



The Last Time We Met

Carol Mason

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From the bestselling author of *After You Left*. Do you ever really get over your first love?

Fifteen years ago in the colourful bustle of Vietnam, Celine and Patrick met and shared four blissful days together. It felt like true love, but soon reality tore them apart and Celine moved on. But now, when she sees him unexpectedly on a busy London street, suddenly nothing else matters.

As she deals with the mixed emotions of an amicable divorce, Celine becomes preoccupied with her daughter and the dating agency she founded—not least when her ex-husband, Mike, asks her to find him someone new. But now her path has crossed with Patrick's again, is fate determined to pull them back together? Or is it Mike she really wants a second chance with?

Because first love is hard to get over. But real love never lets you go.

The Last Time We Met Details

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From Reader Review *The Last Time We Met* for online ebook

Book Binge says

Those of us who enjoy reading romance fiction find that we get set to experience the "Happily Ever After" most of the time, regardless of the time period or genre of the context. It just seems that is a part of loving romance fiction. It comes as a bit of an emotional "jar" when we encounter the unhappy ending or at best, the bittersweet resolution . . . the way so much of life tends to be resolved, if the truth be known.

In this newest novel by Canadian author Carol Mason, we meet Celine, a woman who has been married for 13 years and is now newly divorced from Mike, a radio producer for a popular talk show. Their 12 year old daughter is, of course, not at all happy about the break-up of her parents' marriage and added to her burgeoning adolescence, tends to live her days in the fog of confusion. Celine & Mike have had an on-again-off-again relationship pretty much for the majority of their years together. It has become apparent that Mike loves his wife to distraction but Celine has never really let go of her emotional involvement with a Canadian journalist with whom she shared a four-day madcap affair before meeting Mike. Somehow that initial love--the proverbial "first love" has never been left behind and a chanced glimpse of Patrick during a trip to London--a 10th anniversary trip, of all things--ultimately precipitates the end of the marriage. Mike is tired of fighting the old ghosts and Celine can't seem to object when he files for divorce. Just months after the divorce is final, Celine receives an email contact from Patrick and for the first time in fifteen years, is once again in contact with him. When he calls her and she hears his voice again, she is aware that the old feelings are as strong as her ex has maintained and she agrees to renew their relationship, even if it is a long-distance one.

Set in the Northeast of England, particularly in Newcastle, this story of love and loss, hope and disappointment deals realistically with the hurts, wounds, and challenges couples face when they divorce and especially when old attachments and feelings don't seem to want to die. Told in the first person, this novel reads like a biographical tale of a marriage's end, of the sense of loss, the fear of moving forward, the questions as to whether even this divorce was a mistake. Celine is a very intelligent woman--one who has begun her own business as a specialist in being a modern match-maker, one who reads people well but who can't seem to figure out her own feelings and hopes for the future. Mike is a wonderful man who works so hard to be a good husband and father, a man who knows he is almost always emotionally on the outside looking in, who loves his family and never fails to "be there" whenever he is needed in a variety of scenarios. Celine's dad is an aging Lothario who provides companionship for women in his own age range but whose roving eye never fails to draw him toward a beautiful, sexy woman. As an accomplished artist he definitely has an eye for the female form, but he has been unwise and undependable in his relationships for most of his life. Celine's sister has her own problems into which Celine is dragged, often by her own choice, to be sure, but still wanting the best for this woman who is, in reality, a "soul sister" even though biologically she is a step-sister. Their friendship has been forged in life's hardships as they both experienced loss when parents faded from their lives.

In many ways and on many levels, this was not an easy book for me to read. As one who is often called upon to counsel couples in relational trouble, I am probably more sensitive to the nuances of what Mike and Celine went through, the pressures they endured as each tried to make a marriage work, and the knowledge that a divorce would produce some serious emotional hardships for their daughter. Mike freely admits he still loves Celine deeply and irrevocably, but he is unwilling to even consider a reconciliation--being with her is almost more painful than being without her. The reader can feel that pain, and I was aware of being fearful for them both, especially after Patrick once again entered Celine's life and one wondered if his initial

willingness to walk away 15 years earlier was necessitated by circumstance or was it a life pattern? The characters in this novel were real and bruised and sometimes bled all over the pages. How I hurt for them all . . . I just wanted them to all find a way to be happy. The background cast of characters was fascinating and sometimes humorous being made up of clients of Celine's who are seeking relational partners and some of whom are having quite a time of it.

This is no pie-in-the-sky-by-and-by kind of novel with its hefty slice of real life. It never tries to smooth over the raw nature of the circumstances, even when Patrick and Celine re-unite. Even then there is that tentative sense--was this just something Celine wanted so much? Was this old flame and their newly re-awakened affair worth the loss of so much?

This author is new to me, but I must own up to liking her writing style and her willingness to address the brutal nature of divorce, the factors that impact these lives before and after, and the awareness that when writing about real life, there are not often happy endings. Some readers may not enjoy this in-depth exploration as I did. Others will find that such a keen awareness of adult romantic circumstances, both positive and negative, can be stimulating reading and can hold a reader's interest no matter how real and raw. And lastly, I think it important for fans of romance fiction who need to be reminded that the HEA ending is, in many real situations, a fiction in and of itself.

I give this novel a 5 out of 5 rating.

This review was originally posted on Book Binge by Judith.

Danielle says

Celine is a romantic married to an incredibly practical and good-natured man, Mike. Since her time visiting The Love Market in Vietnam, years before her marriage, she's only been able to think about another man, Patrick. When, by an incredible set of circumstances, she sees Patrick again while visiting London with Mike she's thrown for a loop and suddenly her whole life veers off track. A few years later, an extremely amicable divorce, a random phone call and suddenly Celine is more unsure of her love life than ever. Will she choose the more predictable, Mike, or will she follow her heart by taking a leap toward the practically unknown, Patrick? Only time will tell.

Wow! If only there were some way for me to give this book more than 5 stars? I can honestly say that without a doubt, The Love Market is by far my favorite Chick Lit novel I've ever read. Ever. What Carol Mason has done within the pages of this brief, but incredibly lovely novel is something I feel I've been looking for without consciously recognizing it. It's as if everything I've ever wanted in an adult fiction novel has been tied up nice and neatly with a pretty bow wrapping it tightly, just waiting to be opened and read again and again.

Now, the question is, how do I talk about this story without giving away its most important details and the ending? First of all, the writing. My biggest question is why is Carol Mason not more well known? Her writing is gorgeous! That being said, this is my first experience reading her books and I'm eager to try her others. But honestly, I'm quite surprised she isn't more well known. Her writing is equal to, if not better than many of the biggest authors I read day in and day out. This story in particular had me guessing until the very last pages what the outcome would be, but she would give glimpses along the way that would give you hope without being unrealistic. Mason also wove in the story of Celine's career as a matchmaker between the story

of Celine's love life, making it blend seamlessly with what seemed to me to be little effort (though I'm sure that wasn't the case).

As for the characters...I'm absolutely head over heels in love with Mike! I know, the underdog, but I couldn't help rooting for him all along the way. He was so incredible in his love for Celine and the way he cared for not only her but everyone around him. Such a catch! I just kept hoping that no matter the ending he'd end up swept off his feet in love. In the case of Celine, I actually quite enjoyed her character. She could have turned out to be quite annoying, having just divorced and still longing for a relationship that was in her past, but she wasn't at all. Each of the characters were so refreshingly true-to-life, it was beyond enjoyable. Even the 12 year old Aimee was a doll! I loved how they each felt and seemed so real, as if you could walk down the street and bump into Jacq on her way to her big architecture job.

The Love Market is absolutely one of the best Chick Lit novels out there and definitely a perfect read for the upcoming Valentine's Day holiday. A story of love lost and gained and the choices we make to have it in our lives, Carol Mason has created a story so real that the characters come to life before your eyes. Be prepared to fall in love and enjoy a book that could be the story of anyone anywhere or no one at all. So unbelievably well written and timeless. The Love Market is a book you cannot miss!

Allison (The Allure of Books) says

I got quite a bit more out of this story than I expected before I started it. I was immediately pulled in by the author's flowing prose and lyrical writing; it was very impressive. With that kind of talent, I don't think it will take Carol Mason long to get a pretty large reader base.

This is an emotionally driven story, and even though it revolves around the difficult topic of divorce, the story transmits more hope than regret. Celine and Mark are very fleshed out characters, Mason is as great with character development as she is with prose. The mental struggles the two face head-on in Love Market are realistic and poignant.

I don't know what I was expecting at the end; I truly didn't know which way it would go. There were several possible outcomes. Life is never as black and white as a romance novel, and the ending Mason gave her novel speaks of reality, as it was somewhat bittersweet.

I was very impressed with this book and the real feelings Mason was able to transmit through the pages. Her lyrical writing and true sense of her characters sets her apart from the other writers of the genre.

Geshna Ballgobin says

Marriage. Divorce. First love. Second chances. Romance.

This book takes its readers through the life of Celine who runs a match-making business, *The Love Market*. Mother of a beautiful daughter, Aimee, she is going through her divorce after 10 years of marriage with Mark. Ironical, isn't it?

"It was about how memories of your first love can ruin your future relationships."

Retrospective to some fifteen years earlier, Celine met her lost first true love, Patrick during a holiday in Sa Pa. But, do first loves really fade away? It didn't for Celine. Do we have second chances at first loves? Maybe?

The author's writing is incredible. She has a lyrical prose. The words just flow. The author, Carol Mason knows how to keep the interest of her readers. Good character development. However, the story-line did not exactly work out for me; I could not connect with the main character, Celine. Her feelings were genuine. Still, her confusion in the face of the events that she faced made me somehow resent her. On the other hand, Mark was an admirable character. I loved how he dealt with his divorce. I admire his resilience. Also, Celine's sister, Jacqui was a vibrant character. I loved how she went around chasing her dreams.

Overall, it was a good read.

Bookworm says

I'm sure we've all been there before = that first love that got away. Combine that with the uncertainty of divorcing the only other man you've loved who is also the father of your child and you've got *The Last Time We Met*. Celine and her exhusband Mike are now officially divorced except Celine keeps wondering if she made a mistake letting Mike go. He was a faithful and supportive companion of many years yet she never truly felt like she was in love with him. Certainly not like her first true love Patrick who she met in Vietnam when she was 21 years old. She only had a few days with Patrick before he walked out the door, never to be seen again, yet Celine can't stop thinking about him...wondering if he was the one that got away? 15 years later, Patrick is about to re-enter her life. Will this time be different or was their romance best left in the past?

The story navigates between some awkward and poignant scenes. The author compares that exciting instant attraction kind of love with dependable, deep friendship love. Is it better to be with someone predictable and who loves you to the moon and back, or is it better to play for all the marbles and risk your heart being hurt? There is a whole cast of characters that seem to revolve around Celine including her 11 year old daughter, her step sister, her quirky father and a variety of clients who are also looking for love through Celine's high end matchmaking business, *The Love Market*. To be honest, I found the array of characters to be too much distraction as they didn't seem to add much to the story. I was very taken with Patrick and Celine's romance and wished the story had focused exclusively on that as well as Celine's marriage with Mike. I could sense Celine's impossible decision and her residual feelings for both men, **BUT I WANTED MORE!** The uncertainty of who Celine would end up with, if anyone, was the heart of the story. A more developed background into each of her relationships and the past and present emotions attached would have made this book 5 stars for me.

Despite its shortcomings, this is a solid piece of chick lit. If you're looking for something heartwarming, I would suggest giving it a go. It moves at a decent pace. If you enjoy dysfunctional characters trying to sort through love to find **THE ONE**, this is the book for you.

Thank you to publisher for an ARC via Netgalley in exchange for an honest review.

Meredith says

As I was reading this book, a strange feeling overwhelmed me: I couldn't wait to review it. I couldn't wait to share it with others. In fact, I opened up a blank Notepad file and began typing this review with 40 pages left to read. This is the same feeling I had when I first read Emily Giffin and made the startling discovery that chick lit didn't have to be vapid--that it could be engaging, intelligent, and introspective.

Celine is a divorcée, mother, and professional matchmaker. Though her own romantic life has always been fraught with uncertainty, it is her job to forge romantic connections between clients. She was married to Mike for over a decade, but always harbored unresolved feelings for Patrick, the man with whom she had a brief-but-passionate affair in Vietnam fifteen years ago. The name of her business, *The Love Market*, is a direct allusion to her romance with him. Soon after her divorce, the two reconnect and embark on a second chance at love. However, when Mike hires her to find him someone new, she realizes that Patrick is not the only man for whom she harbors unresolved feelings.

The Love Market isn't perfect. By its very nature, it can't be. Celine can be somewhat wishy-washy as she navigates her complex relationships with Mike and Patrick. And what woman wouldn't feel conflicted when she is in love with two men, both integral parts of her past and present? What makes this book resonate is its honesty, and the care with which this complicated love triangle is crafted. So often, authors fall prey to an annoying, lazy tendency to vilify one love interest while sanctifying the other in love triangles, stacking the deck in the future "winner's" favor. Mason does not fall into this storytelling trap. She presents two men that any woman could love and exposes them for the lovable, flawed people they are.

Mason's writing flows beautifully. The book is simultaneously a comedy that knows when to be serious and a drama that knows when to be funny.

Because this is a spoiler-free review, I won't comment specifically on the resolution of this book. All I will say is that I was satisfied. Deeply, deeply satisfied. The story presents two equally compelling potential endings, but the actual ending was, for me, the only viable one. There are no "neat red bows" here. Some things are left unresolved, but the story resolves enough to give the reader closure.

(Disclaimer: I received the galley proofs of this title from McArthur & Company for review.)

Donna Hines says

Could it be true love between Celine and Patrick who met 15 yrs ago in Vietnam?

It sure felt that way for Celine until reality broke them apart and she moved on.

Now in London she recognizes a familiar face and the emotions start to flutter all over again.

Trying to settle her own divorce amicably is now part of her world while raising her daughter.

Should she try to make amends with her ex husband Mike or move forward with establishing that new long lost romance with Patrick?

Decisions are upon her and now is her chance to shine...

I love this new work from Carol Mason.

Thank you Carol, her publisher, NetGalley, and Aldiko for this wonderful breath of fresh air.

Margaret Duke-Wyer says

You could not in all honesty call this 'chic lit'. I am sure it will be featured as a 'romance' and written for women, but it is better than the 'chick lit' phrase suggests.

Celine travelled to Vietnam 15 years ago where she encountered Patrick who she terms 'the love of her life'. Over four days, they meet, enter into a love affair and she is smitten forever. She learns that he is married but although he wants to be with her he cannot abandon his wife in Hong Kong. After all she followed him there to enable him to further his career as a photo journalist and it would 'not be right' to leave her in those circumstances – but he would work something out. So Celine watches him leave, her heart broken. (So far sounds pretty chick-let, doesn't it.

Moving on, Celine is now married and she has a daughter. She admits to her sister that she is not 'in love' with Mike as she can only recognise Patrick as her one true love. Then on a visit to London she catches sight of Patrick and chases after him. Poor Mike. So eventually she and Mike divorce to the dismay of their daughter. The divorce is amicable and they both work hard to keep it that way. In the meantime she focuses on her introduction business 'The Love Market' named after the market where she met Patrick in Vietnam.

I found the whole matchmaking business fascinating as it allowed the author to introduce some interesting, funny characters and situations whilst the irony was not lost on me that she could not order her own love life. We are presented with an examination of what true love is – romantic love or lust or the love measured in kindness, respect and time. What is interesting is that there are no real badies in this, just measured acknowledgement and understanding.

Thank you Ms Mason for a really, really good piece of women's fiction.

Thank you to the author, publishers and NetGalley for providing an ARC via my Kindle in return for an honest review.

Yelania Nightwalker says

Esta novela me encantó por que tiene personajes muy reales, que te transmiten sentimientos, que te hacen preguntarte y replantearse un montón de cosas acerca del amor y los sacrificios que aveces se hacen en nombre de él...

La pluma de Carol Mason es fantástica, escribe de una manera que logra tenerte pegada al libro hasta que lo has terminado. Lo que más me ha gustado es que te permite conocer a los personajes de modo que no puedas tomar partido por ninguno o condenarlo, pues simplemente sabes que son "personas" con defectos, gente que comete errores, etc... Gente que podría ser real. Yo no podía decidirme por Mike (el padre de su hija) o por Patrick (su antiguo amor). Del mismo modo que no entendía por qué ella debía renunciar a algo por "él", me desesperaba pensar que él no haría ni el más mínimo intento por que hubiera una oportunidad para ellos de nuevo.

Amé *The Love Market* por que Cecile es una mujer que te contagia de sus dudas, deseos y temores. Incluso su hermana, es un personaje con el que simpatizas en seguida y puedes hasta llegar a sentirte identificada con algunas de sus dudas... O como el caso de la hija, a quien consigues ver cómo madura a través de la historia...

*Creo que *The Love Market* es una hermosa historia de amor, muy recomendable para quien busca algo ligero pero con personajes fantásticos que te mantienen con una sonrisa y suspirando.*

Fue una de las mejores lecturas del 2010.

Elle says

This was a great read.

Firstly, what a great cover. The woman waiting in the window, the muted, sophisticated colours, the title. It is all really fitting of the story within.

The most notable feature of this story is the authors writing style. Mason truly succeeded in giving Celine an engaging voice throughout the story. The writing really wraps the reader into the story. Not only that, Celine is a holistic, down-to-earth and relate-able character.

I also loved the theme of this book. I felt that Celine was unsure of the direction of her love life, unsure of whether the divorce was the right wait to go and unsure of revisiting the relationship with her first love. Isn't that so like life, where you just don't know whether you are making the right choices, even if you are mostly sure that you are.

The book was also injected with some humour, with entertaining support characters who were involved with interesting situations themselves.

The bottom line: It's a great story, but more than that Mason is a talented writer. I will be reading more of her work. In addition, the story line was engaging and the characters were interesting.

Stephanie Watson says

I have never read this author before but will go and get her previous two novels now. This book - *The Love Market* - was one of the best books i have read in a long time. I have read many women's fiction novels that deal with the one that got away. But this book deals it so differently. Because the book is as much about a marriage that may have got away as it is a first love. I too have divorced and had moments of wondering if I have done the right thing and this author made me so sympathetic to Celine (the main Character) and her

dilemma. The chapters were short and highly readable. I could not stop turning pages. There was not a moment's boredom in this book - I was gripped from page one when Celine sighted her true love, quite by chance, in the middle of London. I really wanted did not know which man was right for her - her ex or her first love. I loved both of them. I was surprised by the ending, but relieved by it too - I just was doubting that it was going to happen! In addition to a heartfelt story, this book is so funny at times - Celine's crazy father chasing young women, and her sister making a fool of herself over a man at work.... And Mason writes with such a lyrical quality. The words just flow and you get so swept away with her turn of phrase. LOVED it. Can't recommend it more. Can't wait to read her two others.

Cindy says

You are sitting in traffic. Your mind wanders from your to-do list to the what-ifs in your life. What would your life be like if your first (blinding) love had worked out? Suppose you had a second chance?? Carol Mason explores those questions, contrasting one woman's memories and reunion with her first love, fifteen years later while juggling the demands of family, work, and friends.

Mason writes in first person and often, present tense so that the reader is experiencing life from the main character's point of view. Her dialogue is spot on, and frequently, reminded me of my own conversations. The plot moves at a fairly fast pace. While it seems like light romance, this is by no means fluff. Mason slides in enough insight about life and love so that you will feel satisfied with the time spent!

#thelasttimewemet #netgalley

??? Shelley ??? says

What is it about an innocent enquiry about your well-being that makes you realise you're actually not doing well at all?

Carol Mason writes such wonderful prose. The characters were well developed, real to life yet flawed too. The story was so wonderful with both feel good moments yet at times you wanted to cry. I enjoyed reading about the atmosphere in both the UK and Vietnam, I felt like I was there.

We were empty vessels who wanted the other to fill them.

Women's Fiction is not one of my favourite genres, but when it's written with the talent of Carol Mason, what's not to love?

Thank you NetGalley, Amazon Publishing UK and Carol Mason for the opportunity to read this book in exchange for an impartial review; all opinions are my own.

#TheLastTimeWeMet #NetGalley

All my reviews can be enjoyed at <https://shelleyann01.blogspot.com>

Gaby says

All You Need Is Love, The Beatles said. Yeah, right...

Celine is a 30-something women, recently divorced, and mother of a teenager, who can't control the desires of her heart.

For several years she have been trying to make her marriage work, but it seemed destined to fail. And when, for some reason, she receives an email of Patrick, her first love, whom she never forgot, it seems like she is finally going to be happy.

It's a very realistic book, because although I had never had the opportunity to understand everything that involves a divorce, the dilemma that Celine is going through is exactly the same that any woman feels at the end of a relationship. Is this the right decision? So many people are affected, and you just want to find love. But maybe you didn't try enough? But love shouldn't be that hard, right? And why, if you're in love, everything isn't perfect?

The writing is excellent. Doesn't let you drop the book, and makes you sympathize with all the characters. Usually when I read, I tend to prefer one character than the other, but honestly, this book had moments that I didn't know who was the right person for Celine.

And although it seems to be a heavy reading, it's actually a gentle and very light book, and it also makes you laugh. The sister, who is not sure of her relationship, and the father, a lovesick, are very funny, and each one of them are very supportive.

A short and easy read, I just loved it. A heartwarming love story, full of sad but sweet moments.

Review at [Oh My Books!](#) | [Historias Imaginarias](#)

Pam says

I couldn't finish this book!
