

Miss Wonderful *by* Loretta Chase



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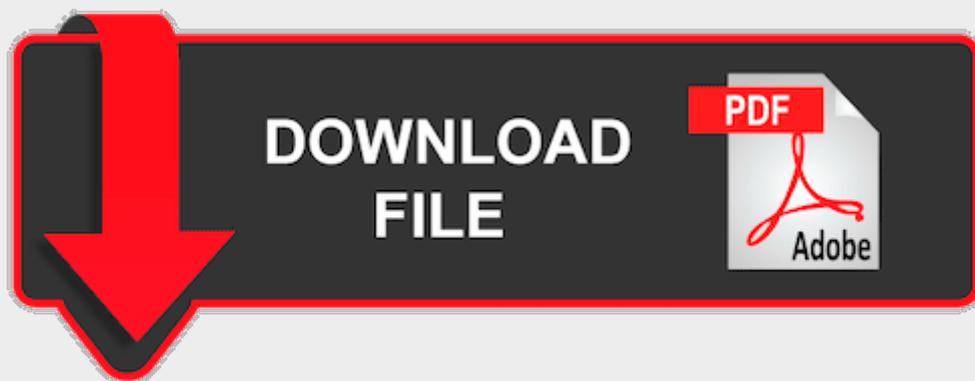
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Beloved author Loretta Chase offers her long-awaited new novel-the tale of a bluestocking and a reformed rake who clash over a matter of business, and soon find themselves facing an entirely different, and delicious, sort of tension.



Reviews of the *Miss Wonderful* *by* Loretta Chase

1. Broadcaster

Alistair is a war hero. He was severely wounded at Waterloo and the entire country has made him a famous man. He does not feel heroic. His leg is very painful and he no longer is able to think about things and deal

with life the way he once did.

Mirabel is the daughter of a very forgetful botanist. Because her father has no interest in anything in the world except his plants, Mirabel has become the person in charge of the estate and all the business attached to that estate. She is a very competent woman.

Alistair has come to Derbyshire to convince people to allow a canal to be built through the countryside and specifically through the biggest estate - the one belonging to Mirabel and her father.

Mirabel does not want to have a canal anywhere near her, the estate or the county in which she lives. She is a very bright woman who uses her wit to try to defeat Alistair and the canal plans. Her wit is very powerful.

There is a strong attraction between Mirabel and Alistair and the conversations between the two are very entertaining. Each of them feel very strongly about their point of view. But, in spite of the different points of view, the attraction is not to be ignored.

This is the first book I have read by Ms Chase and I am now a fan. She writes a very intricate plot and her characters are well developed and have depth. I like the fact that not everyone is exactly who the reader will expect.

I would recommend this book to anyone who wants a romantic story which does not follow any kind of formula. The basics are what one would expect from a Regency Romance, but the way the story proceeds to completion is new and interesting.

Ms Chase is definitely an author who understands how to create a story and characters for readers who want entertainment.

2. Dusho

Alistair Carsington, third son of the Earl of Hargate, may be revered as a hero of the Battle of Waterloo, but currently he's the bane of his father's existence. The earl has tolerated the last of one of Alistair's famed Episodes of Stupidity, and so issues an ultimatum: find an occupation that can support his reputation as one of the most fashionable members of the ton, or failing that, marry an heiress. If Alistair cannot secure an income

via work or marriage, the earl will sell holdings that would otherwise provide for Alistair's two younger brothers -- and seeing his siblings penalized for his notorious behavior is the one thing Alistair absolutely will not allow. Partnering with his best friend, Lord Gordmor -- and the man responsible for saving Alistair's life and badly wounded leg on the blood-soaked fields of Waterloo -- Alistair sinks his remaining funds into Gordy's scheme to build a canal through Derbyshire that would transport coal from his mines, thus making Gordy's estate (finally) profitable.

Determined to prove his worth to the business venture, Alistair travels to the wilds of Derbyshire to meet with local landowners in order to alleviate any concerns they may have about the proposed development. He resolves to begin with the Mr. Oldridge, the largest landowner in the area and as such, arguably the most influential -- if Alistair can win Oldridge Hall to his cause, surely the rest will meekly follow, and his -- and his brothers' -- future will be secured. But Alistair didn't count on Mr. Oldridge being more interested in botany than building projects, and is left to deal with the man's daughter Mirabel -- a titian-haired beauty whose smile turns his knees to jelly, even while her appalling lack of fashion sense drives him to despair. Alistair came to Derbyshire to escape the threat of romantic entanglements -- but when his biggest opposition turns out to be the one woman he doesn't want to live without, his first foray into the world of business promises to yield a richer dividend than he'd ever dreamed...if only Mirabel wasn't so distracting...

At thirty-one, Mirabel Oldridge has resigned herself to the life of a spinster. Following her mother's death, her father retreated into his love of botany and proclivity for scientific study, allowing her beloved home to fall into disrepair. But Mirabel was determined to save the home she loved, and threw herself into the very unfeminine work of running the estate, cloaking her form in hideously unfashionable clothes so as not to distract the men she must deal with, and so be taken seriously as a competent businesswoman. Her life may be lonely, but she doesn't regret her choice, until the devilishly handsome Alistair Carsington arrives with his plans for a canal -- a canal! -- that would wreck the quiet country life that has so long been her solace. But Alistair, despite his reputation as one of the foremost dandies of the ton, proves surprisingly tenacious -- and irresistible -- reminding Mirabel of a part of her life she'd thought long buried, the part that once hoped for a happily ever after all her own. But with Alistair as determined to see the canal succeed as she is equally determined to stop it, any hope of a future is surely out of the question...right? However, Mirabel never reckoned on the delicious chaos the unstoppable force that is Alistair Carsington would wreak upon her heretofore happily immovable resolve, for when the two collide sparks fly, and the only certainty is that neither will emerge unchanged.

As I've fallen in love with the Bridgerton series by Julia Quinn, I've found myself somewhat concerned as to what might possibly come close to Quinn's humor and sparkling characterization once I've finished her books -- and I'm happy to say if Miss Wonderful is any indication, Ms. Chase's novels will not leave me wanting. She has a wonderfully dry, understated sense of humor, a sarcastic bent that I absolutely adored, and her characters just shine. The chemistry between Alistair and Mirabel practically leaps from the page with a deliciously palpable intensity, as at first blush these characters could not be more dissimilar -- yet Chase takes great delight in proving just how wrong first assumptions can be.

Given Alistair's history of romantic entanglements, it would be easy to classify him as a heartless rake, one more in a long line of stereotyped romance heroes. It's a trope I can enjoy, don't get me wrong -- but the manner in which Chase turns one's expectations on their head is delightfully refreshing. Alistair is a man who, when he loves, loves wholeheartedly, committing his all to his amours even as the entanglement inevitably resolves into one of his famed Episodes of Stupidity. But everything changed after Waterloo, and the lame man who emerged from the battlefield masked his emotions and intellect behind the facade of one of society's foremost dandies -- dressed to perfection, always ready with a cutting quip, all to mask his loss of memory surrounding the battle and a soul-deep conviction that he is wholly undeserving of the accolades bestowed upon him by merely by virtue of not dying. Alistair's desire to prove himself in business serves as an unexpected catalyst in his journey toward emotional wholeness, putting him in a position through which he is finally forced to -- and able to deal with -- confront the physical and emotional impact of his battlefield experiences. Thanks to Chase's superbly-shaded characterization, Alistair is a character who proves to be cleverer than his acquaintance at large thinks he has any right to be, and watching him come into his own, driven to make his way in the world is a joy.

I loved Mirabel. Not only is she a spinster, but she's older than the hero by two years -- which isn't much, granted, but it's a refreshing change from the norm in romances of this ilk, wherein the hero is inevitably older, wiser, and more experienced than his romantic counterpart. While she may be completely, hilariously, clueless about fashion and hairstyles, Mirabel is passionate, smart, and dedicated. I loved her business acumen and hard-won respect as a woman choosing to do a "man's work," a choice born from a heartbreaking combination of desire and necessity. Out of this desperate combination of loneliness, desire, and attraction, Mirabel finds herself very much the initiator in her relationship with Alistair, which I loved for her gumption and vulnerability. And while it kind of broke my heart that she plunged into a physical relationship without any thought (initially) of the eventual emotional consequences, it's a testament to Chase's characterization that I still deeply empathized with her even as I

couldn't quite support her willingness to give herself to what she is initially sure will only be a passing fling.

Miss Wonderful proved to be a fantastic introduction to Ms. Chase's writing, and I cannot wait to explore her backlist further. Her sense of humor is laugh-out-loud funny, and her gift for wry, hilarious understatement makes her prose positively shine. Alistair has to rank as one of my favorite heroes in recent memory -- not only is he wonderfully sarcastic and impeccably turned out at all times, but he's positively addicted to emotional vulnerability. *wink* While Chase's leads are polished perfection, fantastic examples of characters whose experiences run the emotional gamut over the course of the novel, her supporting players leave something to be desired, the notable exception being Mirabel's delightfully quirky father. However, the hint that both sets of parents may have had a subtle hand in introducing their offspring? -- a delightful, well-played surprise. Unlikely lovers Alistair and Mirabel's relationship sizzles with electric chemistry. Couple their engaging relationship with a fast-paced plot and a gentle examination of the effects of PTSD in Alistair's life, balanced with warmth, compassion, and laugh-out-loud humor, and the result is a frothy, funny romance that is a sheer joy to read -- Miss Wonderful proves very wonderful indeed.

3. Phallozs Dwarfs

This is quite a masterful romance! Lorretta Chase is quickly becoming one of my automatic 'buy everything she writes' authors. This is the first in her Carsington series. You will feel very endeared to the characters. Mirabel is a heroine you will want to re-visit. In other words, this one is a keeper you will want to read again. Alistair Carsington is wounded from Waterloo, but terribly uncomfortable with the label hero. In fact his war memories turn to nightmares and his struggle becomes something Mirabel is very empathetic about. She is staunchly opposed to the canal Alistair and his partner are determined to build near her home. On the opposite sides of a business deal that puts them at odds. It is a rocky road to love and as Mirabel views herself as a spinster long on the shelf, she is very humble. She is moved by our hero's limp from the battlefield, but that doesn't mean she wants her lovely home ruined with a loud canal that would ruin its beautiful views. Alistair is very sexy and the book is a page turner. Don't miss out on this one.

4. Zbr

I was very happy to come across this book series. I have just finished this first book of five. It was intelligently written and the most amusing parts of the book are the hero's description of his injured and troublesome war wounded leg. The book did drag in a few spots, but mostly kept my attention and I intend to download the next in the series.

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