



## Not Quite A Lady

*Loretta Chase*

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### Irresistible Force

Darius Carsington is a spectacularly handsome rake with a rare intelligence and no heart, a man who divides his time between bedding loose-moraled women and writing scholarly papers. He finds society's "perfect darlings" exceedingly boring. But there's something intriguing, and not quite perfect, about faultless Lady Charlotte Hayward. He senses a crack under her polished surface, and finding it is a challenge he can't resist.

### Immovable Object

Lady Charlotte is so beautiful, charming, and gracious that no one has noticed what an expert she is at Not Getting Married. Early on, she learned a painful lesson about trust . . . and temptation. In the years since, she's devoted her life to being all she *ought* to be—and she's not about to let a man like Carsington entice her to do everything she shouldn't.

### A Splendid Collision

But the rules of attraction can easily overpower the rules of manners and morals, and sometimes even the best-behaved girl has to follow her instincts, even if it means risking it all.

## Not Quite A Lady Details

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Author : Loretta Chase

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# From Reader Review Not Quite A Lady for online ebook

## Desi says

Otro libro de Loretta que se va a mi grupo de favoritos!! ME EN-CAN-TÓ.....!!

No es tan cómico como los anteriores pero tiene ese toque de ternura y diálogos muy ingeniosos como los demás y con unos personajes maravillosos y escenas muy sexys y muy bien narradas.... Empezando por los protagonistas Darius y Charlotte, terminando con el personaje que me robó el corazón y me hizo querer meterme en el libro y poder abrazarlo: "Pip", que niño tan encantador y maravilloso... fue todo una ternurita y me dio mucha pena por lo que tuvo que pasar.... Hubiera querido más escenas de él con su mamá al final, pero igual no le resta puntos al libro, me encantó la historia y TODO!! Este tipo de libros no defrauda.... no sé por qué tengo a los libros de romance históricos tan abandonados... pero ya me pondré al día!!

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## Erin says

I think this is not one of Chase's best efforts. This book just never quite gets all the way there. Darius is supposed to be this insufferable rake, but there's not really any evidence of it, beyond the characters telling us repeatedly that he is. The only woman who ever even enters his thoughts in the whole novel is Charlotte, and once they meet, hardly anything is made of his alleged history of bedding and abandoning women. He also has a Vulcan-esque reliance on logic in the early parts of the novel, and not much is made of it when he realizes he can't be logical where Charlotte is concerned. I guess I would have liked to see more from Darius, some realization that something in him has changed. (He makes a big deal out of calling love a farce at the beginning of the novel, but then there's this weird scene where he says, "I love you" to Charlotte out loud without even thinking about it, and then it's no big deal, they just move on.)

Morrell is not a terribly effective villain, and I'm wondering if his scenes could have been cut without affecting the novel.

Charlotte is probably the best drawn character, but her most emotional scenes are almost all from Darius's perspective, so mostly we just see her crying a lot.

And I kind of wish there had been more Pip. And maybe an epilogue; everything gets sorted then the novel ends abruptly.

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## Lady Wesley says

Review of the audiobook.

4.5 stars because there are a few plot holes, but really, it's Loretta Chase so how bad could it be?

I am blessed with a poor memory. I say "blessed" because this means that I can read a book for a second time and not remember what's going to happen next. Saves me a lot of money on buying new books.

Anyway, I read Not Quite a Lady three years ago and gave it four stars. Kate Reading's narration was, as

usual, spot on, so I bumped up my rating a bit. Truly, Kate Reading is the perfect narrator for Loretta Chase's books. She handles Chase's trademark rapid-fire banter perfectly.

In a couple of years, I no doubt will listen again and enjoy it just as much as the first time.

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### Jan130 says

Really liked this lovely story. Out of the first four Carsington brothers books, this one is my fav. It's more serious in tone than the previous books, but actually that's what I prefer anyway.

The story follows the youngest Carsington brother, Darius, who is a bit of a rake, yet also an intellectual. He loves women and sex. Having studied the mating habits of animals quite extensively, Darius believes it's just a natural urge and feels no shame in 'scratching the itch', but of course is careful to avoid gently-bred virgins. The reader feels a fun feeling of anticipation, knowing Darius is ready to fall.....

Charlotte is just a lovely person. Now twenty-seven, she has avoided marriage for years. At seventeen, Charlotte had a baby which she gave up for adoption. No spoiler - it's revealed in the opening pages of the book. The caddish father who took advantage of an innocent 16-year-old is out of the picture. Charlotte has kept her secret and hidden her private grief for ten years.

The story takes place in the country, at the neighbouring properties of Charlotte's parents, and a run-down property Darius's father has tasked him with restoring. This is how Charlotte and Darius meet. Their attraction is mutual and immediate, but the growth of their love is handled well and is quite convincing. The country setting is also a refreshing change from the stuffy ballrooms and parlours of London.

I liked both H and h - both people of integrity (despite Darius' previous casual attitude towards sex). The storyline involving Charlotte's teen pregnancy and the grief and fallout from that is handled sensitively and is quite touching. And of course it would not have been an uncommon scenario. The ending of the book is satisfying and quite moving. Another lovely read from Ms. Chase.

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### Dina says

Having enjoyed every book by Ms. Chase I've read so far, I'm always a bit wary when I start reading a new (to me) release. I mean, I can't possibly love *everything* she writes, so I can't help thinking the book I'm about to read is going to be "the dreadful one", the one that doesn't live up to my expectations... Well, I'm happy to say that *this* isn't "the one" yet. Phew! :)

This is the 4th book in the **Carsington Brothers** series, and it's youngest brother Darius' turn to find his HEA.

Darius Carsington is the Earl of Hargate's youngest son, the *intellectual* one, always ruled by Logic and Reason. He's one of the most highly regarded members of the Philosophical Society and he's well known for: (1) studying animal behavior, especially breeding and mating behavior, and (2) devoting his leisure hours to emulating this behavior. Item One gives Darius respectability but no income. Item Two gives him a reputation - not necessarily a bad one among the *ton*, but an aggravating one in his father's eyes. So Lord

Hargate decides to "tame" his rakish son and gives him an ultimatum: Darius must either (1) take charge of Beechwood, a neglected property, and make it produce income in one year, so he can support himself and stop bleeding his father's purse, or (2) marry an heiress, so he can support himself and stop bleeding his father's purse. Darius chooses the lesser of two evils: Beechwood. However, Fate has other plans for him and puts an heiress on his way...

Lady Charlotte Hayward, Darius' new neighbor the Marquess of Lithby's only daughter, is a puzzle Darius can't solve. She's titled, wealthy, beautiful and seemingly placid - the perfect wife for any gentleman. Yet, she's still single at the *advanced* age of seven and twenty and, even though she isn't obvious about it, she isn't interested in marriage and deflects all her suitors' attentions with easy politeness. What's behind her "strange" behavior? Logic, Darius' best friend and mentor, can't rest until he solves that puzzle. Naturally, it doesn't take long until Logic abandons Darius and gives way to Feelings - like Lust and Love. Unfortunately, that's when this book lost one star.

What can I say? As always, I loved Ms. Chase's humorous writing, Darius and Charlotte were likable, their witty banter and playful tricks made me laugh, and their loves scenes made me sigh. But why, oh why, did Ms. Chase decide to throw coincidence after coincidence halfway through the story? Not to mention that *unbelievable* plot twist near the end of the story. All of a sudden, Logic left not only Darius, but the plot altogether. I can't say more because I don't want to give any spoilers away, but that *almost* ruined the book for me. Luckily, I'm a sucker for a HEA, so I just reminded myself how much I had enjoyed the story up until that point and decided to let it go. Yes, I can buy (almost) anything in Romancelandia when the author does his/her job and makes me care for the H/h and root for their HEA. :)

All in all, this was a very fun read. I'm still a devoted fan of Ms. Chase and can't wait to read the next book in the series, the most awaited Last Night's Scandal.

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## Lady Wesley says

I've read and enjoyed all of the other Carsington Brothers' stories, and this one was just as good as the others. Darius and Charlotte are a fun, passionate hero and heroine. Charlotte's story, in particular, is rather sad, but Darius brings her out of her funk. There is a pretty over-the-top plot twist toward the end, but it's all written so movingly that I can't find too much fault with it.

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## Ursula says

This was probably my favourite of the Carsington Brothers series, I think because it moved me the most. Indeed, I was in tears towards the end.

Initially, the hero comes across as a bit of an arse. He is described as a rake, and here that means a man who pursues sexual liaisons purely for pleasure and never has any emotional connection with the women he sleeps with. He is not cruel or nasty, he keeps away from innocents, but as a man of science he regards copulation as a natural urge for the continuation of the species and just goes with the urge when it hits him- which is often. So I was, like, YUK!

It was just delicious, then, when this detached man, who satisfies his sexual urges with never a thought, finds himself having- God forbid- **FEELINGS** for a woman.

The woman is the lovely, 27 year-old, unwed Charlotte, who has spent the last 10 years avoiding prospective husbands with clever strategies she adapts to the character of the suitor. She also has a dark secret in her past. It is particularly lovely to see inside the tortured mind of our hero, Darius, as he watches all his theories that disparage the concept of romantic love gradually crumble. The lust he initially felt for Charlotte- it could only **be** lust- is of course a deep and passionate love. It just about kills him to admit it, too! But he is so funny with it, and their snappy exchanges, where she gives as good as she gets, are very amusing.

Charlotte struggles with her demons. The grief she has buried as deeply as she is able is gradually revealed, both to the listener and also to Darius, who is an acute observer of both animals and humans. The social issue raised (view spoiler) is quite heart-breaking.

The emotion is beautifully conveyed by our narrator Kate Reading- when her voice breaks, you really feel it. She does a wonderful job of the boy Pip's voice, as well. I could almost see him standing in front of me when he was talking.

There are a couple of very sensual sex scenes, with a surprising amount of tenderness and mutual respect as well as passion. Most importantly, the **love** is so clearly there, even when they have not yet reached the point of declaring this love, even to themselves.

Darius is a very "modern" Regency hero who roundly condemns double standards regarding "rake" behaviour and illegitimate children. His objective, analytical thought processes are a positive in this regard. (His views as to why marriage is a useful and practical social institution, although he does not wish to embrace it for himself, are hilarious and absolutely spot-on.)

A beautiful, emotional story, deftly lightened by many moments of wit and humour.

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### **Meredith Galman says**

I rather enjoyed Chase's *Mr. Impossible*, so I thought I'd seek out a few other titles. Too bad I forgot this review [<http://www.smartbitchestrashybooks.co...>] before I mooched this one. Chase has set up what is actually quite an interesting situation -- an unmarried Regency-era woman is forced to acknowledge that she bore an illegitimate child before she can marry -- but everything is too easy: the way the hero and heroine both get over themselves so they can come together, the way they find the missing child, the way the villain turns out to be not so villainous after all, the way both families and society simply accept the fact. The only thing I preferred to *Mr. Impossible* was that here I didn't have the feeling that the plot was simply an inconvenience the author was trying to get out of the way to arrive at the final clinch.

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### **Jacob Proffitt says**

This book is interesting, but problematic. And I don't mean because Charlotte starts the book by having a baby when seventeen—ten years before the book really starts. That's actually a large part of the interesting. The problematic was more because of Darius.

Charlotte didn't hang together terribly well, either, frankly. Yeah, she's no longer a virgin, but putting off suitors for ten years in fear of discovery seems rather . . . contrived. She's clever and used to misdirecting

men and her hang-up didn't seem to be about deception so much as whether she could get away with it. So I can't think she wouldn't find *some* prospects in 8 "unsuccessful" seasons that would be tolerable enough to get on with. And yes, you can make a case for holding out for more, but *she didn't actually do so*, even in the privacy of her own head. She wasn't hanging out for true love. Or because she didn't want to start marriage in deception. She gave every impression (again, from inside her own head) that the problem was that she feared being caught.

Not that I didn't like her, because I did. She was clever and witty and kind. And she didn't flinch from hardship or quail before even Darius (who could be very intimidating). But that's just it. I liked her and wanted more than just the flimsy afraid-to-get-caught excuse for her situation.

Darius was way more problematic, though. He's hyper-rational and sex is *explicitly* all about animal urges to him. Indeed, it's mentioned several times that he doesn't even bother remembering his paramours' names once he's done with them. So he's callous and kind of a jerk. He's intrigued by Charlotte at first because she doesn't trip his virgin detector (I kid you not) even though she's an unwed lady of twenty-seven. Not that he believes she isn't a virgin, he just thinks she's an anomaly and a pretty one he'd like to get to know better. With that kind of background, strongly established, it didn't make sense for him to fall in love quite so easily or completely. Or for her to believe it when it happens because she knows he's a rake (because her rake detector is quite functional, thank-you-very-much—yes, that's explicitly established as well. sigh).

So yes, there are contrivances. Unfortunately, there are also coincidences and deceptions as well (view spoiler). If it hadn't been Chase I may have left this unfinished. As it is, I can't really come up with more than three stars for it all-told.

**A note about Steamy:** Another unsatisfying aspect of the novel, I'm afraid. There are three explicit sex scenes, which makes it typical of the middle of my tolerance. Unfortunately, the last is the longest and felt completely tacked-on (and utterly unnecessary) and the others aren't really emotionally engaging because they felt more like lust than anything more intimate. (view spoiler)

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## Wendy says

4.5 stars

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## Ana T. says

### IRRESISTIBLE FORCE

Darius Carsington is a spectacularly handsome rake with a rare intelligence and no heart, a man who divides his time between bedding loose-moraled women and writing scholarly papers. He finds society's "perfect darlings"....exceedingly boring. But there's something intriguing, and not quite perfect, about faultless Lady Charlotte Hayward. He senses a crack under her polished surface, and finding it is a temptation he can't resist.

### IMMOVABLE OBJECT

Lady Charlotte is so beautiful, charming, and gracious that no one has noticed what an expert she is at Not Getting Married. Early on, she learned a painful lesson about trust....and temptation. In the years since, she's

devoted her life to all she ought to be--and she's not about to let a man like Carsington entice her to do everything she shouldn't.

#### A SPLENDID COLLISION

But the laws of attraction can easily overpower the rules of manners and morals, and sometimes even the best -behaved girl has to follow her instincts, even if it means risking it all.

It's been a while since I read a Loretta Chase book and I didn't even read the previous one in this series, in fact I think I only read the first one, Miss Wonderful. However that didn't detract from my enjoyment at all.

I really liked Charlotte and Darius, they were nice and interesting people. Not exactly perfect but trying what to do what they think is the right thing. Darius wants to make the estate he is responsible for profitable and Charlotte is very tactfully trying not to get married as she feels her past doesn't allow her to be someone's wife. The problem is, they feel very attracted to each other from the minute they meet.

Charlotte's problem is that she gave birth to an illegitimate child when she was sixteen, she child was taken from her to be raised by a childless couple and it's been a well kept secret but she knows that if she would marry she would have to explain it to her husband on her wedding night.

Oblivious to this her well meaning father keeps trying to find her a husband and decides to host a house party for several suitors, including Darius. At the same time Charlotte's stepmother decides she is going to help Darius with the redecoration of the estate thus making them spend much more time together.

And then, one day, as they are overseeing the redecoration Charlotte sees a boy that she immediately feels could be her long lost son.

I really liked that Darius decides to help the boy even before knowing of his parentage. And then I enjoyed that Charlotte tells him the truth and Darius promises to help her getting her son back. What I found odd was that for what it seemed a long time Charlotte believed the boy to be her son but never looked for him or tried to talk to him. It was almost as she was afraid to find out the truth and although that might be believable in a way I couldn't believe a sensitive woman like her wouldn't rush to be sure and welcome the child.

The situation wasn't that easy to solve as the child had lost his adopted parent and was now being an apprentice with one of the working men. This means there was a contract between them which must be made void or his apprenticeship bought.

At the same time one of Charlotte's suitors, having found out the truth tries to blackmail her with that knowledge. Fortunately she doesn't give in, the child is safe and we have our happy ending with Charlotte deciding to marry Darius and raise her child openly.

I have some doubts that the child could be easily acknowledged but I did enjoy the characters so much that it didn't prevent me from enjoying the story.

Grade: B

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**Wollstonecraft homegirl says**



So, Not Quite A Lady, or, How To Fall In Love In Five Easy Pratfalls.

Seriously. There are a lot of pratfalls in this book. The background music in my head was that ricocheting gunshot sound they'd play every time Wile E. Coyote nearly doesn't fall off the cliff but then for various comic reasons, does.

If you think about this book too hard, or, at all, really, you will realise how flawed it is. Silly me, I have thought about it. As a consequence, it's dropped from four stars to three.

Let me start by saying though: this was fun. There is usual Loretta Chase lightheartedness and banter of the highest order, a lovely setting and secondary characters and the plot was entertaining (although with some holes, on which, see below).

But. It's light on a characterization for a Chase novel and the H/h act inconsistently with what little characters they have. The heroine in particular is defined by the one mistake from her past, it's shaped her entire approach to men, to the way she lives. Then she makes exactly the same mistake with the hero, but without any really convincing reason to do so, other than: he's hot. (view spoiler)

The hero is a logical rake. Except when he ceases to be. The heroine changes him. I get that, but, I think it should have been a better journey to reformation. As it was, it just kind of happened. He comes to the estate neighboring the heroine's to make the land profitable in 12 months so he can escape his father's plans for marriage. And yet, in spite knowing that the house cannot of itself turn a profit and refurbishing it would be a waste of money, he allows the heroine and her step-mother to undertake that task. It makes no sense for his character, but it's a convenient way of throwing the two of them together.

I was engaged and entertained, but the more I thought about it, the more I realized: this is not the usual level of service we receive from LC. She might even be \*gasp\* Phoning It In. Even the sex, something Chase usually does very well, was a bit by the number.

My advice, read it, enjoy it (you will) and then move on. Just don't think, like that fifth gin and tonic on a work night, if you think about it, you will ruin it.

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## Joanna Loves Reading says

Achingly sweet and lovely. I'm not sure if I just went into this one with few expectations. I enjoy Loretta Chase's writing and expected to like it, but when two of her most popular books were the two preceding this one in the series, I didn't expect to like this one more. That is probably the reason this is my favorite of the series to date (still have the last to go).

Charlotte is 27 and an heiress from a good family. For 10 years, she has deftly and subtly managed to avoid marriage. She manages people without realizing they are being managed. Due to a not insignificant secret indiscretion in her youth, she considers herself unworthy of being a gentleman's wife.

Darius is the youngest and only remaining unwed Carsington son. He is a respected scientist and observer of animal behaviors -- with the inclusion of humans. He is rational and does not believe that love exists because it is irrational. His father gives him the task of making his deceased great aunt's neglected estate profitable

within one year or marry an heiress. The neglected estate abuts Charlotte's family estate.

While on one of her solitary thoughtful walks, she accidentally runs into and disrupts Darius, who is observing dragon flies. It is the first of many mishaps that had me laughing or smiling. It does not take long for Darius to become intrigued by the puzzle Charlotte is and for Charlotte to find her usual evading tactics do not work on Darius.

The way the romance unfolds is delightful and seeing these two grow as individuals and in love and respect for each other is a journey I truly enjoyed. Darius really won me over, and I felt for Charlotte dearly. He realized quickly that his feelings for Charlotte were in a class apart from the lust he has felt before -- it must be love. As the drama surrounding the youthful indiscretion unfolds, Darius is the perfect hero to Charlotte. His rationale towards Charlotte's emotional behavior was great. Rather than try to argue it was irrational behavior, he rationalized that it was normal behavior and his job was comfort and support.

There was great cat-and-mouse by-play and dialogue between these two. It was funny and emotional and beautifully done. I am quite happy with this read.

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## **Suzanne (Under the Covers Book blog) says**

### **4.5 Stars**

The fourth book in the Carsington series, is about Darius Carsington the youngest brother. Darius is a natural philosopher ruled by two things Logic and Reason, and has a reputation for having no heart and being a rake; copulation is after all one of the most natural instincts a male has. But as with all his brothers before him he is summoned into his fathers study and given an ultimatum; restore a piece of land and property that has been neglected for 10 years so it makes a profit within the year, or marry a rich heiress. Darius chooses the property, however, he didn't count on meeting his neighbours daughter Lady Charlotte Hayward. Lady Charlotte seems to defy both Logic and Reason and so becomes a mystery he can't resist trying to solve.

Like all the other books so far in Loretta Chase's Carsington series, this book has two main characters that are both likable and relatable and a light hearted plot. What I liked most about this book though is the witty banter between Darius and Charlotte, it was humourous and clever and made this book really enjoyable to read. I also liked seeing the book from the POV of Darius, especially when he was trying to figure out Charlotte using Logic and Reason, and yet coming up blank.

Although this book may not have the emotional depth of some books, it did however manage to pull on the heart strings a little, especially towards the end. But in general this was a humourous and light read that is sure to put a smile on your face.

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## **kris says**

Darius Carsington is a bastard. Lady Charlotte Hayward is nearly almost a virgin. When he meets her his heart grows probably three sizes if not for copyright infringement, so let's call it 3 and a solid quarter. Also, she has a 10 year old that's a secret. ENTER ROMANCE NOVEL.

1. This is a patchwork thing, with holes and ridiculousness everywhere.

2. Casting the youngest of the Carsington brood as a logical thinker is an interesting choice. Casting him as a heartless bastard is less interesting. Casting him as an intolerable rake is more of a disaster than anything. Why should we root for Charlotte to find her happy ever after with a man who GLOATINGLY points out the fact that he doesn't remember the names of his conquests. Who looks forward with some eagerness to having sex with one--OR BOTH--of the chambermaids at the Inn he's staying at? What the fuck kind of shitty prostate lump hero is this?

HE'S GROSS.

3. ALSO, for someone who is ALLEGEDLY so damned smart, I was super annoyed by his attempts to 'solve' Charlotte. Her early, extremely negative reactions to him touching her should have thrown up some flags he did not even consider. And how does he--not even to dismiss it--consider the fact that she might have had sex at least once before? I don't give a flying fuck what 'society' says; he claims to be learned man that ~knows about the world. His inability to consider that a woman might function outside the accepted bounds of society was just the dumbest plot hole of them all.

4. Charlotte isn't much better. She lets herself be fooled into thinking that she's 'trapped' in her current way of life and doesn't consider anything outside that really contrived world view. It was frustrating to see her talk herself into a corner so early and so fast and without cause. Because usually Chase's heroines are nothing if not scrappy, wily fighters who don't take no shit.

5. Chase's banter, once it hits the page, remains FUCKING EXCELLENT. The fact that it's with such a shitty cast of characters is just a huge shake of the head.

6. The stars this book does get is ENTIRELY for sidestepping the traditional secret-withholding nonsense. Having Charlotte list out her shit in one scene like that was so goddamned refreshing--I wanted to throw my hands in the air. COMMUNICATION WORKS. TELL YOUR FRIENDS.

7. What the hell was that 'villain' even? Was he a villain? What happened? Did I stroke?

8. I'm still seriously so confused by some of the disgusting shit that came out of Darius's mouth about how foolish and unnecessary women are. Like, go fuck yourself? Use a fire poker? Don't hold back?

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