



The Governess Club: Claire

Ellie Macdonald

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Claire Bannister just wants to be a good teacher so that she and the other ladies of the Governess Club can make enough money to leave their jobs and start their own school in the country. But when the new sinfully handsome and utterly distracting tutor arrives, Claire finds herself caught up in a whirlwind romance that could change the course of her future.

Jacob Knightly has a secret. He is actually the notorious Earl of Rimmel. He's just posing as a tutor to escape his reputation in the city. He never expected to fall in love with the kind and beautiful governess. She is the first person to love him for himself and not his title.

But when Jacob's true identity is revealed, Claire realizes she has risked her reputation and her heart on a man she doesn't truly know. Will Jacob be able to convince her that the Wild Earl has been tamed and that she is the true countess of his heart?

The Governess Club: Claire Details

Date : Published September 3rd 2013 by Avon Impulse

ISBN : 9780062292179

Author : Ellie Macdonald

Format : ebook 192 pages

Genre : Romance, Historical Romance, Historical, Regency

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From Reader Review The Governess Club: Claire for online ebook

Lady Wesley says

Sweet novella, with a clever plot. It's short, so love and forgiveness come pretty quickly.

Stacia (the 2010 club) says

Embarrassing life moment #72 : The daughter of the people you work for informs a room full of guests that she saw a man touching your "bubbies."

3.5 stars. I get it, Claire. I've lived through that exact same moment, except without the use of the word bubbies. Darn kids.

"It's gross, pressing your lips against a girl. Papa and Mama even used their tongues. It makes me sick."

The kids are part of what made *The Governess Club : Claire* such a fun read. One minute they were fighting, the next they were peeing their pants. Yes, I do mean it. The kids were hilarious. Some of the conversations involving kissing and how babies were made had me grinning.

This is an *extremely* short read. In a way, that's a good thing. You get in, get some laughs, indulge in some sexy time, and get right back out. I didn't mind the rushed love story, even if screamed insta-love. The romance was actually quite adorable. The overall feel of the book worked fine as a quickie. I kind of liked the weird *Mary Poppins-meets-Little Women-meets-The Prince and the Pauper* thing that was going on here. The characters were likable and the story was easy to enjoy. These are the types of books that work for people who are in a reading slump and need something quick and painless to clear their heads.

Jacob was a man with a secret. He took a job as a tutor, looking to hide from his past. Even though he could have come across like any other duke or earl, there was something real about him. He saw what he wanted and he went for it in a way which came across as bold without necessarily being alpha for no reason.

"You really shouldn't scrimp on your smiles. They have the power to make men do foolish things."

Claire was a lovely woman who caught the eye of many men. She knew her station in life, yet didn't wallow in self-pity in order to gain attention. I appreciated that her innocence was portrayed as something that just was, almost as if she was fine with shedding that skin when the time was right, and didn't need someone else to convince her when that time was. Her character struck me as one of the least complicated HR heroines I've read in quite some time.

Simply put, this couple was a lot of fun to watch when they were together. My favorite scene with these two was a great mix of sweet, fun, sexy and cute. What was this couple doing? They were making toast. Yes, toast.

Screw the fancy dinners and lavish gifts. If you want romance, **THE GOVERNESS CLUB CONVINCED ME THAT TOAST MAKING IS WHERE IT'S AT.**

This book provided from the publisher in exchange for an honest review. Some toast might have been burned in the making of this book. Who am I to say? All quotes are taken from the pre-published copy and may be altered or omitted from the final copy.

Lexie says

As a bit of a disclaimer, the editor for these novellas (Tessa Woodward) and I spoke during the HarperCollins shindig at Book Expo. Aside from an admitted love of Governesses (and wallflowers!) myself, Tessa and Maya (Rodale) discussed this new series about a group of Governesses who band together as a club. I was hooked almost immediately. The idea of it, akin to the Babysitter's Club, had me pumped to read what these ladies got up to. "Claire", the first novella, didn't disappoint at all.

Claire is an efficient, well mannered young lady of gentle breeding. The fact she's been reduced to being a Governess has not made her bitter (though the circumstances perhaps did a little), instead she devotes herself to teaching her charges (the Aldgate children) that with determination and an willingness to never quit you can succeed in any endeavor.

Jacob Knightly is the exact opposite. Needing to flee London due to some...unsavory business with his family, he chose the Aldgate household as a refuge to find himself. Considered a waste and worthless he wants nothing more then to prove everyone wrong.

While the story follows the typical romance outline I found how the two interacted with each other and with their circumstances to be the engaging aspect of the story. Jacob obviously has no clue how to be a tutor--other then a vague belief that he hated having to study when he could be outdoors he's at a loss. Even without Claire pointing out all the small (and large) ways he fails at being a real tutor, Macdonald does a good job illustrating that Jacob is new to the subservient role. I almost wish Macdonald hadn't had Claire pointing out such moments, but Jacob's befuddlement was amusing to read.

As can be expected of a governess tale kids are a big part of the story and these ones aren't annoying. Reading as Jacob struggled to come up with ways to keep his two charges interested and engaged reminded me of when I was a teacher.

The secondary characters--Lucy, a maid who befriends Claire, as well as Louisa who is the most prominent member of the Governess Club to show up (other then Claire of course), hold their own and offer different perspectives for Claire to think on. Though I think that Claire worries too greatly about matters she can't control (this may be a subtle way of Macdonald to show her guilt over what happened following her mother's decline though--a sort of after effect) and the solution to all her problems is a bit too pat, I find myself eager to see how the Governess Club fares in the next book, about Bonnie.

Christiana says

New author. Canlit. Library borrowed. It could have been more developed but overall, quite enjoyable. Also some unanswered questions, eg I don't think it was explained how Jacob who was at the brink of bankruptcy before he disappeared, had the money to buy the estate for Claire. It's plausible but never elaborated on?

Also the idea of private tutoring in those days, was it possible?

What I liked best was the overall idea of 4 friends pooling their resources to start a new better life together, it reminded me of Madeline Hunter's *Ravishing in Red*, *Provocative in Pearls* etc.

Joy (Cheery?Reads) says

I really, really enjoyed this novella. It's so refreshing to read a historical romance that revolves around the working class and the children.

I was intrigued at the prologue and was in love and enchanted from chapter 1 onwards.

Although short, I find the characters well fleshed out with a solid plot. My only complaint is the issue between Jacob and his father as he only mentioned his mother looking forward to meeting Claire.

It would have been perfect if the author had resolved this father and son issue.

Other than that, I simply can't wait to start on the next one.

Stevie Carroll says

Previously reviewed on *The Good the Bad and the Unread*:

What is it with North American authors and the conferring of fictional Earldoms (courtesy or inherited from a distant relative) on second sons? That's not how things work, and Debrett has lots of useful guides and FAQs online to explain the situation. Before I hit that sticking point, this story was jogging along rather cutely, if implausibly, with its tale of Claire, a governess trying to carve out a better situation in life for herself and her friends, and Jacob, an aristocrat in hiding (from creditors rather than anything more exiting) who is passing himself off as a tutor to young gentlemen.

Our story opens with four governesses meeting up on their afternoons off and forming a plan to save up enough money over the next five years to set up an establishment together — possibly in Claire's former family home, which is currently the subject of some kind of legal dispute. Now, while I'm not convinced that their plan would work without Claire establishing her right to the house (I don't have my sources to hand regarding house prices and governesses' rates of pay for the period, and I don't think we ever get properly told how Claire intends to retrieve the house from her father's creditors), it's a cute way of bringing the heroines of the series together and giving them a joint motivation. However, we later find out that their meetings happen regularly, and I do wonder why none of their employers have commented that they are all without a governess on the same afternoon every month.

However... some indeterminate time later, Claire is sitting in the garden when a maid appears with a

message that she must go straight to the house. Leaving the maid to watch over the children, and anticipating news of her ancestral home, she does so only to be confronted with Jacob. He is to be tutor to the two seven-year-old boys of the family, although Claire notes that his demeanour isn't quite right for his role. After Claire has shown Jacob to his room (on the same floor as the nursery and next to hers – which just wouldn't happen), meeting the same maid we encountered earlier in the process (has she dumped the children in the lake and then run very fast, or has she teleported up there with them?), we learn that Jacob is really the Earl of Rimmel, a courtesy title he holds until such time as his older brother produces a son (as I said, that's not how it works). As Jacob develops his tutoring skills, Claire overcomes her initial distrust of him to offer her help instructing him how to behave as part of the house's staff, rather than as an equal to the family.

The two grow closer and Claire tells Jacob of her plans, although he fails to reveal his true identity. They attend a servants' assembly, and then Claire throws all caution to the wind by inviting Jacob to visit her in her room that night (which as we previously mentioned is next to his on the nursery floor, but more on that later). They have sex, apparently without being noticed, and Jacob proposes – still without revealing his true identity. Claire accepts but wants to tell her governess friends before anyone else.

Then the family return, and in a whirl of house parties, Jacob's true identity is revealed and shortly after that, so is his improper relationship with Claire (their assignations having been noticed by the children). Both leave the household: he to clear his debts and his name; she to parts unknown, but with a decent reference. All Claire wants now is to somehow get back her family home and carry out the plans of the governess club. But, of course, this is a romance and... (view spoiler)and then we jump forwards three months for the happy ending and a lead-in to the next story in the series.

As I said at the start, this series has a cute premise, although I'm not sure how the governesses can carry out their plans if they all end up married (just how big is the house they want to live in, and how much are the parents of their prospective pupils going to be charged to pay for it all?) but the first book has rather jarred me with its blithe ignoring of how things would have been done. No matter, it's by no means as bad as some I've read over the past month, and I have hopes that the next in the series might redeem matters somewhat. However, I do think the Avon editors need to update their guides to the history of word usage too: 'toastie' doesn't seem to have been recorded before 1976 (and in a Glaswegian publication then), while 'brilliant' as an exclamation dates from around the same point in time (and my English teacher was still warning us against that usage in the late eighties).

Tin says

Disclosure: I received the ARC through Edelweiss. (Thank you to Ellie MacDonald and to Avon Impulse for accepting my request.) Yes, this is an honest review.

* * *

Claire, Sara, Bonnie, and Louisa have two things in common: their jobs as governesses and their dream of living independently. They formulated a plan: first, to regain Claire's childhood home, then save their wages for three years, and finally quit their jobs. They formed The Governess Club, meeting once a month during their afternoon off.

The arrival of Jacob Knightly, new tutor to the Aldgate boys causes an upheaval in Claire's carefully planned life and schedule. It does not help that Jacob's arrogance and his confidence grates at Claire, who sees that

Jacob is new to the world of service and lacks the humility and obedience that goes with the territory -- and she isn't afraid to tell him so.

Only someone who has lived a privileged life and then fallen from it could understand and see Jacob so clearly and Jacob is intrigued by Claire and her story. Who was she in her formal life?

When the inevitable confrontation happens, Jacob is forced to reassess his behavior and asks for Claire's help and guidance. What begins as a partnership of teachers blossoms into something more as Jacob and Claire slowly fall in love.

But Jacob is keeping one secret very close to his heart -- his true identity as the notorious Earl of Rimmel -- and he wonders how his darling Claire will react when he finally tells her who he is.

Downton Abbey. Upstairs Downstairs. Gosford Park. We have always been fascinated by what goes on in the houses of kings, princes, and lords. How would such a household function and what sort of interesting stories can be found within these stately houses and grand castles?

The "country house" has often been utilized in fiction to highlight the differences (and similarities) between the lives of the lords of the manor and their servants. Very rarely has the spotlight been directed solely on the servants. And this is what Ellie MacDonald does. Ellie MacDonald's series focuses on the lives of governesses and she does so with such sympathetic observation and unreserved sincerity that she elevates and celebrates the working class.

From what I understand, governesses and companions are a very interesting class in the world of servants. Those who work in such capacity are usually genteel ladies whose financial situations have taken a downturn. With no prospects of marriage, they apply as companions to older ladies or utilize their own education and work as governesses to the children of lords and ladies. Not quite meant for a life of servitude, but not living the life of privilege -- it is an odd place that they occupy.

"There's nothing wrong with being a governess," another chimed in.

"Of course not. Not if one disregards the fact that for women of our station it signifies a lowering of one's situation. We were not born to be in service."

"It's not quite service, per se ..."

"How is it anything else? We are being paid to render a service. Our lives are theirs to dictate, I cannot even count the number of times I have been called upon to even out the numbers at a dinner party. And they think they are bestowing some great honor upon me when they know full well I have attended more illustrious tables than theirs."

- Members of the Governess Club, loc 52 - 62

I loved Claire. MacDonald characterizes her so wonderfully: as both fragile and strong. She is still the young heartbroken girl who dreams of regaining her childhood home, which she was rudely booted out of, but she is also a mature woman who has worked as a governess for four years and is comfortable in her job.

When she lectures Jacob about submissiveness and subservience, I don't hear a proud woman who is lording her superiority and seniority over the new staff -- but I hear a helpless young lady, who was forced to do the same because she didn't have any other choice.

"My next piece of advice: don't belittle the choices of others. This one is universal, not just limited to how to survive as a servant. You have no concept of what their dreams or ambitions are."

- Claire to Jacob, loc 342 - 355

While Claire and Jacob start off as adversaries, there is an underlying sense of kinship and recognition of the parallelisms in their lives that draws them to one another. Who could relate to Claire's situation but Jacob? And vice versa.

Love transforms Jacob from a dissolute Earl hiding from his debtors to a man with a direction and a goal: to make Claire happy, to make Claire his. (Read about the toasties and the conversation they have in Chapter 4.)

Claire looked up at him, her eyes clouded with uncertainty. It struck Jacob that he had been very mistaken about her eyes. They weren't a mossy green, but rather grassy, emerald, a combination of all three. The different shades played together harmoniously, each allowing the others moments to shine. When she laughed, the emeralds twinkled with delight; when angered, the grass snapped; when content, the moss softened. This look, this confused uncertainty, blended all three into a shade he had never seen before, yet the impact thudded in his gut and echoed throughout his veins. At this moment in time, he would do whatever it took to banish that look from her eyes forever but had no idea how to accomplish it. God help him, he never wanted her to feel this again. *He* never wanted to feel this again.

- loc 602 - 615

What makes Jacob a wonderful hero is how he respects Claire and how he gave Claire the power to choose their future. Would it be a future together? Or a future apart? Jacob at the beginning of the book had no sense of equality and tossed the word around carelessly -- but Jacob at the end of the book is a changed man, a better man.

You know when you've read a good book because it fills you with a sense of elation and giddiness -- this book did that. I couldn't put it down and, when I'd finished it, I couldn't let it go. I wanted *more* of Ellie MacDonald's governesses. (And I'm glad there is! Bonnie's story is next! Yay!)

The Governess Club: Claire is the stunning debut of Ellie MacDonald. It will be released on September 17 by Avon Impulse. **The Governess Club: Bonnie** will be released on October 1, 2013.

Final note: I'm not certain if you can categorize these as novellas or as short novels. They are 192 pages long.

Lisa says

This was a very refreshing debut from Ellie Macdonald. Our couple, Claire Bannister, a governess who is trying to make ends meet following the death of her father so she can get her childhood back and Jacob Knightly, an Earl posing as a tutor to show his family he can be respectable and not just wild, find a deep attraction to each other for who they truly are. When they are caught out by her charges (the children were so well done in this story!) her life alters drastically and the truth about Jacob's identity throws it even more so. How can she love, marry and fit in in an Earl's lifestyle? As this is a novella, the resolution is quick but very satisfying and we get just enough teases of Claire's three other governess friends to make you anxious for their stories. Well written with a dose of steam, enjoyable humor and realistic characters, I know I will be keeping an eye on Ellie Macdonald in the future!

eARC provided by Avon via edelweiss

Megan says

Since the death of her father Claire Bannister has been forced to make her own way in the world. As a governess she spends her days taking care of children that are not her own and occasionally evening out a dinner party of her employers. When a new tutor arrives at the household she isn't impressed. Jacob Knightly doesn't not behave the way a tutor should and after a few pointers, Claire helps him to become better at his job. What she doesn't know is that he is an earl, the second son of a Duke, and is just pretending to be a tutor to get away from town life for a little while.

I enjoyed reading a historical that wasn't focused on the members of the aristocracy and the ton activities. We see the day to day life of a governess and some of the servants. While there are members of the ton in the story, the obvious one being Jacob, the life they lead isn't put front and center. We see how Claire deals with her new station in life her desire for more.

There is a nice build up in Claire and Jacob's relationship. They start as friends and progress slowly toward more. She makes him work for her affections which I think is always fun to watch. When they do officially get together it was nice to see that Jacob was as affected by their time together that Claire was. We get declarations of affection and intentions all at the same time. There is of course that inevitable moment when Claire finds out she had been lied to but I think it was handled well. I liked how all the characters didn't automatically forgive Jacob for his deception even though he is a peer. It seemed more believable to me.

I would have liked to see what happened to Jacob when he went home to his father. Was he forgiven? Cut off? Did he explain how he felt to his father? We know he told his mother about Claire and she wants to meet her but that is all we get. I didn't like how there was such a large jump at the end of the book in time. I would have like to have had more of the time Claire and Jacob spend apart. Whether it explained how the governess all got together again and how they managed to organize themselves or what Jacob did while he waited for her in London.

Overall I really enjoyed this story. It was a strong start to the series and I am looking forward to seeing how

the rest of the governess' tales turn out.

Jo (My House of Books) says

This novella by Ms. MacDonald begins The Governess Club series, which focuses on four friends who happen to be governesses. All the ladies are tired of pushing back against stereotypes of their station in life and have decided to save their money for three years in the hopes of purchasing a house where they can live and work. The first novella focuses on Claire, who proposes her childhood home, Ridgestone -- despite it having been repossessed -- as the place the ladies should purchase.

Claire works for the Aldgate family. Jacob Knightly, the Earl of Rimmel, arrives to tutor Michael and Peter, sons of the Aldgates. Jacob has no idea how to survive or blend in at a lower station, so Claire gives him some tips. They spend quite a bit of time together, and naturally, they fall in love. Jacob keeps his true identity a secret from her. Despite Claire discovering the truth, things work out fine: Jacob and Claire agree to marry; the governesses leave their employ and live free.

Some portions of the novella didn't seem possible (that Jacob could free himself of debts and purchase Ridgestone within a two-week period) or historically accurate (Jacob losing his title when his nephew is born). However, *The Governess Club: Claire* was a good way to spend an afternoon.

Mary - Buried Under Romance says

Posted on my blog: <http://buriedunderromance.blogspot.co...>

Ellie Macdonald's debut hits a high note with introducing a group of friends who created a club to better their lives as governesses; this book focuses on Claire, a governess whose life is disrupted by the arrival of a new tutor for her charges, and makes her yearn for something more than just a dream to return to her childhood home.

The chief focus of this novella is characterization, especially of Jacob Knightley, the newly engaged tutor. Jacob is actually the Earl of Rimmel, and has a devil-may-care attitude through his nonchalance with Claire's reputation as he sought to charm her. This quickly changes as he gets to know the real Claire, a woman of high intelligence and integrity who teaches him the ways of a servant, and through her, he begins to understand noblesse oblige. Yet despite his charming demeanor, he exhibits both humility and honesty with Claire and builds a wonderful companionship with her first as friends, then as lovers. Jacob truly grows from a rakish young man who believed it a lark to masquerade as a tutor, to a man of sincerity and honor that grovels in order to obtain Claire's forgiveness. It is only Claire's character I have slight trouble with, as she spent a good amount of time unwilling to forgive Jacob after she found out his deceit, all the while knowing

from her assessment of his character that he never intended to hurt her. A good deal of angst could have been avoided were she to have let go of her stubbornness and accept his sincere apologies, but this was prolonged to the point of annoyance and lessened my appreciation of her character.

Besides that, there is little not to like with this novella. The dialogue is very well crafted; Claire and Jacob's banter is lively and witty, yet at once heartfelt and touching. With its length, character backgrounds were explored and used in excellent comparison, and the ending provides an excellent connection with the next governess story. All in all, Ellie Macdonald is an author to watch for!

*ARC received from the publisher via edelweiss

Rashika (is tired) says

This book, or more appropriately, this novella, didn't have much going for it. It seemed very generic in terms of a historical romance but it wasn't enjoyable. I spent more time cringing than smiling at the silly antics of our characters.

Claire seems to have the basis for a strong female lead. She rarely wallows in self-pity, is confident and she doesn't let her circumstances bring her down too much. Yet at the same time she lets her employers walk over her and she doesn't really ever stand for what she believes in. In fact, I am not even sure what she believes in. She seems to parrot Louisa's ideas but that's really about it.

But Claire wasn't really my main problem with the book. Jacob was. I didn't find Jacob swoon-worthy. He got jealous for no reason and thinks Claire is his to lay a claim on. He accuses her of purposefully avoiding dancing with him and the way he handled his jealousy was worrisome. He really needed to take a chill-pill. He never really seems to take into account that she isn't a possession but a real human being. He says she is magic but it's more about what she does for him than who she is or what he could in turn do for her.

Throw into that that their romance makes no sense what so ever. It comes out of nowhere. One day they don't get along and Claire tells him he needs to stop acting like a spoiled brat and suddenly Jacob has an awakening and changes overnight (or over the course of a week) and then they are in love etc etc. How? When? Why? I get that this is a novella but I've read novellas where the romance is done well. Just because it's a short story doesn't excuse the need for development.

We know right off the bat that Jacob is hiding a secret and when the secret is revealed to Claire, she seems to react in a predictable way but that bothered me too because she over did it and chose not to listen to any of his explanations. I guess over the course of the book, I became more and more critical since there weren't as many positive points to compensate for the little things that bothered me.

This novella also lacks a strong base. We get a very vague background story for Jacob and almost nothing for Claire. So they both are more like plot devices being used to produce a historical romance of (not so) epic proportions.

The plot is non-existent. I get that this is historical romance, I read a lot of historical romance myself, but I find the conflict in this book lacking mostly because this novella is so centred on the romance that all the other (so called) conflicts take a back seat.

This novella isn't a nightmare or anything, it's a nice quick read if you just want some good brain candy but don't go into this novella hoping to find your new favorite historical romance.

Jen says

3.5 to 4 Stars

Rane says

The first in the The Governess Club series, Clarie kicks it off with a sweet romance with a governess Claire Bannister trying to hold on to parts of her past while a romance starts to bloom between her and the mysterious new tutor Jacob Knightly whose a lord in hiding. Between romance, crazy kids, secrets and some nice toast this had a little bit of everything to make it such an enjoyable read.

Being a novella Macdonald did an excellent job building the relationship between Claire and Jacob quickly while the reader notices the change both have in each other lives and outlook. I was very much convinced that they both cared and loved each other with a nice added build up of sexual tension and a great love scene that flowed with the story and didn't hinder it or make it just about lust but about love!

I did feel the ending did lack somewhat of a punch when the truth of who Jacob is came out. The period of separation wasn't dragged on but I would have liked it out all together as I felt it didn't added any needed drama to an already fun story.

This debut kicked off wonderfully as am looking forward to more from this series and author!

Kathy * Bookworm Nation says

This had such a fun premise and I was excited to give it a try. Four friends who are tired of being governesses decide to pull their resources and gain their independence. The first story focuses on Claire. Once a gently bred lady she has had to seek out employment as a governess. One day Jacob shows up as a Tudor. Only Clair doesn't know that Jacob is really an Earl in hiding. Sparks fly and attraction grows.

Unfortunately, I had to stop reading because of bad content. I guess I'm partially to blame for not researching the book beforehand, I went off the mild cover, fun synopsis and mistaken that Avon did clean romances (I think I confused them with Avalon?). There is some mild innuendo at first, but it progressively gets worse. There is one detailed make out and a detailed love scene. I didn't finish although I was curious about how everything would play out. Such a shame.

I know there is sadly a market for this type writing, but there is an even bigger market for clean reads. I wish we could buy edited versions or at the very least have ratings on books.

Content: NOT clean, R. Mild language and descriptive intimacies between an unmarried couple.
