



Curricles & Chaise

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When Mrs Thomas Barrington was so inconsiderate as to depart this world without so much as a ‘by your leave’, leaving two daughters to burden their aunts and precious little else to cover their maintenance, their futures looked very uncertain indeed.

Of course, it was entirely natural that two young ladies of 19 and 7 would feel bereft at the loss of their mama, but to Miss Lydia and Miss Susan Barrington their change in circumstances demanded a total and somewhat painful adjustment to their whole way of life.

With their father less than two years dead and no male relative available to render them assistance it quickly became apparent that they must learn to shift for themselves. Even this might have proved tolerable. After all, Lydia was an independent sort of a girl, more than capable of holding her own against importunate tradesmen, and more than happy to bring her younger sister up on her own.

It would not do, however. The state in which Lydia discovered the family affairs made independent existence quite out of the question. In spite of all her best efforts, within a few months of her mama’s death, and scarcely out of full mourning, it became apparent to her that there was nothing to be done but to acknowledge the inevitable and appeal to her relations for help....

It is 1810. Lydia, now penniless, is forced to seek a home with an aunt and uncle who have no interest in her whatsoever. But there are plenty of others with an interest in her – including the handsome but selfish son of the family – her cousin Charles - and two elegant brothers who live nearby.

Each, in his own way, poses an intriguing challenge to her. Luckily Lydia is well able to look after herself but she gets into a number of scrapes which almost cost her any chance of happiness before finally managing to sort things out in the end.

Curricile & Chaise Details

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Mystica says

I liked the very beginning of this book! When Mrs. Barrington decided to very inconsiderately decided to die....., this was enough for me to decide this was a mix of Georgette Heyer, with a dash of Jane Austen.

I've finished Georgette Heyer's books and love the Regency period and the descriptions of domestic life and the characters that people her books. This was no different.

Lydia and Susan are left destitute on the death of their mother and unfortunately they both cannot be taken in by a single family. One aunt takes on Susan who is a quiet, shy child and Lydia goes to the Abdales where she is treated no less than a servant, not at all like a niece.

Lydia's time in the Abdale household is a tough one. She is always made to feel that even giving her the time of day is a luxury and she should look on it as being extremely lucky to have a place in this great house. Her cousin Julia is a pretty girl, whose interests are fixed on the second son of a neighbour whereas her ambitious mother wants her to aim higher for the eldest son. He is more interested in Lydia from the onset but this Mrs. Abdale doesn't figure! To make matters worse the obnoxious son of the household has his eye on Lydia and you know it is not going to end well the way things are going.

Like all Regency love stories you know this is going to end well and happily and it did.

Megan says

Thoroughly enjoyable romp through the lives and times of Regency England. Our heroine, Lydia, recently orphaned and predictably penniless, is thankfully neither a simpering idiot or exhibiting attitudes so modern and out of place that Jane Austen would be spinning in her grave. To my mind she is a nicely drawn mix of a young lady who is aware of her place in the world, sadly sunk low, but with enough brains and wit to make her personality shine. I found her response to the situations fate sends her well written and fitting. All in all a very enjoyable Regency romance with a nice balance of characters, written with care and talent, and a plot managing to avoid many of the cliches writers of this era often fall into, and with a few curves and surprises to keep the reader guessing. Definitely recommended.

Diane says

Meh again!

As previously stated, I am reading books in a strange pointless sort of manner. I picked this out of my "Free Books -- To Read" collection because after American Heiress, and The Bean Trees, I was up to picking a book that started with "C". I did have some books in there with more substance but I already knew my "meh" mood (getting worse every day, the longer I am laid up with my back") so I intentionally picked fluff.

I feel a little guilty if all that contributes to why I gave this "only" two stars but, truly, it really is just okay.

The writing is fine, the story is fine, it's pretty a 'classic' formula for "regency romance"... but the characters are pretty flat. People make comparisons to austen, heyer, etc. and it's not even close. It's the same *genre*, yes, but that's about it. If you are in the mood for this particular style of book (regency romance; and I don't judge, because I quite enjoy it!) just go ahead and read some Heyer Georgette instead -- tons of her stuff is free on kindle unlimited and her characters and dialog really do pop. Even The Marriage Mart is so much better than this and it is straight cutesy regency romance.

So, yeah, meh again!

Gerrie says

This was an utterly delightful book. This author writes very well, and this book reminds me of a more contemporary version of Jane Austin or Georgette Heyer. Lydia, the heroine here is intelligent and spirited. As a penniless orphan, she goes to live with her extremely mean spirited aunt and uncle. She never lets her aunt bully her, and I always wanted to applaud the assertive way Lydia handled herself.

The author is an excellent story teller. I didn't finish another book of hers because I found the heroine so nasty and obnoxious as to be offensive. However, I planned to give the author a second chance, because I found the quality of her writing to be very high. I'm glad I did. This author can definitely write a spirited, intelligent, assertive heroine, with heart and compassion, as she did here. I look forward to more books by Ms. Church.

Natalie says

It's amazing how many books you can get through when you are feeling sick. I was glad to find this on Kindle Unlimited. This is just my style of romance book.

heidi says

In which Lydia is constantly sexually harassed, but manages to parlay her marriagability into a respectable life.

I love a good Austen pastiche as much as the next person. This one, however, left me cold.

Lydia is a patient, responsible, dutiful woman who is not excited about being a household drudge, but as a dependent relative with no particular mental gifts, she is kind of stuck. Happily, there is a rich neighboring landowner. Also competing for her affections are a feckless younger brother who ought to be paying attention to his own girl, and elderly squire, and her odious cousin who likes to corner her.

The story line depends on a fortuitous carriage accident, some chance meetings, and a little more coincidence than was strictly necessary.

The narrative voice is amusing, and probably my favorite part of this book. Lydia's skill at making friends while staying polite and appropriate is endearing.

Read if: You are in the mood for a low-impact romance you could give to your aunt without fear of embarrassment.

Skip if: You are going to be ooked out by how much Lydia has to work to defend herself against sexual onslaugts.

Read instead: Frederica, for a custodial sister who is more empowered.

Theresa says

I was super excited when I found this as a freebie for my kindle. I adore Jane Austen and the idea of finding another author that wrote Regency romances made me happy. It did not disappoint.

I fell in love with Henry almost instantly and was hoping that Lizzie Church would follow in Jane's footsteps and it would be obvious who would end up with the heroine. Henry's spunk coupled with how much of a gentleman he was made me swoon on nearly every page. The fruit bit? oh my. I was swooning hardcore.

It did seem like every man that came in contact with Lydia fell in love with her, and that was a bit much. Though there are girls who have that going for them. It did create a different kind of tension. Instead of having everyone dislike her because of her low connection, the couple was pulled apart by a misunderstanding.

There are certain plot points that I am a complete sucker for and Lizzie Church utilizes them perfectly. I felt myself hoping things would go a certain way and they did indeed. Such a joy from start to finish.

Leann says

I'm torn in my rating of this book, just as I'm torn in reviewing it. Someone else rated the book low, and said it was "pseudo-Jane Austen", and that's exactly what I both like and don't like about it. As I was reading it, I kept thinking that I needed to go back to the title page to make sure this was a recently published book. It is written SO much like the books of the period, which is both endearing and annoying.

I LOVE Jane Austen. But let's be realistic -- the woman would not be published today. By today's standards, her books would be considered poorly paced, with too much POV shifting, and too much expository text. But we read them and love them and forgive her because she wrote such a long time ago.

This book is written so much like Austen's books that it has all of their flaws. BUT it also has all of their strengths, plus one, in that Austen didn't have to research her time period, whereas Ms. Church has extremely well-researched the time period about which she writes.

Ultimately, I am giving this 4 stars because when I read it, I felt like I was reading a book written in the time

period in which it is set. This is a unique way to write an historical novel, affecting the style of writing of the period in addition to including all of the historically accurate details. Plus, I didn't want to put it down, and that's always a plus.

Laurie says

Got this long ago as a kindle free book, and decided to check it out. I love Regency romances, and this one didn't disappoint. Characters I could relate to and care about and a lovely ending made me glad I own it

Donna says

The language is a bit old school/high brow, but the story is good. I liked it despite the lofty writing.

Hannah Ruthie says

A regency romance in the style of Jane Austen. Set in the early 19th century, Lydia and her younger sister are bereaved of both parents and forced to live separately with two of their aunts. Lydia's lot is with her snobbish unkind Aunt Abdale, who forcefully and continuously reminds her of her low station in life. Her cousin, Julia provides passable companionship, but is not after Lydia's own wild-spirited heart. Their wealthy neighbours, the Churchmans, have two sons - the elder Henry, who is perhaps aloof, and the younger Edward who is fun and charming, though perhaps too much so. Lydia's rough cousin Charles arrives on the scene with dark consequences. Lydia's life is followed as she moves on - but will she ever find the means to provide for herself and her younger sister? And will she ever find love with a man she respects?

This was an enjoyable novel written in the classical style of Austen, the romance is sweet and the plot fluid. Quite a feel-good tale of life and love and family. It's also a relief to find any kind of clean romance now and I would happily seek our further books from this author. My biggest criticism is that it (apparently) borrowed too heavily from two Austen and one Gaskell novels, and a fresher take would have been welcome. Also, the wording can seem a little contrived at times - sentences that are too long, or with unnecessary adjectives. However, this is nit-picking, and once accustomed to the writing style of being told what people feel (more so than with Austen) it is a pleasurable well-written book.

Wealhtheow says

After Lydia Barrington is orphaned, she tries to maintain her household but is quickly forced to admit defeat. Her younger sister goes to live with one aunt, and she to another. Although her Aunt Abdale does her best to make Lydia feel the full humiliation of being a poor dependent relation, Lydia manages to make friends and enjoy herself. She even makes a connection to a local gentleman. But the course of love never did run smooth--Lydia's poverty and lack of protection

I was astonished by how much I enjoyed this book. The language is just what I wish for from a regency romance: long sentences with plenty of clauses, reminiscent of the literary style of the 1790s-1820 without

sounding forced. The tone is light, but with a dollop of social insight. Lydia herself is a wonderful heroine, with plenty of spirit and wit without ever coming across as anachronistic or waspish. The plot clips along quickly, but there's plenty of time to enjoy the slow build of relationships and yearning tension.

Jacqueline Driggers says

Well, I gave the book a read, and in conclusion, I'm not a fan of this book. It seems too much like it is the imitation of another classic author from times past, like the writer was trying to imitate their work. I found the book to be rather tedious to read, and there was too many mundane details and conservations. The characters in the story were interesting, but not gripping. It just wasn't a memorable book for me.

Mutantreptile says

Exasperating read at times. Some characters I just wanted them to die of some horrible, wasting disease, but everyone was so polite to them. I'll commend Lizzie Church for the language. I imagine that each sentence must have taken hours to construct.

Irene Sauman says

I enjoyed this book and have downloaded to kindle the next two Lizzie Church has written. I don't write romance myself but love the Regency romances when well written. This is what the author calls 'traditional', which I guess means gentle, in the sense of Jane Austen, and not the smouldering, almost bodice rippers, that some authors produce. While not disparaging those, as have read my share, they tend to all blend together after a while. There seems to be better character development, more range of characters, and a more varied storyline in the traditional form, and are generally less fraught.
