion, is her ability to craft a wonderful and diverse ensemble cast of characters. In this story, the heroine Henrietta Bascombe is an impoverished 19 yr old member of the gentry who has just inherited 5000 pounds from the local squire. Henrietta's an orphan who lives in her late parents' cottage with only her former governess turned companion, Miss Hissop. These 2 women are celebrating Henrietta's good fortune at the start of the story:

Miss Hissop is a 40 something yr old spinster who is quite an amusing and eccentric character ! She thinks Henrietta ought to use the money as a dowry in order to get herself a husband but Henrietta has more revolutionary plans. The heroine thinks that a gold digging husband might just end up marrying her and then gambling away her money or spending it on loose women. Henrietta's big plan is to do the unthinkable (for a gentle woman of the gentry) and **go into trade** ! Miss Hissop is appalled because this will make Henrietta ineligible for a husband from the aristocratic class but the heroine has plans to open a confectionery shop to rival **Gunther's** in London. Henrietta gets 2 other impoverished village gentry women to go with her and Miss Hissop to London. The other young ladies, Charlotte and Josephine, aren't exactly fond of going into **trade** but it's better than suffering all alone in the village. These 2 are a bit different from Henrietta because they still have romantic dreams of finding the perfect husband. The kooky Miss Hissop, however, is only obsessed with one thing: planning her perfect funeral !

Only Henrietta knew that behind this formidable exterior lurked the soul of a rabbit. All Miss Hissop wanted out of life was to pay for her own funeral and not to be buried in a pauper's grave. In the way that young girls had a "bottom drawer" or wedding chest for their trousseau, Miss Hissop had a funeral closet in which she kept the little money she had saved in a tin box, a hand-embroidered shroud, black armbands for the mourners, and a long list of instructions as to the funeral arrangements.

M.C. Beaton. At the Sign of the Golden Pineapple (Kindle Locations 75-78). Little, Brown Book Group. Kindle Edition.

The funniest thing about Miss Hissop is that her funeral plans would become grander and more ostentatious each time she managed to acquire more money. That made me laugh a lot because normal folks would tend to want to spend any extra funds on making their present life better. Henrietta was a smart and unconventional heroine. She had a keen mind for business and after an initial difficult start, her confectionery shop **Bascombe's** started to make a lot of money. The 4 women used inventive marketing methods to attract customers and soon, 2 eligible noblemen started coming everyday because they were interested in Charlotte and Josephine. These men were Guy Clifford and Lord Charles Worsley. Charles was the younger brother of the snobbish hero. The H is Rupert, the Earl of Carrisdowne. When Rupert hears about the other 2 men's interest in the ladies at **Bascombe's**, he's amused initially because he thinks that shopgirls are only suitable as mistresses. Then, when he discovers that Guy and Charles are thinking in terms of marriage, he is scandalized, especially after they inform him that the women are members of the gentry:

"Are you trying to tell me that these tonnish ladies have taken to trade?" demanded the earl.

"Well, I suppose that's it," said Mr. Clifford awkwardly. "Ain't that just what I've been saying?"

The earl cast a cold blue eye on his friend.

“I thought you were looking for a wife, not a mistress,” he remarked.

Mr. Clifford flushed. “Surely running a respectable establishment like a confectioner’s don’t put a female beyond the pale?”

“Yes, it does, my friend,” said the earl gently. “And well you know it.”

M.C. Beaton. At the Sign of the Golden Pineapple (Kindle Locations 173-178). Little, Brown Book Group. Kindle Edition.

Rupert was such a stuffy and entitled type of H. When he realized that he couldn't prevent Guy and Charles from courting Charlotte and Josephine, he decided to spread bad rumours to make people stop visiting **Bascombe's**. When that failed, because Henrietta had such mad marketing skills, he decided to get to know the women personally. That's where the romantic storyline started to develop and the H's plan backfired because he soon found himself falling in love with Henrietta. Their sweet little romance was proceeding smoothly until a jealous wannabe other woman called Lara Clara intervened. Clara wanted the H to propose to her and she thought he'd liked her until Henrietta came into the picture. The jealous OW schemed with her drunken brother, Alisdair, and they paid a couple of men to set fire to **Bascombe's**:

“Only a sovereign to get rid of that Bascombe?” Lady Clara smiled, a slow, catlike smile.

“The only bargain to be found, little brother, in these expensive days. Very well. Burn her out! Carrisdowne hasn’t yet proposed, evidently, or we’d have heard of it, and without a place to stay she will need to return, even if temporarily, to where she came from. That will leave the field open for me.”

M.C. Beaton. At the Sign of the Golden Pineapple (Kindle Locations 1522-1525). Little, Brown Book Group. Kindle Edition.

The H arrives in time to stop the fire from spreading but the 4 women are traumatized by it since they could've died if he had not arrived and seen the 2 men running away after setting the blaze. The most entertaining result of this near tragedy was Miss Hissop's response:

“So terrifying,” gasped Miss Hissop. “We might have all been burned to a crisp, and then what would have happened to my funeral? Oh, to think all my dear funeral instructions might have been burned with me! Henrietta, my funeral instructions must from now on be lodged at the bank.”

M.C. Beaton. At the Sign of the Golden Pineapple (Kindle Locations 1595-1597). Little, Brown Book Group. Kindle Edition.

The MC's seemed well set for their happy ending after the fire, because Rupert decided to propose marriage to Henrietta. But the adolescent shopboy, Esau, whom Henrietta had saved from the workhouse was afraid that if Henrietta married the H, then **Bascombe's** will be closed and he will be forced to return to the workhouse. I felt sorry for Esau since he'd suffered so much in the workhouse, but I wanted to punch him when he pulled a nasty stunt and split up the MC's. Esau lied and told the H that Henrietta provided sexual services to a certain elderly duke and a couple other titled men. The jealous and enraged H didn't stop to investigate these accusations properly. He was heartbroken because he thought he'd been about to marry a slutty woman so he said a lot of nasty things to Henrietta. The MC's are separated for a few months and the

depressed Henrietta closed down the London shop and moved to Bath to open her new store there. As time passed, however, Rupert continued to pine over Henrietta and concluded that he'd been too hasty and unfair to her:

As the longing to see Henrietta became stronger and stronger, as he became more convinced he had damned her without a hearing, he became determined to find her. But inquiries at livery stables and coaching inns drew a blank. It was as if there had never been a Bascombe's, as if Henrietta, Josephine, Charlotte, and Miss Hissop had never existed.

M.C. Beaton. At the Sign of the Golden Pineapple (Kindle Locations 1814-1816). Little, Brown Book Group. Kindle Edition.

The wily Lady Clara also got her first comeuppance because the H flat out told her to get lost !

Lord Alisdair Sinclair returned home one evening to find his sister, Lady Clara, in tears.

"Haven't seen you cry this age," he said. "What's to do?"

"It is Carrisdowne," said Lady Clara. "He told me if he found me waiting outside his door again, he would need to order his servants to tell me to go away. He said... he said he was tired of being annoyed by me."

M.C. Beaton. At the Sign of the Golden Pineapple (Kindle Locations 1816-1820). Little, Brown Book Group. Kindle Edition.

That didn't stop Clara, though. She started stalking the H and followed him down to Bath when he went to reconcile with Henrietta. Her big revenge plan entailed poisoning a huge cake that Henrietta had catered for the H's dinner party. The evil OW thought that the H would end up dying and her nemesis Henrietta would be jailed for murder. It's the smart Miss Hissop who saved the day by jumping on top of the cake to prevent the diners from eating it ! Clara was discovered wandering alone in a rural pathway and was placed in an asylum. Her conspirator brother Alisdair managed to escape; he probably had to leave the country because the authorities were looking to arrest him. The servant boy Esau was contrite after the MC's confronted him about his lies but he wasn't punished because they understood that he was just a scared child who didn't want to be sent back to the workhouse. This was a marvellous story ! At the end of it all, Henrietta decided to keep **Bascombe's** but she compromised with the H and decided to hire supervisors and other employees to see to it on a daily basis. Josephine and Charlotte also got their happy ending with Guy and Charles while the awesome Miss Hissop became a rich lady whose funeral plans started to rival that of royalty !

This is the heroine, Henrietta:

This is the hero, Rupert:

Karyl M. Wade says

What Do Men Really Want?

This book processes to think that a male member of the tin will never even look at a young woman unless she practices all the many things that prove a young lady to be very rich as that's what a true female member of the ton must never hold a job or even think for herself! If he wants to miss her, she must be a prostitute! This book does it's best to prove that; however , the three men in this story seem to truly love these three shop girls, don't they?

Mckinley says

This is the best one of the series in my opinion however, I didn't like this series so much. See her Poor Relations and The Traveling Matchmaker for fun romances.

Janet McCord says

I keep seeing scathing reviews for the author's Regency romances and people comparing them, unfavorably, to Georgette Heyer's similar genre. While I love Heyer's books too, I also love these. What I love most about Chesney/Beaton's series of Regency Romances is the education she includes, almost off-handedly, about the period. She has obviously done her research and has a great knowledge of the customs, behaviors and many other minutiae, and includes them in her stories so that it makes the time period truly come alive. I remember many times reading Heyer's descriptions and names and phrases in which she just assumes that you know what they are or mean without any real explanation. This, especially for an American audience was confusing and sent me, then, to the encyclopedias (time before the internet!), yes, well, not a bad thing. Also, from what I remember, Heyer didn't go into a lot of detail describing little things of period interest or that would stand out. Chesney/Beaton's stories themselves, while maybe light and fluffy, are universal and familiar which make them so much fun to read when everything turns out for the good. Boy meets girl, there's an impediment, challenges, then they are overcome and everyone lives happily ever after. As I said, Chesney/Beaton, however, includes such period detail--this one has a fascinating description of how men of the time were fitted for leather breeches, and how they could nearly kill you if you get them wet, that is hilarious along with much information about the confectionery businesses of the time!

Leann says

This was an enjoyable, regency romance. The ending was tidied up a little to easily for me, but overall, the story kept me engaged.

Tara says

I love these books. They're a mix between regency romance and mystery. I love that combination. And the characters are always slightly eccentric and funny. Not life changing, but always enjoyable.

QNPoohBear says

The intrepid heroine of this novel is Miss Henrietta Bascombe, the orphaned daughter of a country doctor who has recently received a small inheritance from one of her father's former patients. Instead of using it as a dowry or investing it to live comfortably, Henrietta wishes to go into trade and open a sweet shop in London! Along with two local girls and a former school teacher, Henrietta opens Bascombes sweet shop which quickly becomes popular with the young gentlemen wishing to look at the pretty shop girls. When the Earl of Carrisdowne learns that not only has his younger sister been pigging out on the shop's pastries, his younger brother and best friend have formed a tendre for two of the shop girls which, in his opinion, is entirely unsuitable! He intends to have the shop shut down but he quickly learns he's no match for Henrietta Bascome! She shocks her friends by decrying marriage and sticking to her plan no matter what happens. The plot follows *Pride and Prejudice* without being too much of a copycat. Henrietta is an intelligent and admirable heroine. She sticks to her guns and doesn't ever become silly. This is a wonderful novel and one of my favorite Regencies to date!

Sara says

Henrietta Bascombe is an impoverished gentleman's daughter who has inherited a small fortune. Rather than doing the proper thing and using it as a dowry for herself, Henrietta has determined to go into trade by opening a confectioners shop in London. And, to make matters worse, she has taken three other gentlewomen with her. There is her housemate and former school teacher, a young, beautiful army widow of good family, and the local squire's daughter who is tired of being beaten whenever the mood strikes him. The other three women are only in it until they can raise enough money to have dowrys in the younger ladies case and a "proper funeral" in the older's. Henrietta, on the other hand, wants to be rich; filthy, stinking rich. The Earl of Carrisdowne is concerned. His best friend, younger brother, and sister are all under the sway of Bascombe's the new confectioners. His sister is growing fat on their sweets, while his friend and brother seem to have fallen for the wiles of the two pretty shop girls. Carrisdowne does not believe that they could be actual gentlewomen and sets out to close the shop down, thus pitting himself directly against Henrietta. I'll be honest. I quit this book before the end. The Earl was too much of a bastard while Henrietta seemed underdone and limp. Carrisdowne, because he disapproves of the way other adults spend their time, sets out to close down the shop, without a care as to the livelihood of the four women who work there. Then, when that doesn't work, he plans to make Henrietta fall in love with him so he can dump her and make her close the shop due to embarrassment and a broken heart. What a prince. Henrietta, on the other hand, declares that she has no interest in marriage and then turns around and decides to marry Carrisdowne as soon as he shows a healthy interest. The whole book would have been over much sooner if not for the machinations of Henrietta's servant and the spoiled young woman who wants to marry Carrisdowne herself. I quit just as the servant was about to say something terrible about Henrietta to Carrisdowne. I just couldn't handle one more scene of elaborately orchestrated betrayal.

Rebecca says

Started as a spirited story with a spunky heroine. But she fell in love too fast and there was a little bit of crudity in the end which totally jarred with the rest of the book.

Lee says

I was looking for a regency romance in the style of Georgette Heyer and thought I'd give Marion Chesney a try. She's also a prolific mystery writer under the name M.C. Beaton. I was quite disappointed in this story. I didn't expect much of the plot but was at least hoping for some witty banter. The characters were underdeveloped and uninteresting. *Sigh* I don't know why it's so difficult to find decent books in this genre.

I'm now a little worried about the quality of writing in her famed Hamish McBeth series which I've been looking forward to trying for a long time but will probably give the first one a shot.

Leslie says

Simply I adore the books of Marion Chesney / M. C. Beaton. This is an adorable tale of love and resilience. Miss Henrietta Bascombe; a darling lass of 19 has been reduced to genteel poverty by the death of her father. When a friend of her late father's leaves her £5000 instead of hieing herself off to a spa resort to search for a husband she collects several other ladies of good background but no means and heads to London to open a confectionery shop to rival the famous Gunthers. And of course this being a Chesney Regency there is an Earl and several Lords about just waiting to fall in love with our ladies. Despite that this is a wonderful, clean Regency jaunt.

Pinky says

A group of down-on-their luck ladies decide to escape their troubles and open a confectioners in London. This is risky because the merchant class is not looked upon the same way as the gentry, but with a lot of flair and fashion they just might succeed. Of course, the brains behind the scheme, Henrietta, wants nothing to do with love and marriage but discovers that she must alter her behavior in order to protect the other ladies under her care. This means an involvement with an Earl. Of course.

Some of the best researched and craziest writing from Marion Chesney here - including the Earl getting stuck in his new leather breeches requiring an emergency "surgery" and close call indecent exposure, a mad ex who tries to burn down the confectionery and poison a centerpiece, as well as the former tutor and older companion of the ladies constantly planning her own funeral. Funny!

Susan says

Miss Henrietta Bascombe's bosom chums gasped to hear a well-bred lady talk of going into trade. For

Henrietta was hell-bent on turning her pittance of an inheritance into a fortune by opening a London sweet shop to rival the famous Gunther's!

Undaunted, Henrietta proceeded to hang out the traditional confectioner's sign of a golden pineapple and soon earned the custom of the entire haute ton. That is, until the proud Earl of Carrisdowne took exception to his younger brother and his best friend ogling the girls behind Bascombe's counter. Miss Bascombe would have to be put out of business, and quickly.

But somehow, the earl looked forward to tangling with the fiery-eyed proprietor much more than he was willing to admit...

This was a better story than most of Chesney's writing, which tends to repeat the same lines- all the men hoping to look better are "buckram padded" and the ladies wishing to show off their figures wear "dampened muslin."
