



The Last Hellion

Loretta Chase

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She Needed to be Tamed . . .

She was a breathtaking firebrand, and Vere Mallory, the notorious Duke of Ainswood, had never seen anything like her. Although he thought he was rescuing Lydia Grenville from the clutches of a renowned wastrel, he quickly discovers she is angry at his interference! Amused by the sultry hell-cats's fury, Mallory vows to teach her some humility -- in life and in love.

He Was Just the Man to Do It.

Lydia Grenville was fuming. She was determined to *save* womankind from disreputable rakes like the infamous Mallory, not to succumb to his scandalous charms. She finds herself overwhelmed by the scintillating sensations he brings to her body, but when she discovers that he has bragged that he's going to "tame" her, Lydia vows to fight his advances . . . but nothing prepares her for the surrender she finds in his arms.

The Last Hellion Details

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From Reader Review The Last Hellion for online ebook

Dina says

When I was first introduced to Vere Mallory, the Duke of Ainswood, in 'Lord of Scoundrels', I was less than impressed with him and I couldn't see him as the hero in any book. After reading 'The Last Hellion', I stand corrected. And it didn't take long, he had me right at the Prologue. Loretta Chase did a wonderful job showing how much he was affected by the row of deaths that took away his family, up to his beloved 9-year-old cousin, and even before I read the rest of the book, I KNEW he was one of the "good guys" and his "hellish" behavior was just an act.

As for the heroine, Lydia Grenville, she was a real hoot. A 6-feet-tall, 28-year-old spinster (even though she was NEVER referred as that in the book, which I found very refreshing), intelligent, self-confident and in possession of a sharp tongue - and quick fists - that had Vere doomed from the start.

The story flew very smoothly, with a series of "harmless" antics that threw Vere and Lydia together and kept building the sexual tension between them, up to the point where neither of them could deny their mutual attraction anymore - no matter how "annoyed" they felt about it. I loved their dialogue and the way one tried to outmaneuver the other. I loved the nicknames he called her. I even liked Bertie Trent in this book, LOL.

What I didn't like was the way Dain kept calling his son Dominick. "Demon Seed" and "Satan's Spawn" are NOT endearing terms! I had this problem with Dain when I read 'Lord of Scoundrels' and I didn't expect to see him still behaving like that in 'The Last Hellion'. That's a minor complaint of mine that I could easily overlook, considering that this book was not about Dain.

In summary, I really loved this book and recommend it to everyone who loves a very funny and not too-angsty romance. I lost count of the times I laughed at the witty and snappy remarks exchanged between Vere and Lydia, and I admit I had a silly smile on my face when I read the last line of the book.

Aly is so frigging bored says

I had so much fun reading this book. Thank you Catherin for tempting me with it.

Here are some quotes that I loved:

He gave her a wounded look. "I was not trying to pay any scores. I was consumed by curiosity."
Her eyes narrowed. "About what?"

"How you did it." He let his gaze fall to her manly chest. "It isn't binding, is it? What have you done with your breasts?"

She opened her mouth, then shut it. She looked down at herself, then up at him. Then her jaw set and between her teeth she said, "It's a specially designed corset. The front is shaped like a man's torso. The back is like any other stays."

"Ah. Back lacing."

"Yes. Not in the least interesting. Nothing you haven't seen many hundreds of times before." She turned away and returned to the drainpipe. "If you want to make yourself useful, you could give me a boost up."
"I can't," he said. "I can't aid and abet your burgling a house."

"Since when have you become a champion of law and order?"

"Since you pointed out my failure to provide an example of high moral tone," he said. "I'm studying to become a saint."

"Then study someplace else. I'm not going to steal anything. I only want to get my clothes."

"I've wed you," he said impatiently. "I don't want a lady. I shouldn't know what to do with one." He grasped her shoulders. "I hope you're not turning missish on me."

He danced a bit, jabbing the air with his right, then his left. "Come, what are you afraid of? Here's your chance to give me the pair of stinkers you promised in Vinegar Yard. Or was that all boasting? Did the tap on my jaw hurt your little hand too much, my delicate flower? Did you learn your lesson then?"

It came from nowhere. Lightning fast and low, her fist shot toward his privates.

He nipped aside in the nick of time. "Not there, Grenville," he said, swallowing his astonishment. "Think of our children."

There was a silence, during which, he assumed, the parcels on the bed finally attracted her attention.

"You wicked man." Her voice was low and not quite steady. "Have you been buying me gifts?"

"Bribes," he said, sneaking a glance at her. She had left the chair to go to the bed, and stood looking at the packages. "So I wouldn't be obliged to sleep in the stables." [I love it when they have important conversations, both of the make it sound like a joke]

Viri says

Me fascinó Vere, me encantó ella y su forma de ser.

Lo siento, pero tengo debilidad por los Duques HAHAHA y su historia ha sido muy bonita. Un libro divertido y muy al estilo de la autora. Totalmente recomendable

Lady Wesley says

January 1, 2016

One of my five 2015 favorites on Romantic Historical Reviews. Please follow the link to see favorites from Caz, Wendy, Claudia, Natalie, Sara, and *moi*.

May 9, 2015

Kate Reading's audio rendition of **The Last Hellion** is every bit as good as Lord of Scoundrels. Full, gushing review to come.

June 16, 2015

And here it is . . .

Like thousands of others, I count Lord of Scoundrels as my favorite historical romance, but **The Last Hellion** is just this close to topping my list. I have read them both many times and each time these Loretta Chase titles leave me sighing a romantic sigh with a happy smile on my face.

You can imagine the excitement last year when the audiobook version of **Lord of Scoundrels** finally came out, with an almost perfect narration by Kate Reading. And now, she has followed up with another excellent rendition of **The Last Hellion**.

Let me count the ways that I love this book:

1. The hero. Vere Mallory became the seventh Duke of Ainsworth after the deaths of virtually everyone in his family, the last two being his beloved cousin Charlie and then Charlie's young son, Robin. There was nobody but Vere left to serve as duke, but he had no interest in being a duke. As in Lord of Scoundrels, Ms. Chase writes a heart-tugging prologue explaining the many tragedies that led Vere to become a hell-raising sot who ignores his young wards, Robin's two young sisters. When urged to do his duty, Vere erupts:

"Why the devil should I consider the title? It never considered me." He snatched up his hat and gloves. "It should have stayed where it was and let me alone, but no, it wouldn't, would it? It had to keep creeping on toward me, one confounded funeral after another. Well, I say let it go on creeping after they plant me with the others. Then it can hang itself on some other poor sod's neck, like the bleeding damned albatross it is.

Vere's heart has been so badly wounded that he simply cares for nothing and nobody, not even himself. He is careless in his dress and manner, and he frequents the lowest taverns and gambling hells in London, which is where he first encounters . . .

2. The heroine. Lydia Grenville is lovely – fair-haired and blue-eyed – but she stands nearly six feet tall and prefers to dress in dull black bombazine. She was brought up unconventionally by her late aunt and uncle and was tutored by the Grenvilles' educated manservant and discovered a talent and passion for writing. Now she is a reporter for The Argus and known popularly as "Lady Grendel" (Grendel being the giant monster in Beowulf). Lydia – actually everyone in the book calls her Grenville, so I will as well – is a crusading reporter, and her latest mission is to expose the crimes of a procuress who forces unsuspecting country girls into prostitution. As the story opens, Grenville, accompanied as always by her black mastiff Susan, is chasing the madam through the filthy alleyways of Drury Lane in an effort to rescue a girl whom Coralie has just abducted. Grenville grabs the girl and commands Susan to guard her while she and Coralie square off, which leads to . . .

3. The first meeting.

Please read the rest of this review at **Romantic Historical Reviews** .

Nani says

¿Sabes esas veces, cuando estás leyendo un libro, estás pensando todo el rato "cuando lo acabe, lo leo de nuevo"? Pues es lo que me ha pasado con este libro. O cuando piensas "¡¿Por qué no lo he leído antes?!". Además de unas ganas enormes de leer el libro anterior ahora mismo (y leer después éste).

Huelga decir, que está espléndidamente escrito, con unos personajes diferentes, complicados pero tan bien

construidos, que te lo crees a pies puntillas. En cuanto los personajes, son geniales, tremendos, con una fuente inagotable de ocurrencias, frases demoledoras que disfrutas como una enana. Solo como ejemplo, Vere, se refiere a ella, con unas comparaciones, unos epítetos, que no paras de reír desde el momento que lo lees.

Vere, es como ver el hermano gemelo de lord Belcebú. No en el aspecto físico (son totalmente diferentes) sino en su actitud, comportamiento y pensamientos (y en cómo te calientan los dos, ffjdlñfjañjslkf). No se corta ni un pelo, dice lo que piensa sin un ápice de sutileza, más bien derrocha sarcasmo. Tiene un pensamiento bastante pésimo por las mujeres. Y tiene mucho más que contar de él, pero mejor leerlo (yo lo haré de nuevo en este año fijo). Lo que sí tiene es unos sentimientos que le marcan mucho en su comportamiento, que definen lo que hace y el porqué lo hace. Y por supuesto, te mantiene con las enaguas calientes, a punto de ebullición, durante todo el santo libro.

Lydia, es una mujer que se ha hecho así misma, se ha criado en los bajos fondos de Londres (no hay que olvidar que estamos en el siglo XIX, y como eran esos bajos fondos), que conoce muy bien las miserias humanas y lucha para mejorar, aunque sea solo un poco, las vidas de algunas persona. Es una mujer muy bella, alta, rubia, como una Valquiria la define Vere, pero por su altura poco convencional, ella se ve poco atractiva (claro, que si se lo preguntas a Vere, te contestaría que está a punto de sufrir priapismo). Pero lo que mejor define a Lydia, es un valor inmenso, una generosidad apabullante y un corazón más grande que una catedral. Ante esta mujer, Vere no tiene nada que hacer, ya que se queda prendado desde el minuto uno en que se encuentra con ella.

He disfrutado conociendo los bajos fondos de Londres, porque nos da una imagen muy real de esa época. En este libro no vais encontrar ni una escena de baile, o un día de compras, ni momento de tomar el té, ni paseo por Hyde Park. Aquí veréis, donde acaban las mujeres jóvenes y cómo acaban, como se puede morir por inanición. Es duro, pero real y merece la pena leerlo.

Y he disfrutado muchísimo con las apariciones de Lord Belcebú (grrrrrrr), como adoro a este hombre. (pensamiento profundo: estaría más que encantada de compartir algo de “tiempo” con Lord Belcebú y Vere a la vez, fdasfdjfdfañec,mncalweoi). Pero también he adorado, disfrutado y amado leer una historia de amor para mi hermano putativo Bertie. Que me ha parecido preciosa.

Lo he dicho, lo leeré este y el anterior este año otra vez. Los dos seguidos, para así padecer un proceso de caliento global y sufrir una fallo multiorgásmico. Dfjlfjalñfjdfñdjfñijafljkjaldjlsk.

P.D. Mi guerra por las traducciones de los títulos al español, la cagan pero bien.

Mo says

She was a breathtaking firebrand, and Vere Mallory, the notorious Duke of Ainswood, had never seen anything like her. Although he thought he was rescuing Lydia Grenville from the clutches of a renowned wastrel, he quickly discovers she is angry at his interference! Amused by the sultry hell-cats's fury, Mallory vows to teach her some humility -- in life and in love.

I really enjoyed the previous book in the series and wondered if anybody could top Dain. We met, Vere, Duke of Ainswood in the previous book and he came across as a bit of an ass ... and not in a nice way. So was a bit wary of meeting him.

"Due to not getting pumped regular, females take the oddest fancies, such as imagining they can think."

I adored the heroine of the book. She did not have an easy life but she took it all on the chin and rose above everything to become an independent, beautiful woman, albeit a spinster at the age of 28... and a virgin.

"Men don't see the world as women do. Men don't always see what's under their noses."

I love how these Rakes, these men about town, who spend their nights with whores and gamble their fortunes away are suddenly brought to their knees by sensible, ordinary, women. Love it.

"Thank you," she whispered again, helplessly, while she looked into his handsome face and gave up all hope of ever being sensible again.

"Mad, quite mad, alas!"

Off to find my next read. What a great start to the 2015 reading year, with a 5 star read.

Jan130 says

Vere unexpectedly became a duke after a series of tragedies in his family. But he doesn't really care about the title or the money he now has. Grieving bitterly, and angry at life, he shuts himself off from the remaining members of his family. He lives a wild and carefree life - wine, women and song - he is 'the last hellion' in his family.

Lydia Grenville had a difficult childhood, but she is reinventing herself as a successful journalist and writer of serials in the newspaper.

Both Vere and Grenville are energetic, larger-than-life characters. Their attraction is immediate once they meet, but it takes a while for them to let down their guard with each other, and the sparks fly each time they are together. There is arguing, kissing, brawling, laughing, the whole gamut.

I loved these two characters and their wild relationship. The writer does a great job of bringing them to life, and they are very believable. Their 'I hate you/I love you' kind of relationship was a lot of fun to watch. And I like the way they both accepted in the end that they were in love, and they'd just have to go with it. No artificial communication mishaps such as some authors clumsily introduce to drag out the angst. Ms Chase is a skilled writer.

The leads from Lord of Scoundrels appear as secondary characters in this book - Dain is a close friend of Vere apparently. This has made me want to go back and reread Lord of Scoundrels, which I read years ago. After having read many HRs since then, it will be interesting to go back and see what I make of LoS now.

This book was intense and fast-paced, with an interesting back story for both characters. Lydia's background isn't really unravelled till the end, and I found her story quite touching. I also liked the way the sensitive side of Vere was revealed in bits and pieces.

Overall, a really good HR. I'm definitely going to read more of Ms Chase's backlist.

Erika says

2.5 stars

~~Will write the review. But not before~~ I'm done counting how many epithets Vere has for Lydia.

It's **28**.

1. Miss Boudicca Grenville
2. The gorgon
3. Madam Insolence
4. The dragon lady
5. Miss self-appointed guardian of public morals
6. The amazon
7. Miss Attila the hun Grenville
8. Miss guiding the light of civilization
9. The blue-eyed dragoness
10. Mistress Thespian
11. Lady Grendel
12. The blue-eyed gorgon
13. Miss devious sneak attack Grenville
14. Miss Ivan the terrible Grenville

15. The Grenville gorgon
16. Mistress Melodrama
17. Miss gypsy queen Grenville
18. Miss half-naked painted harlot Grenville
19. Queen Gertrude
20. Her Highness
21. Miss vestal virgin Grenville
22. The beautiful monster
23. Miss Messalina Grenville
24. Miss price
25. Miss queen of play actors
26. Miss fraud of the century
27. Miss nemesis Grenville
28. Madam vindication of the rights of women

Unbelievable.

Somewhere in the middle I stopped thinking it was funny as I was losing my interest. I love the author because she writes romance and *more*. There have never been a moment where I had to wait for something to happen. But in this case, the great page-turning formula of Loretta Chase just didn't work. Same thing happened with me and Mr. Impossible. The characters and dialogues were smart and hilarious, the Egypt setting was great, but I barely felt the romance because the overall story was heavily focused on solving the mystery. With *The Last Hellion*, although it started very promising, the romance was also overwhelmed by others. And by others I mean a lot of things happened throughout the story.

It was a pity, because nothing was wrong with Vere and Lidya. They were two strong and fun characters who could stand out against each other, but I didn't feel them. Lidya has to investigate powerful people who abandoned their illegitimate children, Lidya has to save the children from bad people, Vere's relatives are missing so he has to find them, Vere has to collect some evidence regarding Lidya parentage, secondary characters are falling in love...

No, 380 pages of romance book was not enough when it was fully occupied with all those additional stuff. And because they only shared so much portion in the book, none of them felt important, neither Vere nor Lidya grew in me, and their romance failed to shine. Even after Dain and Jessica -the couple who will always have a place in my heart- played their role in the story, they still couldn't save the book from my poor rating.

Too bad, because like any other LC's books that I've read, this one also had some captivating moments. I just wished there hadn't been so many things that happened.

"You cannot do everything, you know. Sometimes you must be content with giving moral support. I don't need to be coddled and sheltered. I don't need all my battles fought for me. I do need to be believed in."

Preeti ♥? (Romance She Reads) says

A light fun historical, with a thrill or two provided courtesy of villainous ‘bawds’ and miscellaneous others.

Both the h/H have emotionally scarring pasts but that doesn’t really impact on the present.

I love the strong characterization of the h – physically (a veritable amazon) and mentally (very opinionated). She’s a strongly independent journalist-writer (the characterization seems a bit stretched historically/factually but then...) who’s also into social service and reformation.

The H seems weaker by comparison. Don’t get me wrong – he’s an uber alpha but there wasn’t much for him to do apart from occasionally beating his chest (to remind us of his alpha credentials) and playing Robin to her Batman.

I love the h/H as a couple and their chemistry is deliciously hot and endearing. But the thriller byplay is allowed to somewhat overshadow the romance – probably to fatten up the book but it was more an irritant than a genuinely enthralling suspense.

The secondary romance couple is too endearing for words.

The dog even more so and complements her mistress quite well.

Eastofoz says

What a fabulous love/hate romance from beginning to end! Fantastic dialog between the h/h was what made the love/hate so good and not turn into silliness.

Vere, the Duke of Ainswood, is a quintessential bad boy who couldn’t care less about what anyone thinks of him or how he behaves especially when it comes to women. Lydia is a great foil to his nasty devil may care attitude. She gets him to tow the line and he doesn’t even realize it until he discovers that he can’t live without her.

The build-up to their love affair is so well done. They’re always calling the other out and never backing down right to the end. There are few authors that can do this theme well without the reader getting fed up with all the fighting and arguing but Chase did a superb job with ‘Lord of Scoundrels’ and continues in this one. There is also an appearance from Lord Dain from ‘Lord of Scoundrels’ which was a nice touch.

Some parts of the story are quite moving while others will have you going “ooooo ouch!” and all this is done through the dialog and not endless pages of narration. Chase really has a knack for putting the reader right there as if you’re watching a movie with lots of sexual tension. There is a sub-story between Bertie who was also in ‘Lord of Scoundrels’ and Lydia’s companion Tamsin which didn’t detract from the main story as secondary stories sometimes do. And the ending! Well it left me very satisfied with a big fat smile on my face :D

Chase ranks right up there with Kleypas, Enoch and Quinn in my opinion. Pick up this reissued gem if you like the love/hate romance theme with a smart heroine and bad boy hero who throw words at each other like red hot coals you’re trying to stop from burning your hand ;D

Jane Stewart says

Weak 3 stars. This barely kept my interest.

This was written three years after Lord of Scoundrels (LOS) which I loved and gave 5 stars to. I was hoping this might be similar. The two main characters sounded similar. Lydia in this book is competent, smart, and not afraid of Vere. They have multiple spats. But the magic is not here the way it was in LOS. The LOS dialogue was witty and creative. But here the dialogue, events, and relationship felt too much like most other romance novels - nothing to set it apart. It was ok. The sex scenes were forgettable (I don't remember them).

STORY BRIEF:

Lydia is a journalist and is the secret author of a novel with a chapter a week published in the newspaper. Her main enemy is Coralie who forces young girls into prostitution. Lydia frequently wears a disguise for investigative reporting. Vere follows her and rescues her more than once. He's never had a relationship with a woman. Once he beds them he no longer wants them.

DATA:

Story length: 379 pages. Swearing language: mild, including religious swear words. Sexual language: none to mild. Number of sex scenes: 3. Estimated number of sex scene pages: 16. Setting: 1826 to 1828 England. Genre: historical romance.

OTHER BOOKS:

I have reviewed the following Loretta Chase books. Dates are copyright dates.

5 stars. Lord of Scoundrels. 1995

4 stars. Lord Perfect. 2006

3 stars. The Sandalwood Princess. 1990

3 stars. The Last Hellion. 1998

2 stars. Mr. Impossible. 2005

1 star. Your Scandalous Ways. 2008

KatieV says

What can I say? I just loved this. I loved the heroine, I loved the hero, I loved the dog. I really don't have anything bad to say.

Loretta Chase has a talent beyond romance. She took a very unpleasant fact of life in the 18th century - one that is rarely addressed in romance novels - and created the base for a great pairing. At its core this book deals with the fact that dealing with death was very much a part of everyone's daily lives during this time in history. In particular the death of children.

Of course children die today, but in wealthy countries it's almost as infrequent as to be blessedly rare. There are the tragic accidents and some cancers/birth defects we haven't cured yet, but overall most children do make it to adulthood. We have antibiotics and vaccinations now. For many of us, death is something that mostly stays in its place and visits the old. Honestly, it's hard to imagine how people made it through the

things that were facts of life in those days.

Both the hero and heroine had their own little ghosts as well as the loss of various older (but not old enough to die) loved ones to shoulder. The heroine lost her young sister to tuberculosis and the hero his young ward to diphtheria. Both of them dealt with their losses in vastly different ways, but the courses of both of their lives were deeply affected.

Was this book depressing? NO! It wasn't. That's what's great about this author. She sees both the tragedy and the comedy in life and, despite what has happened to the characters, manages to make you laugh as well as cry and the tone is overall very positive and fun.

I really don't know what to say. I have nothing snarky to add. The narrator was fabulous. Revisiting Dain and Jessica was fabulous. Jessica's goofy brother from the previous book even turns out to be a pleasant surprise with more depth than expected.

I highly recommend this and plan on going back to the first 2 novels in the series. Obviously, these don't need to be read in order to be enjoyed or followed.

Wendy says

I ADORE THIS BOOK! Don't take any notice of the first part of my review, I've left it there as a lesson to myself! I've listened again and again and THE LAST HELLION is simply superb....

I can't believe that **The Last Hellion** was written by the same author who wrote the magnificent **Lord of Scoundrels**, if it were not for characters from the previous book appearing in this one I would not have believed it. I read the two books back to back having only just discovered Ms. Chase's work and was rubbing my hands together ready for another wonderful feast of a story, I was disappointed.

I did like The Duke of Ainswood's character although I couldn't reconcile him with the Duke described in **Lord of Scoundrels**. It seems to me that when writing the previous book, Ms. Chase didn't have any idea that she would develop this character further. Vere Mallory, to the outside world is a tall, handsome, dissolute, scruffy, drunkard, always ready for a fight. On the inside he is a soft, kindhearted, sensitive soul, carrying out his good deeds in a self deprecating manner, almost as though he is embarrassed to allow the outside world to see he has a heart and cares. He does care though, and deeply, he has become The Duke of Ainswood by default as a result of a series of deaths in the Mallory family, not least 9 year old Robin, whom he loved and cared for after the death of Robin's Father. Vere blames himself for not being able to save the child and abandons his responsibilities and embarks on his own ruination....as he is **The Last Hellion**.

So far so good, I was absorbed up to this point. Vere meets Lydia Grenville (known as Lady Grendel when wearing her journalist hat) and is drawn to her, she is a journalist of some repute and a woman ahead of her time, a fighter for women's rights....I like strong women...normally I am attracted to them. Lydia did not strike a cord with me, the description of her conjured up a cold, bossy, dictatorial woman. Beautiful, tall, statuesque, Amazonian, but I could not warm to her character, no matter how many souls she saved with her incredible talents. She is just too perfect, too brave, too independent! Grenville...as Vere keeps calling her - and it really grates on me to hear a woman continuously referred to by her surname - is dealing with her own personal issues, but whereas with Vere Mallory his problems manifest themselves into loveable, roguish and misunderstood, hers did not touch my heart, I felt no empathy.

I was also confused by how many characters were introduced randomly and had to keep backtracking to see what I had missed. The plot is long and convoluted, I grew tired of it but kept plodding on. I do hate being so negative, Loretta Chase is an excellent writer, as proven by her outstanding third book in this series. I have awarded 3 stars (**now changed to 5**) because there are moments of deep tenderness and humour, the narrative had the potential to be good if it were not so complicated, I also really liked Vere's character, but mainly because I enjoyed **Lord of Scoundrels** so much. I will persevere in the hope that Loretta Chase regains her mojo in novels of hers I have yet to read, there must be another tale out there written to the standard I know she is capable of. **Slaps head here every time I see what an idiot I was!!**

I've reviewed my review! May 2015

I really can't understand what I was thinking! This is a wonderful story and so beautifully written; perhaps my change of heart has something to do with the fact that I have just re-visited it but the audio version this time with the amazing Kate Reading performing it. I only know that this time around I adored it, it was funny, witty and the interaction between the protagonists was fascinating with an absorbing and very clever plot. I Loved it, Loretta Chase has not lost her mojo...I think it's possible that I did - briefly...5 stars....sorry Ms. Chase I did you a disservice in my original review.

Caz says

I've given this an A+ for narration and A- for content at AAR.

The Last Hellion is the last of the four books in Ms Chase's *Scoundrels* series, which are linked via a number of recurring characters; and it can perhaps be seen as a sequel to the wonderful *Lord of Scoundrels*. We met Vere Mallory, Duke of Ainswood, in that story when, drunk as a lord (!), he mistook the newly-married Lady Dain for a light skirt and was immediately pummeled into the dirt by Lord Beelzebub himself, and forced to apologise.

Ainswood is the appropriately titled "Last Hellion" of the title, and comes from a long line of ne'er-do-wells. He never expected or particularly wanted to be a duke, but a series of tragic accidents and illnesses sees him attending a seemingly never ending succession of funerals, the last of them for his beloved nine-year-old nephew and ward, Robin.

Anyone familiar with *Lord of Scoundrels* will recall how skilfully Loretta Chase recounted Dain's backstory in the book's prologue, introducing us to an unloved child who believed himself unlovable. Here, the author yet again introduces her hero in an incredibly poignant manner, and all I will say about the prologue to **The Last Hellion** is this – have a box of tissues handy. You'll need them.

In the months following his accession to the title, Vere has thrown himself into an unending round of debauchery, cut himself off from his remaining family and eschewed his responsibilities, both to his title and to his remaining wards, Robin's two sisters. He presents himself to the world as a dissolute, cynical rake who cares for nothing and nobody, but behind that façade is a grieving, angry man who despises himself, his position and his life, a man who wants so badly never to be hurt again that he pushes away everyone he cares for and walls off his emotions.

Lydia Grenville is a crusading journalist who is currently working to expose the underhand practices of one of London's most notorious madams. She is on the verge of catching the bawd abducting a young woman but

is prevented at the last minute by Ainswood, who mistakenly believes that Lydia, the madam, and her quarry are merely ladies of the night engaged in a quarrel. Furious at the interference of the ill-dressed, ill-mannered but gorgeous lout she recognises as “one of the most depraved, reckless and thickheaded rakes listed in Debrett’s Peerage”, the encounter ends with Lydia knocking Ainswood on his arse and stalking off – but not before the sparks have well and truly begun to fly and both have recognised something of a kindred spirit in the other.

Like Vere, Lydia has suffered the pain caused by the deaths of loved ones, in her case, her mother, who died when she was ten, and her younger sister who died from consumption contracted during the year the girls spent locked up in debtor’s prison with their neglectful, drunken father.

The relationship between Ainswood and Lydia is jam-packed with wit, humor, and enough sexual chemistry to blow a hole into the middle of next week. Neither of them wants to desire the other at all, let alone with such intensity, and they fight their fascination with each other every step of the way. The way Ms Chase conveys their extremely reluctant mutual attraction is nothing short of masterful – the listener is never simply “told” anything; instead, we’re shown time and again through dialogue and action that these are two people who are meant to be together and who really need each other in order to become the person they’re meant to be.

There are several sub-plots running through the book. Following the encounter which Ainswood disrupted, Lydia rescues the girl the madam had been trying to abduct, who turns out to be a runaway from Cornwall, Tamsin Price – a sensible, well-bred young woman who becomes Lydia’s friend and confidante. Bertie Trent, still the lovable buffoon from Lord of Scoundrels gets to show another side of himself and comes into his own, Lydia discovers the truth about her past, and there’s a dramatic kidnap plot as well as the various scrapes Lydia gets into as the result of her journalistic investigations.

Both Ainswood and Lydia are extremely well-drawn, complex characters, who hide the truth of themselves from the world. Vere is, deep down, a decent, compassionate man who has been so severely affected by the losses he has suffered that he can’t bear to open himself up to more. Lydia is a woman trying to make her way in a man’s world – she’s frequently subjected to ridicule because of her height (she’s taller than most men), her quick temper, sharp wit, and willingness to stand up and be counted; yet beneath it all, she’s soft-hearted and a bit of a romantic at heart.

The Last Hellion is a terrific listen. The quick-fire dialogue between the principals is to die for, the romance is brilliantly written, and I loved the glimpses of the friendship between Ainswood and Dain that we got to see. I did find that the pacing slowed a bit in the middle, and that the ending meandered a bit; the truth of Lydia’s parentage is revealed alongside the aforementioned kidnap plot, and although both are relevant in that they help the protagonists in making peace with their pasts, I was so invested in Lydia and Vere’s relationship that I wanted to spend the time with them rather than focused on something else. But that really is my only complaint, because otherwise the book is every bit as good as its predecessor.

Kate Reading’s name attached to an audiobook is like having it stamped with a seal of quality. She’s someone I’ve enjoyed listening to for some time – her recordings of Lauren Willig’s Pink Carnation series are terrific, and I really enjoyed her performance in Madeline Hunter’s Dangerous in Diamonds, which was the first book I’d heard her narrate – but I remember bemoaning at the time that she hadn’t recorded a great number of historical romances. A little bird must have heard me, because since making that stupendous recording of Lord of Scoundrels last year, she’s gone on to narrate more books by Ms Chase as well as a number of other historicals, including His at Night by Sherry Thomas, which has quickly become one of my favourite audiobooks.

Her performance in *The Last Hellion* is every bit as good as it is in the other books in this series – and may, in fact, be even better, which is really saying something. Her characterisations of all the principals and main secondary characters are excellent and very well defined; Ainswood and Dain are easy to tell apart as are Lydia and Jessica, and Bertie Trent sounds just as sweetly bluff and slightly bewildered as he ever did. Tamsin's Cornish accent sounds authentic but isn't so thick as to make it unintelligible, and the various servants and city dwellers are given accents appropriate to their ages and situations.

Both narrative and dialogue are perfectly paced and delivered. Ms Reading gets to the heart of the characters and the story in what is an incredibly nuanced and emotionally resonant performance. In a recent interview, she said that she is going to be recording a number of Ms Chase's other books, and if they're all as good as this one, we've got a lot to look forward to.

Beatriz says

<https://beahreads.blogspot.com.br>

"O Último Canalha" é a famosa continuação do livro "O Príncipe dos Canalhas" (clique no título da obra para ler toda a negatividade que eu senti durante a leitura desse livro) e eu confesso que a mera ideia de tentar ler novamente qualquer palavra escrita por Loretta Chase apavorava-me.

Porém como boa brasileira, que não desiste nunca, resolvi ignorar a voz do bom senso dentro da minha cabeça e ler essa sequência. No entanto, antes mesmo de iniciar a leitura dessa obra, abaxei o máximo possível todas as minhas expectativas; praticamente tomei um chá de camomila para ficar bem calminha; respirei fundo e finalmente abri o livro.

Infelizmente, nem com todo esse relaxamento intensivo, foi possível aguentar algumas ideias e as 100 últimas páginas desse romance. No entanto vamos ao breve resumo do enredo e posteriormente irei expressar todos os gostos e desgostos que senti com relação a narrativa de Loretta Chase.

Seguindo a temática de libertinos incorrigíveis a autora apresenta agora a história de Vere Mallory. Um canalha de 34 anos que simplesmente não deseja fazer nada da vida a não ser dormir, beber e ocasionalmente dormir com alguma mulher. Como todo bon vivant, nosso protagonista evita todas as damas virtuosas, já que o trabalho (e a dor de cabeça) de deitar-se com uma virgem é enorme demais (e para não fugir do clichê ele também tem aversão a ideia de casar-se).

Eis que todas suas convicções vão por água abaixo quando encontra a jornalista Lydia Grenville numa situação inusitada que acaba ferindo o orgulho e a reputação de macho man do nosso duque de Ainswood (sim, além de tudo isso ele ainda possui o título de duque).

Óbvio que após toda a humilhação do encontro, Vere teve que vingar-se da mocinha. Seu plano maligno consistia em seduzir a moça, destruir sua credibilidade perante a sociedade e consequentemente tornar-se o único homem que conseguiu domar o dragão (apelido carinhoso que foi dado à Lydia).

Basicamente o enredo do livro resume-se a isso, não há grandes acontecimentos ou reviravoltas. E até a página 150 da obra eu estava realmente divertindo-me com as peripécias dos protagonistas (ainda que muitas delas fossem irreais para a época), contudo a autora conseguiu destruir toda minha escassa simpatia após ultrapassar a metade do livro.

Sinto em informar à vocês que a partir do parágrafo seguinte essa resenha conterá vários spoilers e também será levemente negativa. Então agora a leitura desse texto fica por sua conta e risco.

(view spoiler)

