



## If This is Paradise, I Want My Money Back

*Claudia Carroll*

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Charlotte Grey is hovering between life and death, but the weird thing is, it's taken a coma for her to finally open her eyes and see things clearly. Namely that she's made a complete mess of her short time on Earth, and don't even get her started on the five precious dating years she's just wasted on the worthless, faithless James Kane.

But after a quick peek at the afterlife, she decides that it's not all it's cracked up to be either. Kind of like a big retirement home in the sky, with an awful lot of bingo and bridge and absolutely no sign of Elvis/Princess Di/Kurt Cobain or anyone it would actually be nice to spend eternity with. So when Charlotte is offered a chance to go back to Earth, this time as a bona fide angel, she jumps at it.

But there's a catch. The person she's assigned to watch over is . . . a certain James Kane. Which is where the fun really starts. Well, just because she's passed on doesn't necessarily mean she's moved on, does it?

## If This is Paradise, I Want My Money Back Details

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Author : Claudia Carroll

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## From Reader Review If This is Paradise, I Want My Money Back for online ebook

### Juliane says

Übersinnliche Geschichte mit wenig Überraschungen

Charlotte hatte einen schlimmen Autounfall und liegt bewusstlos im Krankenhaus. Sie hört ihre Mutter, ihre Schwester und ihren miesen Ex-Freund James, über den sie selbst im Halbcoma noch aufregt. Dann plötzlich - ein weißes Licht - trifft sie auf ihren toten Vater und Charlotte ahnt: Sie selbst ist auch tot.

Sie bekommt die Chance sich als Engel zu beweisen und wird auf die Erde geschickt um ausgerechnet James zu einem besseren Leben zu verhelfen.

Letztendlich begleitet Charlotte nicht nur das Leben von James, sondern auch das von ihrer Schwester Kate und ihrer besten Freundin Fiona. Und greift mehr als einmal in die Geschehnisse ein - ob das wirklich eine gute Idee ist?

Mir hat das Buch nicht wirklich gefallen. Es war nichtssagend und die Story war flach. Schon zu Beginn konnte man erahnen, wie es mit Kate und Fiona weitergeht - und meine Ahnungen wurden tatsächlich wahr. James' Leben war so uninteressant, dass ich oft die Szenen mit ihm überflog.

Nach gut zwei Dritteln des Buches fühlte es sich immer noch so an, als hätte die eigentliche Geschichte noch nicht begonnen. Es war regelrecht langweilig und die Autorin schaffte es nicht, mich zu fesseln.

Dennoch mochte ich die Geschichte um Fiona, was mich dieses Buch auch weiterlesen ließ. Denn Ich-Erzählerin Charlotte gewann nur wenig Sympathie - mag aber durch ihr kindisches und egoistisches Verhalten gekommen sein.

Das Ende war abzusehen, aber trotzdem nett. Kann man nicht meckern, sich sonderlich freuen aber auch nicht.

Zum Schreibstil kann ich nicht viel sagen, er ist mir nicht wirklich in Erinnerung geblieben. Was ein Zeichen dafür ist, dass weder über die Maßen schlecht oder gut war.

Cover ist toll, die Farbe und die Ornamente gefallen mir sehr gut. Titelwahl finde ich nicht so gut, hätte man lieber den Originaltitel wörtlich übersetzen sollen.

Insgesamt ist das Buch für Zwischendurch ganz nett, aber man sollte nicht erwarten, eine große Liebesgeschichte zu lesen oder gar eine Geschichte, die durch übersinnliches Thema röhrt.

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### Ana says

*\*Copy provided by publisher via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review\**

Whoooooaa! I finally read it. I'm ashamed to admit it's been more than a year since I've downloaded it from NetGalley. I did try reading it once soon after downloading it, but it didn't work for me. I was hoping if I postpone reading and get into a certain mood I'd enjoy this book more. So I gave it another chance. This time I did manage to finish it, however as you can see from the rating, I found it just ok.

You see, I had few issues with it, more than few actually. The writing was ok, though frankly, I wasn't

impressed. The premise was promising, and I thought I'll enjoy this book as much as I enjoyed Heaven Can Wait by Cally Taylor, since it basically the same stuff, going to heaven and learning a lesson. BUT, I was disappointed.

The writing felt a bit strange and very hard for me to understand, not because of the Irish slang (I've read quite a few books by Irish authors so am pretty familiar with some words/phrases they use). The sentences were too long, and as a rule, that's always something which makes reading the book harder for me.

The characters, oh my god - don't let me start with that! Not only I couldn't relate to Charlotte, the MC, she was too annoying from the start till the very end. Now it happens rarely that I dislike a character so much. Of course, I've read many books with characters I didn't like at the beginning, but somehow by the end of the book they would kind of grow on me. They would leave a certain impression, impact, make me care for them or feel them. With this book - it was NADA! NOTHING!

No matter how hard I tried I COULD NOT understand or like Charlotte. That's a major problem with me, which of course reflected my enjoyment of this book.

I will check out Claudia Carroll's other books, but I just can't recommend this one.

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### **Gromeo558 says**

I had to force myself to finish this book. I found myself skipping paragraphs at a time.

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### **Kersty Evans says**

So full of lively funny characters. After an accident a young woman becomes an angel. But instead of peace n bliss she is given a lot of tasks to sort out those left on earth. Her family, her best friend, n especially her loser of a cheating boyfriend. Sometimes frustrating when the people just don't get the message or learn the lesson n even as an angel she can't always intervene. She can see everyone exactly as they really are, but they can't see or hear her. They're also talking about her! A lively, funny story with an unexpected ending - thoroughly enjoyable.

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### **Sangeetha says**

A run down version of 'Click', highly disappointing and not worth the time. The story hardly grabs your attention and stuck between 4 characters and none of them strong enough to keep the story interesting.

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### **★Ruth★ says**

**DNF :\*(**

I felt like I'd read it all before & it was a little try hard in the comedy department IMO.

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## **Lelia Taylor says**

If This Is Paradise, I Want My Money Back

Claudia Carroll

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Charlotte lies in a hospital bed, trapped by a coma, listening to the conversations around her. Most are directed at her in attempts to bring her back to consciousness and she appreciates the efforts, really she does, but a little peace and quiet would be nice, too. Between her best friend Fiona's chatter about the latest guy she met on the internet and her mum's blathering on about just about anything, not to mention the boring music they make her listen to, Charlotte just might stay down where it's really rather nice.

None of them know the truth about what happened right before the car accident when her significant other, James, unceremoniously dumped her after five years and asked her how soon she could move out. Charlotte was clueless, had no idea he...hmm, she can't quite remember but it'll come to her...and, well, she'd ignored the fact that all her family and friends had disliked him from the beginning. Looking back, she guessed she should have paid attention.

And then James comes to see her and pours on the charm, trying his best to appear terribly concerned. Unfortunately for him, no one in the room is buying his act. Then, listening to his BS, she remembers, the Other Woman. To top it all off, he takes a call from his new honey and starts with the sexy talk, right there beside Charlotte's bed. That's all it takes for her to see the bright light.

Charlotte finds herself apparently dead and about to be "assessed" by Regina Angelorum (who first has to take a call with Gabriel, THE Gabriel) to see whether she's a candidate for the AWE programme—that's Angelic Work Experience. Next thing she knows, she's in a classroom, learning all she needs to know to be a guardian angel.

Then she gets her earthly assignment and she can hardly believe she's right back on earth...in James's house. Horrified at first at the idea that James is her charge, she soon learns that there is a way she can mess with him. Charlotte is delighted with her new-found abilities until the day she learns that being an angel is not all fun and games. Fortunately, there might be a way she can redeem herself.

This is a delightful mix of laughter and sorrow, anger and forgiveness and, above all, redemption. Ms. Carroll has crafted an intriguing story and I look forward to reading more of her work.

Reviewed by Lelia Taylor, November 2011.

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## **Ruzaika says**

Review can also be found here: <http://reading-is-dreaming-with-open-...>

*"Girls are like tea, you don't know how strong they are until they get into hot water."*

I've always loved Claudia Carroll's works on account of her extremely down-to-earth style of writing and the serious subjects she chooses to write about in an exceptionally amusing way. This looked like tons of fun- who wouldn't want revenge, sweet revenge, on an ex-boyfriend? What promised me a fun read was the protagonist, Charlotte Grey who is on the brink of death, and gets to see what the afterlife has in store for her.

I expected a lot more when I first delved into the story though. The synopsis, as in many other books, sort of spoils what could have been many surprises for the reader, but nevertheless the story line did have a slightly serious undertone when it came to Charlotte's relationship with her mother and sister. Charlotte herself was a total riot. Waking up to find herself in a coma, she is all ready for a serene, well-deserved rest. Oh, but no.. It looks like everyone she knows is very determined to bring her back by yakking away to her in the hope that she can hear them. Hear them she can, but then comes the ex-boyfriend (James), talking to Sophie-bloody-Kelly over the phone. Wait. He LOVES her? This doesn't bother Charlotte one bit- she only goes into a cardiac arrest, and next thing she knows, she's with her father. This could have been a lovely little re-union, except for the fact that her father died ten years ago. So does that mean she's dead too? What happens next is for you to read and find out.

I felt the author could have made this whole ordeal a bit shorter. One of the highlights of the book was the many tricks Charlotte plays to get back at James. He deserved her crazy antics and made me laugh out loud in more than one instance. But while this is really fun to read about, not to mention oddly satisfying, I do think she went a tad too far. Her interventions in Fiona's life, though well-intended, were particularly exasperating. Apart from these few things that tested my patience, I found that I liked this book just as much as I did Carroll's other works.

I really liked how Charlotte didn't spend a lot of time wallowing in self-pity and her growth into a strong character was pretty fulfilling. Even though the ending was predictable and it's highly unlikely that I'd read it again, the book was nonetheless very engaging and kept me turning the pages. You should definitely go for it if you're on the lookout for a lighthearted, hilarious chick-lit to kill your time. I daresay YOU wouldn't want your money back!

The story idea: 5/5

The realization of the story: 3/5

The characters: 3.5/5

The cover: 3/5

Enjoy factor: 4/5

**Final Rating: 4/5**

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**Sara says**

**2.5 Stars**

Up until the end of the book I was undecided between three and four stars, but the end left me undecided between two and three. Why?

Because:

The end is sort of a cliffhanger, but there's no follow up book. It was unsatisfactory... the three main stories get wrapped up by the head angel in a very very short chapter and that's it. Also, there is no romance for the protagonist, Charlotte. The book is all about her getting over her ex and the lives of her best friend, Fiona, and sister, Kate. And I know that she's an angel, but the author could have slipped in a fellow training angel and make them bump into each others during their training/angelic duties, right? And finally the amount of back-story, conversations with the dad, and descriptions of heavenly offices or so are simply too much and too long.

On the positive side the book has some funny moments, and the idea of having uncensored access to your ex is great and was the best part of the book.

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### **Alexa says**

Brilliant!

Loved that this was chick-lit with a twist, the ending was predictable but that didn't matter.

Favorite quote: "girls are like tea, you don't know how strong they are until they get into hot water!" - So True

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### **Elizabeth Adam says**

A book I picked up randomly at a used bookstore ended up being such a fun read. Switching between focusing on four different people's lives, this book makes you want to keep reading without putting the book down. So good! Got me feeling all the feels.

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### **Margaret says**

Charlotte, after spending 5 years of her life waiting for James to finally make the commitment, finds herself dumped. She is so angry and distraught, that she tears off in her car and lands herself in the hospital where she can hear voices and music; but she quite likes being in the comfy comatose state, thank you very much. As she snuggles down deeper into her blankets and hazy thoughts, the air takes on a chill and she knows that the rat James has come to check on her. She has to lie there and hear his self-centered words, knowing that he is the one who caused her pain. All of a sudden, there are buzzers sounding, nurses shouting, metal paddles being used on her skin and then nothing but whiteness.

Next thing she knows, she is in a waiting room of some sort and the only comfort is that her dad (dead for many years) is holding her and promising that he has always been with her and that he will continue to be with her, reassuring her that things will be "all right". He accompanies her to another room to meet Regina, in charge of AWE (Angelic Work Experience). Should Charlotte decide to go for training as an angel, she will get a chance to go back to earth to finish her earthly business and it will then be determined where Charlotte will go after she completes her job. Only problem is, her job is to watch over and guide...James. Yeah, THAT James.

Well, Charlotte accepts the assignment after she realizes that now she can get her revenge. He can't see her, but boy, can he hear her; and she gives him an earful in several very funny scenes. Who knew being an angel could be such fun, especially when you are tormenting the one who sent you off to the realm of uncertainty to begin with.

But, Charlotte doesn't stop with tormenting James. She meddles in her sister's life and her best friend's life and does some damage there too when it becomes apparent she doesn't really know what's best for everyone nor does she know all the facts about their lives.

Needless to say, Charlotte is called back to Regina when things go horribly wrong for all concerned. It is then that her real fate, her real place will be decided.

I liked the unusual plot and Charlotte was a likeable, if a little out of control, angel candidate. She loved with all her heart and that was apparent. She just let emotions get the best of her.

The character of James was quite unlikeable so it was easy to enjoy Charlotte's antics at making him miserable. The dialogue between the two was laugh out loud funny.

I guess that's what I enjoyed most. The book was light and funny...and yet, there was something touching about the idea of knowing that perhaps, even after the soul leaves the body, there is Something or Someone watching over us. (Just, please, not Charlotte.)

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### **Annie says**

I'd finished reading all the Joanne Fluke books that our library had, and which I quite enjoyed. So I asked the librarians about another author that was light-hearted & easy reading (but not romance or soppy!) Claudia Carroll was one of the suggestions.

So I tried this book, but I didn't finish it. The main plot idea is funny enough, but the character of Charlotte I found to be a bit pathetic & sorry for herself. Plus the book didn't go anywhere very quickly due to long descriptions of people & rooms & so forth.

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### **Suad Shamma says**

I actually really, truly, enjoyed reading this novel. I was worried I'd end up asking for MY money back, but I am glad Claudia Carroll proved me wrong.

Yes, it's a light, fluffy, story - even though the protagonist is actually in a coma - and yes, it is quite predictable, but I still enjoyed it immensely. It is the kind of thing I really needed at the time that I read it.

This book has been perched on my shelf for quite a long time, and I didn't know when I was going to get to it, but I finally did. And I finished it easily in a day or two. I found Charlotte Grey to be an absolute delight, and was very satisfied that she played all those nasty tricks on James. What a total douchebag. Even though she wasn't supposed to, I was inwardly happy every time she got back at him. Oh, the laughs I got out of it.

On the other hand, there were several story lines that weren't as light and fluffy, such as those of her sister's

and mother's. I found the story line involving her sister to be very heart breaking and sad. I was very disappointed at how things turned out for her, but not at Carroll's choice of writing it that way.

What I did find annoying was Charlotte's meddling in Fiona's life. That needed to stop. I found myself yelling at the book at some point telling Fiona to stop listening to Charlotte!!

The book reminded of A Tooth Fairy in the way that the events took place and how this bizarre, insane, surreal organization takes you up and changes your life.

I really liked how Charlotte took it all in stride and not too much time was spent feeling sorry for herself, or going through passages of misery. I also liked the humor and sarcasm of her character. But most of all, I really enjoyed watching her grow and develop as a protagonist.

Very enjoyable read.

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### **Chibineko says**

Chick lit has always been one of my guilty pleasures. It's pure potato chip pleasure for me and I've been known to completely cut myself off from civilization whenever Sophie Kinsella or Meg Cabot put out a new book. Paradise gives off roughly the same feel of guilty pleasure, but fails to deliver on exactly all that it promised.

I'm a little torn at how to describe this book. Carroll puts out an entertaining read to where I'm definitely going to track down her other books, but this was a bit of a chore to read at times. The book's general premise sounded like it'd be incredibly fun because after all, being able to get even with an awful ex is something most of us would love to do. In this aspect yes, the book was fun. I read the scenes of Charlotte tormenting her ex with a bit of sadistic glee. These were some of the better written scenes. Charlotte made for an interesting main character in that she was enough of an every-woman to be relatable to, something that is invaluable in any sort of read. She made me want to keep reading about her even as I wanted to throttle her for being so dense.

Where the "but I'm torn" part comes in is with the book's predictability. You can see every big revelation and plot twist coming miles away. This wouldn't be so bad considering that chick lit books tend to be a little formulaic by nature, but when you add in the parts of the book where the plot got a little dull, it became a chore to read at times. The amount of times where Charlotte visits her family members really could have been reduced greatly because most of what she does ends up being the same as the last time she saw them. I'd express more irritation over how completely devoid Charlotte is of common sense (she wouldn't know it's raining even if her head was soaked), but as this is something that was brought up in the book as a plot element I figured that I'd give it a pass. If anything, Charlotte's moronic nature was something of a "how much more simple minded can you get" form of entertainment where I eagerly turned the pages like a crack addicted chipmunk to see exactly what she'd do next.

Even with all of the irritation I would occasionally feel throughout the book, I was somehow unable to put it down. This might not live up to the high standards put out by Kinsella's fare, but Paradise was still an addicting read and I know I'll be tracking down the author's other works. Carroll still has a way to go but I have a feeling I will end up staying with her for the long haul. My recommendation? For anyone who loves chick lit, this is something you'll probably want to read, but you might want to flip through it first or check it

out at the library.

3 out of 5 stars

(ARC provided by Netgalley)

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