



Too Close for Comfort

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Foodie Joy Waltham is stressed out. Before she can expand her business empire, she needs her ex-husband's signature dissolving their silent partnership. A trip to Maine to find her ex, get his autograph, and chill out seems ideal. But instead of relaxing, Joy winds up inserting herself in the middle of a mystery—and wrapped in the overprotective arms of Comfort's chief of police—her ex-husband.

After retiring from LAPD, Paul Donovan took charge of tiny Comfort's police department. Back in his hometown he may be bored senseless, but he's nowhere near ready for chaos in the form of his ex-wife shaking up his life. Joy arrives in perfect time to meddle in his investigation of a string of accidental deaths. Forced together again, Joy and Paul confront some unexpected challenges. Their son is in harm's way in the Middle East and their daughter is being stalked back in California. It's emotional déjà vu as they dig through their thorny past, reawaken old sexual attraction, and finally face the fact they never stopped loving each other.

Too Close for Comfort Details

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From Reader Review Too Close for Comfort for online ebook

Samanthe Tucker says

I'll first confess I'm a fan of Ms. Marshall's Harlequins, because of the emotion she brings to her stories, but "Too Close for Comfort" is more than a super-sized category romance. At times zany, racy, heart-touching and suspenseful, there's no mistaking this for a simple reunion story.

The heroine, successful health-food entrepreneur Joy Waltham, grapples with mid-life panic attacks, an emptying nest, and a trip to Comfort, Maine, to see her too-sexy ex from whom she needs one last, little favor ...

The hero, small-town Police Chief Paul Donovan, finds his distracting wife -- ex-wife -- on his doorstep, determined to wrangle a signature out of him, and maddeningly underfoot during an investigation into a handful of deaths involving a new designer drug.

As Joy and Paul close in on answers, they also discover a few fundamental truths about their failed marriage and their current feelings for each other. Not an easy journey of discovery, but this is where, in my opinion, the story departs from a fun, entertaining romantic suspense and delves into something deeper. I appreciated the valid reasons why the marriage ended, yet still found myself rooting for reconciliation. The characters have grown since the divorce. Priorities have shifted and, honestly, they're a lot more right for each other now than they were years ago.

Not much gets between me and my sleep, but I stayed up way past my bedtime to see how this story turned out!

Francheska says

Ms Marshall wrote a wonderful love story with suspense included in a story for us "older" readers. There was a romance and the just the right about of sex (for me any way). I enjoyed the story very much and am very glad I was introduced to her books at the convention in Burbank in November. Thank you.

Romancing the Book says

Reviewed by Maria

Book provided by the publisher for review

Review originally posted at Romancing the Book

This book has been described as a mature romance and a reunion story and of course it is both. But it is actually a lot more. It is, on one level, pure reading entertainment with comedy thrown in for good measure. And not only comedy, suspense makes its appearance too. It's also an extremely honest look at life, love and relationships.

The plot is simple. Paul and Joy have been divorced for three years after a twenty three year marriage. Joy is

now a successful entrepreneur in California where she runs a pre-packed foods company along with her daughter, Edie. Paul's the police chief in the small town of Comfort in Maine, which is pretty much back to his roots, as he originates from that place, although he was in the LAPD during his marriage to Joy. I have to confess, with Comfort in Maine's proximity to a city called Portland, I kept confusing my US geography, thinking that Comfort was in Oregon, not in Maine.

Joy suffers from anxiety and panic attacks. She worries about her son Michael who's serving in Afghanistan. There's that ever present tension of running the business. Her panic attacks are becoming more frequent and worrying. So her daughter Edie, who's finding Mom's presence rather tedious, suggests she flies to Maine for a while, to relax, slow down, recharge her batteries and stay in the guest house of a beloved relative. And although Edie isn't saying this the fact that her father is the Chief of Police in the area means that he has the power to keep an eye on Joy. The ostensible reason for going is, however, to buy Paul, who's of course both father and former husband, out of the business which he helped the two ladies set up and of which he's a shareholder.

Joy's an adventurous, courageous woman who takes life head on. Being rather antsy and unable to stay still, she gets involved in kayaking lessons and handgun classes. She walks around a lot and before long, disturbed by teenage drug deaths in the vicinity, stumbles upon information which could lead to the busting of a drug ring. Concerned, her former husband has her shadowed for her own safety, afraid that she could inadvertently walk into danger. As we get to know Joy, we realize that he's probably perfectly correct. She has the comic propensity to show up in the wrong place at the wrong time. Joy and Paul embark on a series of adventures, some of them absolutely hilarious.

We notice Paul appreciating the fact that Joy has maintained her youthfulness and he's done the same. They find themselves coming together for personal reasons too, one of which includes a beloved family pet. We see Paul manipulating situations to have Joy stay over, much to the delight of his elderly aunt and their daughter. But when Joy finds out what he's up to, will she be pleased about this? Joy is above all an autonomous lady who does not appreciate being controlled. Once she finds out what Paul is up to, the sparks will surely fly.

A wonderfully entertaining read, full of rich humanity, humor and wisdom. One of the lessons which I've taken away from this read is that happy ever after is a one day at a time job, not necessarily 'forever' one.

Favorite Quote: It looked like his ex-wife. The woman had the same body type and right now she stood, weight on one foot, hip jutting out, exactly like Joy used to do. Always one of her best features, like a thumbprint, he'd recognize that ass anywhere.

Robena Grant says

I loved this book. It was a really fun read. I first read it as an e-ARC but have since bought a copy for my Kindle.

I've always enjoyed the depth of emotion the author achieves in her stories, whether they're HM&B medical or single title romance like this one. Ms. Marshall is not afraid to dig deep into those emotional dark spots, and her quirky sense of humor is a delight.

Too Close for Comfort features an older hero and heroine who have a shared past. It is, however, more than a

second chance at love story. I'd call it a "hot sex with your ex" story, at least at first. But what transpires as the story unfolds is the rekindling of deeper, repressed feelings. Then there's the adventure that keeps things in the sleepy town of Comfort, Maine, hopping: mystery, a drug ring, and death.

The emotional thread is love. Resolving past issues, letting go of control, embracing family. You won't be disappointed with this read.

Roz Lee says

This is another great read from an author who continues to surprise me. *TOO CLOSE FOR COMFORT* is a cozy mystery woven together with a tender love story. As I've come to expect, Ms. Marshall's characters come across as real, fleshed out people. They are your neighbors and your friends. Their emotions and personal struggles are believable.

As in her earlier work, *ONE FOR THE ROAD*, Ms. Marshall has done the romance world a favor by focusing on an older generation. Joy and Paul have been there – done that. Their twenty-something years of marriage ended in divorce, but they soon find that a piece of paper doesn't make a divorce any more than it does a marriage.

Ms. Marshall does a fabulous job with the rebirth of the romance that brought these two together in the first place. If there's any fault to be found in this story, it's the way the heroine stumbles and bumbles her way into her ex-husband's business. I was reminded of a clueless version of Jessica Fletcher of *Murder She Wrote* fame, complete with a Cabot Cove-ish setting. I can forgive the heroine's behavior because it becomes apparent that this trait was part of what made her attractive to the hero when they first met – before life's struggles created a wedge between them.

Overall, I give *TOO CLOSE FOR COMFORT* four stars. I enjoyed watching Joy and Paul rediscover what made them fall in love in the first place and come to terms with the realities that forced them apart.

CoffeeTimeRomance andMore says

Paul Donovan has retired from the LAPD and moved back to Comfort, Maine to become the chief of police there. For the most part, it is a quiet job, but lately there have been deaths related to drugs that Paul needs to solve. Then there is a bigger issue—his ex-wife has returned and manages to get herself in the middle of his investigation.

Joy Waltham is looking to expand her business, but she needs her ex-husband's signature to move forward. So she heads to Comfort to get what she needs. Being much stressed lately, she finds herself relaxing and that is when her curiosity lands her in the middle of a drug investigation.

As Joy and Paul spend more time together, they find their attraction and love is still there, but there are more issues than jumping back into a relationship. Can they rekindle what they once had or should they just live separate lives?

Too Close For Comfort is a very entertaining read. The relationship between Paul and Joy is complicated. They must work through the same issues we all go through in our lives. They have great chemistry together, while the rest of the characters round it out for a mystery and romance all in one. I would suggest adding this

to your bookshelf.

Matilda

Pam Lowery says

Second Chance at its Best!!!

I love second chance stories, and this is one of the best I have read.

Paul and Joy had been married for 23 years when, I guess you could say life got in the way. She had a successful frozen healthy food company and he was an LAPD cop climbing the ranks. The story starts 3 years later when Joy and her daughter Edie wanted to expand the business, but Paul had a 20% interest in the company and they needed to buy him out. Joy has been suffering from panic attacks, so stressed at work, that Edie demands she go to Comfort, Maine where Paul was from and is now living, and have him sign a contract buying him out and pay him. So, she does, she stays at Paul's Aunt Clarissa's B & B. She doesn't let Paul know she is there and relaxes and does some kayaking, hiking and other things around town. Now Paul keeps thinking he is seeing Joy at different places, but thinks she is in LA. Edie calls and let's her dad know she is there and why, but asked him to keep her there for a while. Well, the divorce wasn't a pretty one and it could go either way when they meet up. Joy overhears something about buying drugs from someone and she goes to tell Paul. Paul is the chief of police now in Comfort and has 2 teens that have died of drug overdoses, so he listens to her, but tells her to let it go. Well, she doesn't, she actually helps him in many ways, but gets into trouble with him too. He sends one of his deputies to watch after her without her knowing of course. She thinks she is being stalked when Drew messes up his duty. Paul talks her into staying with him until they find whoever is following her, knowing he set it up. Paul and Joy become close again and one morning the power of attraction is too strong and they make love and Joy wonders why she ever left him. They continue to get closer and they both realize the feelings are still there. They find out who and where the drugs are being made because of a clue from Joy, but she doesn't know they are going to raid the place and she follows. After being stalked for good, Paul sends Joy back to California to keep her safe till everything settles in Comfort. It is there that she finds out that Edie had a stalker for real, then finds out Paul had her followed, she is furious. Meanwhile, one of the reasons they grew apart was that Paul signed the papers for their son Michael to join the Army before he was 18, now he's in Afghanistan and she worries constantly about him. While Joy is in California, Paul gets word that Michael had been injured by a car bomb, but was going to be okay after a while, well he didn't tell Joy, because they had had a previous scare and he wanted to wait till he knew Michael was better before he told her. And yes, she found out when a nurse called her when she was at Paul's. She was furious and broke it off completely. But with the help of Edie and Michael, who got to come home for rehab, she realizes Paul will always be the one.

The reason I enjoyed this so much is that they were not 20 or 30 somethings, they were in their late 40's and had already lived a good life.

Christine London says

Do you like cozy mysteries mixed with second chance romance? A recommended read:

Too Close For Comfort by Lynne Marshall

From the hero and heroine's 'twenty-something year old, perfectly capable daughter' of "unconventional beauty" to a son who'd joined the military with his father's blessing, but without bothering to tell his mother; this book struck many all-too-familiar personal chords. The mother of two uncannily similar adult children myself, so vividly described in *Too Close for Comfort*, this tale of a divorced couple finding their way back together is an endearing mix of cozy and modern.

Heroine Joy had me rooting for her in her justifiable rage at some of her ex's bone head moves. Turn around and she is acting too impulsive and plain stupid to be a viable 'heroine'. This mix of personality traits makes her all the more complex and, therefore, believable.

Paul is a rough edged police chief, sometimes using gritty speech, sometimes thinking in 1950's Leave It To Beaver-isms. He too is a mix of jumbled thoughts and actions. One might ask, 'what man isn't?' Flawed and believable.

Ms Marshall writes an enchanting story that tickles the mystery buff, satisfies the romantic and provides a sensory treat for the weary with the comfort and New England charm of small town Maine. Secondary characters add rich texture to this look at the vibrancy of two middle aged people with lots of life and dreams yet to live. My hat is off to Ms Marshall and her voyage into post forty life and love. Our aging population and preponderance of baby boomers begs the question, 'why are there not more romances with protagonists in their forties and beyond?'

Bravo on writing another very enjoyable read!

TashNz says

Too Close For Comfort is a heart-warming story about Paul, the town of Comfort's Chief of Police and Joy, his ex-wife, two forty-somethings who are divorced.

Circumstances bring Joy to the town of Comfort to see Paul again and swiftly they are caught up in an adventure involving the towns kids who are dying from taking a nasty new drug that's doing its rounds in the local area.

Throw in their grown-up kids who are immersed in side adventures of their own and some self-discovery between Paul and Joy you end up with beautiful, heart warming tale of lost love, rekindled love, family love, heartbreak and new loves.

There's lots of little twists and turns that occur, just when you figure you've got the story sorted in your mind you turn the page and hello another little surprise which cover a whole spectrum of emotions. It's written beautifully and the story flawlessly flows. I loved the little twists and turns. It was strange at first reading about characters who were older than I'm used to reading about but it ended up adding to the book because there was so much history that could be referred to and the fact that Paul and Joys kids were already grown and living their own lives just added more material to work with.

I'd recommend this book if you're looking for a warm romantic story with likeable mature characters peppered with fast paced action and adventure and lots of little twists and turns to keep you fully engaged until you flick close the last page.

Connie Saunders says

A trip to a small town in Maine seems like the perfect getaway for a successful business woman from Los Angeles. Right? It would be if you didn't need your silent partner to sign papers to dissolve your partnership so that your business can become even more successful. Not to mention that you were married to this silent partner for twenty-three years before you divorced three years ago. Joy Waltham's trip to Comfort, Maine may be business related in the beginning but it soon becomes an eye-opening and heart-wrenching reminder of the life she shared with Paul Donovan and their two now adult children. She and Paul begin to experience rekindled feelings of both love and lust as they realize that this may be a second chance to correct their mistakes.

This book by Lynne Marshall is longer than most of the books she has written for Harlequin and she has used the extra length to showcase this "older couple's" return to love. It also allows her to give readers a glimpse of the charm of a small town in Maine during the beauty of New England in the fall season.

Too Close for Comfort is an enjoyable book that has humor, mystery and yes, romance, as we are given a story that proves that mature love can be very exciting and fulfilling and fabulous love isn't limited to the young!

I was provided a copy of this book in exchange for my honest review.

Jerrie Alexander says

This is my first time to read Ms. Marshall, but I'll be back. I don't do spoilers, but will tell you Jill and Paul are in their forties and still very vital, smart, witty and still in love..even though they don't know it. Jill's curiosity gets her into trouble with her exhusband the Chief of Police, who already has his hands full. There's great humor, mystery and enough tenderness to make you root for this couple to remember why they fell in love.

Lynne Marshall says

Dear Reader

I don't know about you, but I love reunion stories. I love the second chance to get it right, and putting the characters back together when they're a bit older and a whole lot wiser. That's exactly what I've done in TOO CLOSE FOR COMFORT.

There's nothing quite like reading about a couple who gets a "do-over" if you will. How many of us get second chances at anything? That's the beauty of writing romance books: I get to help characters who once blew it make it right, that's why I loved every minute of writing this book.

Joy and Paul were married for twenty-three years before divorcing. They have two grown children and a truckload of shared memories. The book begins three years later, when Paul has left Los Angeles Police Department and taken a job as the chief of police in his old hometown, Comfort, Maine. Their daughter Edie is an MBA junior business mogul working with her mother and their son Michael is serving his country in the Army in the Middle East. With this type of story, I couldn't ignore the whole family dynamics. Now

add in the recent string of accidental teen deaths under Paul's watch, and Joy showing up from Los Angeles out of the blue.

Being married to a New Englander, I have been back east for many vacations over the years. So when it came time to have my protagonist take a trip to chill out and relax, the fictitious hometown of Comfort, Maine came to mind. I combined all the favorite seaside towns I've visited into one quaint little town. The dramatic seaside, the fun Maine accents, clam chowder, kayaking, fall in New England, B&Bs, you name it and I used it.

Do you enjoy reunions set along the Maine seaside in the fall, over-forty romance between a panic prone business mogul and her small town Chief of Police ex-husband and the thrill of second chances? Then this story is for you. If you'd like to crack an unsolved drug case, experience the luxury of a two-hundred-year old B&B, finally shut up a snoopy travel journalist, and delve into unresolved family issues, plus get to know a dog named Roger, I think you'll enjoy this book of my heart.

Best wishes,

Lynne Marshall

Too Close for Comfort (out now)

* * *

Betty says

Joy Waltham is a divorcee, mother of 2 adult children, and business owner. She is stressed out and yet very successfully planning on expanding her frozen food business. The only problem is that her x-husband still owns a piece of the company. She has decided to fly to Maine, where her "X" currently lives and get him to sell his part of the company back to her. Since she has been so stressed out and suffering from anxiety attacks she has decided to make this trip a vacation and spend a few weeks relaxing. She leaves her daughter in charge of the company and heads out. This is where the fun really begins. Joy is a rather strong woman who has a tendency embrace life and to just "jump right in". That can get her into some hot water. Her "X" is the town's police chief and becomes entangled in Joy's antics. I thoroughly enjoyed this book. There are parts that made me laugh so hard my eyes teared up and I had to stop reading. Only to start and stop again for more belly laughs. There are also parts where the tears were for sadness for the pain that the characters were experiencing. And through it all I hoped that the main characters would find their way back to each other. This is an excellent read with a fun story line and lovable/likable characters. I highly recommend it.

*A GoodReads win. Thank you so very much. I loved it.

Desere says

~Reviewed by Desere ~

This was one of the most intense books I have read all year. It had the danger ,action, romance, old love rekindled, sadness and happiness all packed into one stunning read. I personally love a happy ending story and very much love when an author adds in an epilogue to give me as reader that extra few months or years into the happiness that comes at the end of a romance novel, but I never stop to think that as in real life

couples sometimes grow apart and the happy ever after is forgotten.

In *Too Close for Comfort* Lynne Marshall took me behind the scenes of the "happy ever after that did not last" moments and all the complications that can and will be caused by the split. It made the book seem very real as it played on all the situations that can arise in real life for a couple who have loved and lost.

The book focuses on Joy and Paul, divorced three years earlier who's paths once again need to cross due to a previous business arrangement and some clever thinking by their daughter.

Add in the small town of Comfort 's very own drug dealing schemes and Joy's new found sleuth skills and Paul's forever protect and serve motto and your in for a guaranteed good read.

The author used the perfect backdrop of Comfort and described it as the perfect town where everyone helps everyone and it is just the perfect place to live even though it has some backstreet thugs or should I say "dawgs" hanging around causing the death of some of the town's teenagers. The author also very vividly described the town's rich historical background. This for me gave the perfect illusion of a setting where there is bound to be some intense moments and people who really care about each other.

What I loved about the book was how the author managed to so intensely focus on the new found rekindled passion between Paul and Joy and the drug scene that she completely caught me by surprise with a turn of events relating to the couples son serving in Iraq that all I could do was cry and try to refocus my attention, sneaky move but very well done Mrs Marshall.

Another part that truly delighted me was seeing that the author really did her homework on the facts of those that serve in Iraq. I have read many romance books relating to Iraq , and in my profession I deal with the facts of Iraq and those who serve on a daily basis , and many times I have seen authors incorporate facts about Iraq into their books but none of the facts they use are true, and most likely the authors think that because this is a romance novel the facts do not really matter, which of course they are fully entitled to.

In some cases I suppose that is all right as readers of romance do not want the facts and just really want to read about the romance blossoming between the characters. However for me as reader I like to know that the smaller facts be it about Iraq, history or any topic really, of what I am reading is true and correct even though it is a non true story and yes made up facts about things such as a fictional town's history or the people is what books are all about , it was still a delight to see that when such topics as Iraq and the troops are touched upon that the author really made sure of it all before penning it to paper.

This of course is just me and it is most likely because of the fact that I deal with it on a day to day basis , and all are entitled to their own opinion. But yes the author adding in the smaller true facts made the book even more realistic and I as reader felt more connected to the characters and what they were going through , and that is what I truly loved.

The author in my opinion certainly packed in a lot of emotion into this one and did a truly excellent job in capturing my attention from the start and in the end leaving me with that happy and content feeling.

This was a heart-warming and compassionate read filled with true depth, emotion, lots of laughter and sadness and I highly recommend it.

Well done Lynne keep them coming !

Virginia Campbell says

It's exciting for me as a reader to immediately become so involved in a book that I keep saying to myself: "This would be a great movie!". "Too Close for Comfort", from author Lynne Marshall, kept that reel playing in my head, and I read the book all in one sitting. Lynne is one of my favorite authors. I was hooked on her warm, funny, and touching storytelling from the very first book. Her characters are very real and vividly drawn, and she gives them compelling story lines that are true to life, yet full of unexpected twists and turns. Her romances are sensually sweet, and she writes characters of varying ages--yeah! "Too Close for Comfort" is a rollicking reunion romance that also offers action, suspense, and poignant family drama. Joy Waltham's marriage of over twenty years ended as her health food business began to take off. She and her husband, Paul Donovan, had grown apart as their children grew up, and each of their careers had become more demanding. The final straw for Joy was Paul's agreement that their son, Michael, could enter the service at a very young age. After the divorce, Joy continued to develop her health food business where they had made their home in Los Angeles. Paul eventually retired from the LAPD and moved back to his hometown of Comfort, Maine, where he became the chief of police. Paul had invested in Joy's company, and when she is ready to expand the business she needs his signature on an agreement to let her buy him out of the company. This means coming face to face with him again--something she had not done since the divorce. Once they meet again, the sparks that fly are incendiary! Complicating matters are Joy's accidental discovery of clues to a series of drug-related deaths in the small community, and she involves herself in Paul's investigation of the crimes. He has his hands full trying to protect Joy and solve the case, so he decides to keep Joy very close and under surveillance. While Joy and Paul are rediscovering each other, their daughter, Edie, is running the health food business. Ever since the divorce, and Michael's enlistment, the pressures of the business world and family worries have caused Joy to have anxiety attacks. Spending time with Paul away from her life in LA proves to be freeing and reinvigorating for Joy, and she finds herself letting go of anxieties and grabbing on to new life experiences. Paul knows that he wants Joy back in his life, and he also feels reborn, but can they overcome the issues which drove them apart in the first place? When a family tragedy threatens their happiness, can they pull together and blend a longtime love with new understanding and appreciation? "Too Close for Comfort" features lead characters in their forties who are vibrant, conflicted, funny, sexually vital, and full of life. All Right! Highly recommended.

Review Copy Gratis Author
