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Charlotte Lamb

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Would the past ruin her future?

In the chaotic world of a London television network, Natalie struggled to rebuild her life--and grieved privately over the death of her beloved husband, Angus.

When she was promoted to Jake Lang's production team, the whole network buzzed. Jake had hated Natalie ever since an unspeakably humiliating night she'd tried to forget.

But Natalie knew that if she was to have any kind of a future, she somehow had to make Jake believe that he was more than just a substitute for Angus. It wouldn't be easy!

Frustration Details

Date : Published February 1980 by Harlequin Books (first published 1979)

ISBN : 9780373103393

Author : Charlotte Lamb

Format : Paperback 186 pages

Genre : Category Romance, Harlequin, Romance, Contemporary, Harlequin Presents, Contemporary Romance

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KC says

[Examples include pulling Natalie's hair; kissing her so hard that her mouth spilled blood; and demanding that she say his name/desired him while making out with her and then rejecting her. (hide spoiler)]

bookjunkie says

This book was damn good! Natalie and Jake saw each other across a crowded room at a party and he fell hard in insta-love. They fell into bed together... and then she called him Angus! She'd only been swept away because he looked so much like her beloved dead husband! It was like a knife in the gut for poor Jake, who didn't realize she was widowed and thought she was a slutty adulteress, quite a shock from thinking he'd met his dream girl at last.

Of course it turns out that he's her new alpha boss and she's the original ice-maiden-in-an-impenetrable-bubble, etc. etc. I thought it was tons of fun and I liked everything about Natalie, being all competent and reserved and depended on by everybody in the office to be the calming influence on volatile, intense Jake, who's not-so-subtly head-over-heels for her. It was nice that she had actually had a happy albeit short previous marriage and she had truly loved her handsome young deceased husband (despite that name... lol). I like when heroines are capable of knowing happiness outside of the brawny arms of the Hero. I also liked that she never really embarrasses herself, like so many h's are wont to do.

I didn't wholly approve of what Jake did for revenge, but I can understand how he must have felt after being hurt so badly. He was certainly in a desperate position for most of the book. I liked how neatly she maneuvered him into confessing at the end, although maybe she did it subconsciously. Great read!

KatieV says

3.5 rounded up. This was more of a 'cannot look away' than a 'aww what a couple' type of romance. I'm hoping Jake chills out now that he has the girl. The inclusion of his happy and sane parents gave me some hope. Very old school. Lots of punishing kisses, manhandling, and threats from the obsessed hero. Lamb was a good writer though. Bonus for having kid characters who act like kids.

Jacqueline says

This was okay. I enjoyed the jealous hero but his actions didn't always make sense even with that. I felt that he should have done more apologizing at the end instead of her doing most of it. I did like how the book went on after the I love yous to show how their relationship was working out. All in all a good read but not necessarily something I'll reread.

Booked says

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Verity says

Similar premise to Laurey Bright = The rainbow way, w/ the widow still grieving for 1st hubby & sleeping beauty is not ready to move on w/ a much hawter dude, but overall I prefer TRW 'cuz the hero in CL book acts more like a petulant child @ times, just 'cuz the poor sap heroine subconsciously utters the dead hubby's name during hot & heavy session. Whoops ! Uh la la He turns out to be her boss & besides being a natural slavedriver, he makes her pay for denting his ginormous ego. The LB book has a heroine who tries to fake it & gets caught, another big no-no in a man's book. CL book is slower & more lethargic in pace & mood. Jake is a beast, fesses up that he wants to hurt Natalie, as a way of cauterizing a wound. I liked Nathan, the hero in TRW much bettah & also 'cuz TRW ending was way more satisfying than this 1. Sigh. Makes me wanna re-read TRW again for the umpteenth time. Lessons learned :

* Heroine : Uttering another man's name during passionate encounter = a dong deflater.

* Hero : Being over-competitive w/ a dead man is like pissing in the wind.

Vintage says

*Temptation, frustration
So bad it makes him cry*

Normally I dislike/hate books like this, but CL pulls it off with an uber, over the top, in over his head, bamboozled hero. Jake raises ass-hattery to an extremely high level, but redeems it and himself with his ~~obsession~~ love for the heroine.

Natalie is a butter-won't-melt-in-her-mouth, cool as in cold as ice grieving widow when she sees a man that reminds her of her husband at an office party. She goes home with the besotted fool only to call him by her husband's name. Jake DOES NOT TAKE IT WELL. To say that Jake is a poor loser is like comparing the Titanic to a rowboat. Think John McEnroe: the early years.

Lucky Natalie finds out that Jake is their new boss, and the office gossip mill is grinding like mad with lots of help from the h's irritating office friend. Natalie ends up working for Jake ,and the tension is high. She tosses a bone to another office worker and dates/uses him to diffuse the situation.

Punishing kisses later, Jake finally gets her where he wants her, and Natalie admits she wants HIM. He gloats in her face at her capitulation and leaves, and the ice maiden melts. She melts due to the rage she feels over the humiliation.

There is a lot of back and forth, more office gossip fueled by the office friend (she's the one that needs a 2 by 4 desperately). In a final, awe-inspiring moment, Jake admits his love for the heroine. It's not so much a grovel as the confession of all-consuming love. Despite the fact that Jake is a total ass-hat meanie, he redeems himself with his confession AND his explanation. Plus his mom and dad really like her, and he is sweet to his mother.

Folks, I don't know what's going on here, but in my last HarleyLand read I had a heroine who refused the hero, and now we have a hero who *explains* his ass-hattery!!!

Jake is both terrible and awesome. Apparently recovering from thunderbolts is hard on the male psyche. Natalie is pretty darn cool as well. She stands her ground with Jake although I was a little disappointed in how she used the OM.

All in all, quite the angsty read, but it rises to the top with the OTT emotions that spur the OTT actions of the H.

I don't know if I see a HEA long-term for these two as Jake is more than a little tightly wound. But it's an intense HEA for now, and that's good enough for me.

Melanie♥ says

What a deliciously cruel hero! Another 4 star CL book. I like her books from this time period.

Naksed says

If you are wondering why that freaky doll is on the book cover along with the lovers, it is because the hero, crazed with jealousy that another man has dared to gift the heroine with this atrocious, cheesy souvenir doll, quite deliberately knocks it off her desk and into a wastebasket filled with trash and ashes, rendering it beyond repair. This is just one of the hilarious episodes in this crazy, OTT, mine-mine-mine, frustrated hero's quest to make the cool, icy, remote heroine fall for him.

If you look at the book with ironic distance and an open mind, I think you will find yourself chuckling more than once. If you are looking for a soft, sweet romance, RUN FAST!

Honestly, I enjoy CL's breed of crazed, Alpha, heroes, at least when they don't cross the line into actual homicidal maniacs, which she has done more than once. Though the hero of the piece is quite physical with the heroine (and her traitorous body likes it every time even though her mind is screaming), he did not cross

the border into psychotic and (view spoiler).

I think it really helped that the heroine of the piece was quite strong. She gave back about as well as she got, and kept the hero off balance just as he did her. It would not have worked for me if she was a doormat or wallflower. I also liked the office romance setting, along with all the malicious gossip and forever interfering co-workers. A little visit to the would-be in-laws was quite lovely and I smelled a juicy story between this elder HP couple to rival our protagonists.

Chitra *CJ* says

"Frustration" is the story of Jake and Natalie.

Widowed Natalie has been a shadow of herself since her husband Angus passed away, and is slowly fading away to oblivion. On what would have been their second wedding anniversary, she is asked to attend a party with her friend where she meets an enigmatic stranger Jake, who bears a faint resemblance to her dead husband. As they are about to coitus, it is interrupted when she calls out her ex's name, something that enrages our dear hero.

Soon Natalie finds out Jake is her boss, and that he might not be really wanting to let her go..

A tale filled with

- A crazy obsessed hero
- A strong but stoic heroine
- Office drama and grapevines
- Bruising kisses and mouth "raping"
- Loads of OW/OM drama and throwing them in H/h's faces

-Loving parents

-Angst

-Violent love

This was all about getting over your past and embracing a slightly disturbing future. I wasnt very comfortable with the hero frequently attacking heroine's mouth despite promising not to, but this is an OLD CL and it was kinda expected. Ends on a very sweet note.

SWE

3.5/5

Diya says

Jake was cruel hero and this book had me laughing at times, the whole office politics and Jake's behaviour was something out of high school playground ...with little kids bickering and the gossiping. It is what I thought about when Jake was inflicting pain on Natalie like when he was pulling her hair etc. It was the sort thing a boy who is crushing hard on girl does not a grown man!

It was fun read nonetheless - loved the ending. A keeper for sure!

LLC says

This is probably one of my favorite CL books to date. Sometimes in older HQN books and CL books in

particular I like the story but get tired of the overwrought emotions, the OTT anger of the H resulting in bad and even despicable behavior. Frequently I have trouble understanding the level of anger over a real or imagined offense. These elements were true of this book and yet I still really liked the H even when he was acting badly.

From the first page this book held my interest and kept me reading to find out what happened next. I was never tempted to skip ahead and just get on with it as I often do. This book was so well written that I wouldn't dare skip any of it because I just might miss something.

I would recommend this book, especially if you've been bored with reading lately. I've been feeling bored and having trouble finding anything I wanted to read. I've started books and put them aside and felt frustrated. After reading this book now I'm excited to find another good book to read.

♥Aicha~high~on~books♥ says

this is one book i have read and re-read over again... it never palls!!!

the book has every ingredient of a fav book

**an adorable and endearingly jealous hero

**a strong heroine (non-doormat)... even though she is a widow never once in the story did her love for her first husband appear trite or worthless(even if compared to her love for the Hero)

** a great plot with a reluctant heroine n a pining hero

the H is very lovable due to his frequent and passionate(albeit childish)outbursts of jealousy and possessiveness.

and as i totally fall for books that show that extra something (time with family n friends) for a better outlook into the characters of our protagonists.. i fell for this one (and hard)...check out this para where the hero is interacting with kids in heroine's sister's place.

Colin stared with round eyes. 'You're not Uncle Tom.'

Jake's head swivelled to Natalie and she flushed at the look in his eyes. 'No,' he said, glancing back at Colin, 'I am definitely not Uncle Tom. Don't forget that. I don't like being confused with other men.'

Tony jumped down and measured himself against him. 'You're not as big as my daddy.'

'I'm sorry about that,' Jake retorted. 'I'm still growing.'

'So is my daddy,' Colin said.

Tony nodded, giving Jake a satisfied grin.

'God forbid,' Jake said piously. 'What does your mother feed him on? Beanstalks?'

this book is totally worth the while!!
grab it!Happy reading!!
:))

StMargarets says

The creepy doll on the front - symbol of the hero's insane jealousy - really sums up the story. Heroine is a widow, still locked in grief. She has a one night stand with the hero on the anniversary of her husband's death. Turns out he is a big boss where she works. Ooops.

The hero, for his part, fell instantly in love with the heroine and is enraged that he was used as a substitute for her dead husband. He wants her love and attention and alternately throws tantrums and is kind until he finally breaks through the heroine's shell of grief and wins an I Love You from her.

The H/h were both given families and family scenes in the story. I liked the hero's parents and the rose gardens as well as the heroine's sister and her precocious boys.

The characters I didn't like were the H/h, unfortunately. The heroine was a zombie who shamelessly uses an OM to stop gossip. (Like what's the difference? They gossip about you and the H or you and the OM.) The hero was a bully - not just to the heroine, but to his co-workers as well.

This is very well written, but not a favorite by CL.

Leona says

This one just didn't grip me. The hero's actions were sometimes just downright silly and the heroine walked around most of the time in a fog.
