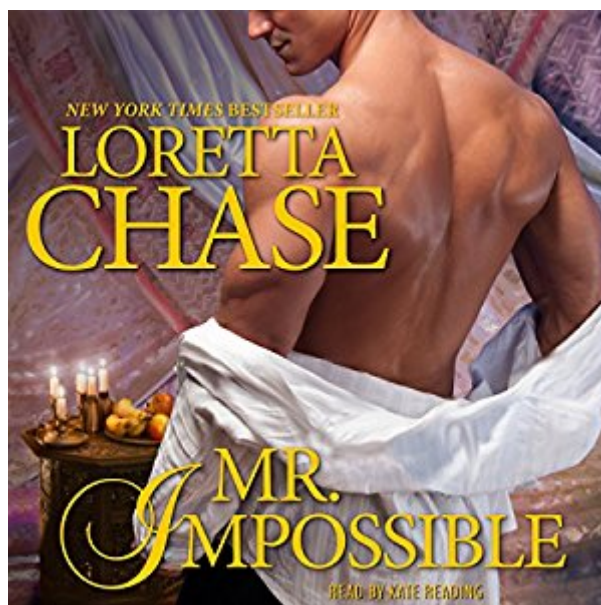


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Mr. Impossible



Synopsis

Rupert Carsington, fourth son of the Earl of Hargate, is his aristocratic family's favorite disaster. He's irresistibly handsome and unapologetically irresponsible, & trouble follows wherever he goes. Still, Rupert somehow manages to escape entanglement - emotional or other - with maddening grace! But now he's a prisoner in Cairo's most infamous jail and his only chance out is accepting a beautiful widow's dangerous proposal. Scholar Daphne Pembroke wants him to rescue her brother, kidnapped by a rival seeking a legendary treasure. The partnership will be strictly business: she'll be the brains; he, the brawn. Simple enough in theory. Their journey takes them into danger and adventure. The most disciplined of women and the most reckless of men are about to clash in the most passionately impossible way.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Honestly, what's not to love about a great lummoX of an honorable guy who ignores aristocratic social conventions with a twinkle in his eye and very naughty intentions...and who is fascinated not only by the heroine's (ahem) abundant charms, but her BRAIN!! And he didn't even notice she was filthy rich. I love all Loretta Chase's books, especially the Regency historicals and her early Regencies, but I'm especially fond of the ones that take place in exotic settings. In Mr. Impossible they're rooting around in pyramids and Egyptian bandit towns and befriending a mongoose while they try to locate heroine Daphne Pembroke's missing brother. She, in the meantime, keeps getting sidetracked by all the fascinating hieroglyphs they find...while trying to convince everyone that her

brother is actually the family brain and expert in the mysteries of Egyptian cartouches, papyri, and tomb hieroglyphics. The hero, Rupert Carsington, is among my Top Ten Favorite Heroes of All Time, not just because he's big, gorgeous, and fearless...but because of that sly twinkle in his eye and his big heart...and the fact that he doesn't even think social conventions are important enough to struggle against. He just ignores 'em.

While I cannot echo Publisher's Weekly's characterization of this novel as a "romp"--Daphne's scholarly personality and Rupert's dogged struggle to identify the feelings he has for her simply don't support that tone--I CAN confidently assert that *Mr. Impossible* is a terrific read and kept me engaged right to the satisfying if predictable ending. But then satisfying and predictable are two elements that make the romance genre as a whole so popular. The setting, of course, is early 19th century Egypt, but what made this book stand out from the exotic stereotypes we have come to expect of that time and place was the shared discomfort of the principals at the thought of disturbing the dead--even the long-dead kings and queens of an(other) country. Another romance convention, that of the economically unstable woman needing the validation through marriage of a rich peer, is much more cheerfully and lightheartedly overturned as Rupert--not the second or the third but a fourth son of privilege and a self-styled dolt to boot--is much more in need of Daphne's fortune than she is his family's social standing. The romantic twist, or one of them, is that each figures out the other's secrets: Daphne is a widow who has learned that she must hide her considerable brains as well as her sexuality, and Rupert is a "pretty face" who is also capable of emotional depth. And don't forget what I'm coming to recognize as Loretta Chase's trademark narrative pacing. I think she knows us, her readers, very well. The most enjoyable parts of any romance novel are those in which the principals are in each other's company, so she gives Daphne and Rupert plenty of opportunities to interact, even more opportunities than she gave Alistair and Mirabel in *Miss Wonderful*, the previous Carsington Family Series book. Each interaction informs the next in perfectly escalated ways so that it's not the action that necessarily carries the plot along (although this book has plenty of action and suspense) but the developing relationship itself. And I did love listening in on those steadily evolving conversations!

My second favorite Loretta Chase novel (and not by much!). Thoroughly enjoyable and lovable heroine, refreshingly individual and delectable hero, and lots of fun mid-Victorian Egyptian shenanigans. A delightfully nuanced, emotionally rich description of two people, firmly set in well imagined and richly researched background. What every women's adventure novel ought to be, and

usually isn't.

I admit I was very skeptical when I picked this up: the combination of an Egyptian setting and a female scholar seemed fraught with peril of the wrong kind: strained, melodramatic plots, faux historical color, and an absurdly gorgeous woman with a pair of glasses meant to indicate she's smart. I was totally wrong: I loved it. More than loved it: it is one of my favorite romance novels ever, for all time. The combination of Rupert's head-bashing and Daphne's prickly bookishness is hilarious, warm, touching, hot. Moreover, Chase uses the Egyptian setting brilliantly. Like its heroine, the novel is covertly learned, casually revealing the depth of Chase's research on European efforts to discover, study, and steal Egyptian antiquities. Most importantly for this former academic, Daphne is probably the best portrait of a female scholar I've ever encountered in a romance or paranormal novel. Usually I find them so agonizing I have to delete the book from my Kindle. Half the time, they resemble the Hollywood version of a female scientist--a woman with glasses, a white coat, and perhaps a clip-board, who looks and talks like she's moonlighting from her regular job as a runway model. Other times they are insufferably self-congratulating as they are pursued by fantastically wealthy and handsome men who recognize why they are so superior. But I believed Daphne, both her personality and her situation. She's no saint: she's snobbish, prickly, temperamental and anti-social--all qualities that you frequently see in real academics as well as fictional depictions of male academics. Moreover, the novel was full of insights on what it might have been like for a woman trying to pursue a scholarly career in that era: the condescension, the ambition, the frustration, both sexual and career. That she ends up with "Carsington's Hellion son" is too perfect. It's priceless. In conclusion, it's a great book in a great series.

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