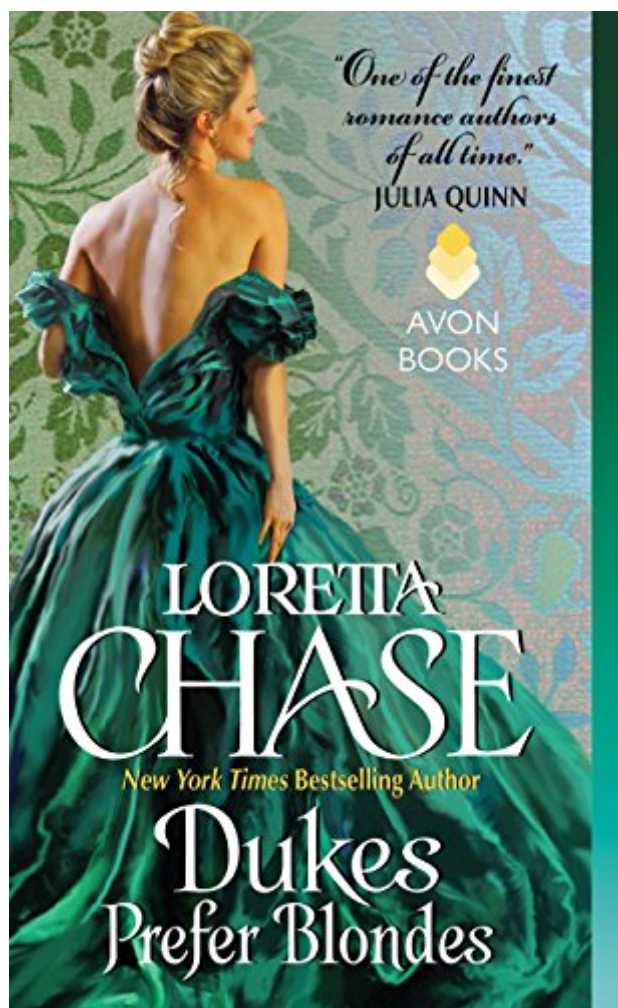


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Dukes Prefer Blondes (The Dressmakers Series)



Synopsis

Biweekly marriage proposals from men who can't see beyond her (admittedly breathtaking) looks are starting to get on Lady Clara Fairfax's nerves. Desperate to be something more than ornamental, she escapes to her favorite charity. When a child is in trouble, she turns to tall, dark, and annoying barrister Oliver Radford. Though he's unexpectedly found himself in line to inherit a dukedom, Radford's never been part of fashionable society, and the blonde beauty, though not entirely bereft of brains, isn't part of his plans. But Clara overwhelms even his infallible logic, and when wedlock looms, all he can do is try not to lose his head over her . . . It's an inconvenient marriage by ordinary standards, but these two are far from ordinary. Can the ton's most adored heiress and London's most difficult bachelor fall victim to their own unruly desires?

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Customer Reviews

"To begin with, he was obnoxious."FINAL DECISION: Simply adorable with a hero and heroine who are clever and witty to one another. The banter is high in this one. A social mismatched between an aristocratic heiress and a barrister is filled with laughter and a serious romance that is a keeper.THE

STORY: Lady Clara Fairfax is slowly being smothered by her role in society. She keeps getting marriage proposals from men who don't interest her. She has begun to want more. When she sees a young seamstress in training upset because her brother has disappeared, Clara becomes determined to help. Clara ends up seeking legal help and meets Mr. Oliver "Raven" Radford, a barrister who also is in line of become a duke unless his cousin straightens out his own life. Raven is brilliant and steps on people's toes. As the two join forces to help the young boy, they also bicker and argue into a sense of respect and then something more. But can a man who wants nothing to do with the aristocracy and a woman bred for nothing else ever have a future together?

OPINION: This was a book that snuck up on me. The pages went by and when the book ended, I realized that I adored it and went back to re-read my favorite parts. The fact that I wanted to re-read so quickly is a good sign that this book will be on my keeper shelf for years to come. Clara and Raven make such a terrific bickering couple. No one does bickering love better than Loretta Chase. The main characters argue and push against one another and seem to be entirely wrong for one another until the moment when it becomes clear that there could never be anyone better. This is a cross-social love story where it turns out that both social positions are necessary to the success of the romance. I love what Chase has done with Clara's character. She has grown from the young woman who was willing to be led to become a woman of substance and determination. My favorite part of the courtship between Clara and Raven is his willingness to allow her to be herself and not be constrained by the rules for women. His acceptance of Clara is rather sexy and romantic. He sees her for who she is and he falls in love with her. Honestly, however, my favorite part of this book is Raven himself. Irritating, brutally honest, brilliant and willing to annoy people to do right, he is one of my favorite heroes. This is a self-made man who is happy with his life but finds it turned upside down by this beautiful aristocratic woman. When he falls for her, he is willing to change everything for her. Sexy, sweet, annoying, nerdy, talented -- I adored him as a character. The plot of this book is multilayered. There is the story of the children who bring Clara to Raven and her determination to save the brother who has fallen into bad company. There is the story of the person who is trying to kill Raven (because he is the kind of man that people think about killing). There is also the story of Raven's relationship with his cousin the duke. The threads of these stories are seamlessly woven into the romance in a way that everything advances as a whole.

WORTH MENTIONING: This book has a slow buildup for the romance but it is so worth it.

CONNECTED BOOKS: *DUKES PREFER BLONDES* is the fourth book in the Dressmakers series but it can be read as a standalone as it is really a spin off from the original series.

STAR RATING: I give this book 5 stars.

I loved this book - it was definitely my favorite in the series. Olivier aka Raven aka Radford was awesome! He was obnoxious, smart mouthed, provoking, had basically no tact and was too smart for mere mortals. I LOVED him - I never thought he was cruel or deliberately mean, he loved Clara for herself and fought for her. Which is more than I can say for a lot of more charming heroes I have read. I loved that he did not take himself too seriously and his inner dialogue was laugh out loud funny. Clara was a great heroine - talk about appearances being deceiving! This girl is so much more than anyone gives her credit for. She is smart, compassionate, strong and brave. She was perfect for Radford. Individually, these two are good - but together they are a force of nature. They have such chemistry and their banter is priceless! I thought the writing was excellent, the story flowed well and kept a good pace. The love scenes were warm and well done. All in all, I thought this book was a great read and buttoned up the series perfectly. It could be a stand alone book without any issues, but you will get so much more from the story if you read the series in order.

Lady Clara Fairfax accepts the help of Oliver Radford, a barrister called Raven, to find the younger brother of one of her favorite charities' protégés. The young boy was on the streets of London, possibly with one of the gangs. His very life is in danger, if not from his ne'er-do-well associates, then from the results of breaking the law in England, hanging. The association with Raven was an adventure unlike any Lady Clara had been privy to. It was dangerous in more ways than one, especially to her heart. Raven was sexy! He is one of my favorite of all-time heroes! He is brave, logical, brilliant, funny. This author is brilliant herself in how she created him. She had him self-talking with his logical side versus his "bewildered, I am in love" side. It is hilarious!! Raven finds himself in line for a dukedom, but he loves the law and the life he has created. He is a self-made man with a successful career and he intends to follow his goals, but then comes this brave, saucy, kind, beautiful aristocratic lady who just up ends his world. This book is the end of Loretta Chase's Dressmaker Series. Lady Clara figured prominently in all three of the previous books, so if you have read the first three books, the reader already knows Lady Clara and is rooting for her happy ending. Lady Clara has been fighting the path of docile, obedient, pampered, society maiden for some time now, and the author, in this book, allows us to see her determination to be "more" in spades. However, do not let the fact that this is the last of a series put the reader off. The series really ended with the first three books. All the loose ends were addressed in the third book. Lady Clara was a secondary character in the previous books who was always a loser at love, despite her beauty, wealth and position. This book can be read as a stand alone with no questions, except wondering who Clara's three visitors were when she was ill. That little scene is completely

inconsequential to the plot of this book. There is one other hint about the three previous books' heroines by the author when she listed that a Duke, Earl, and Marquess attended a wedding. No cross-referencing events, nor relevant characters, connect this book to the Dressmaker series. And therein lies the rub for those of us who have read the first books. Lady Clara was not only a client of the heroines in the series, she was also a friend, plus she was a sister-in-law to one of them. It is annoying to me that, if this book is to be called part of a series by the author, the reader is not treated to more interaction with the Noirot sisters, heroines of the first three books. The author could have shortened the somewhat over-used trope of the sick room section and added some funny scenes with the Noirot sisters. That would have been a lot more fun and satisfying to this Dressmaker series reader. As a whole, this book was adventurous, fun and had a very unique plot, except for the long, drawn out, cliché, sick bed scenes. There the story became totally implausible and started to drag for this reader. After that, the book returned to the sparkling dialogue and sense of fun that this author does so well. Loretta Chase is excellent at portraying true historical facts in her books. I always learn something new in her books. This time it was the descriptions of the ragged schools. I had never heard of them, and I have been reading both fiction and non-fiction historical books about England for years and years. Chase's references sent this reader off on a research tangent, and Chase was on target with historical facts, as usual. Loretta Chase is always a go-to author for me. She can usually be counted on for lots of fun down the romance trail. The only problem she has as an author that I can see is keeping up with her own excellence.

Sparkling with wit and infused with deep intelligence, humor, and real emotions, this was my favorite Loretta Chase novel in years. I looooooved the hyper-intelligent and emotionally repressed barrister hero, and I loved the connection between him the heroine, who is so much more intelligent and capable than anyone has ever seen...until him. I love how he sees her for who she really is in a way that her loving, dotting, and utterly condescending family never has, and helps liberate her to be the even more amazing woman that she CAN be. And oh, every word of their banter really sparkles! I loved it.

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