



## Winter at West Sands Guest House

*Maggie Conway*

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## **Winter at West Sands Guest House** Maggie Conway

Can Eva find love this Christmas?

Eva Harris has her hands full juggling a young son, a disobedient dog and running her thriving seaside guesthouse, so really the last thing she needs is to be distracted by her new neighbour, ridiculously handsome but arrogant Ben Matthews.

For one thing, she's got nothing in common with the man, Ben's a high flying lecturer at the town's university while she barely scraped through high school, for another he's fresh out of a relationship while Eva hasn't been on one single date since the death of her husband, seven years ago!

She's determined to keep her distance, but in a small town like St Andrews that's easier said than done, and it doesn't help that everyone, including her son Jamie, think Ben is wonderful! Breaking out of her sad but safe little bubble might be the hardest thing she's ever had to do, but Ben might just be worth the risk...

**Perfect for fans of Jules Wake, Heidi Swain and Phillipa Ashley.**

Praise for Winter at West Sands Guest House...

'A great Christmas read.' Grace at Good'n'Ready-y

'Pick this wonderful book up' Amazon Customer

'It was heartwarming' BananaTricky

## **Winter at West Sands Guest House Details**

Date : Published November 8th 2017 by HQ Digital

ISBN :

Author : Maggie Conway

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# From Reader Review Winter at West Sands Guest House for online ebook

## **poppie says**

Delightful easy read. Despite the outcome being fairly predictable, it was an enjoyable read and left me with a good feeling. Will be looking for more books by this author.

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## **Rachel Gilbey says**

The cover for Winter at West Sands Guest House is absolutely stunning and is ultimately what had persuaded me to give the story a go. However for a tag line that states Christmas romance, it had very little of the real build up to Christmas, and the festive season seemed to be passed over.

I do agree that it was a romance, but although there was plenty of chemistry between Eva and Ben,, it took ages for the characters to realise what the reader clearly new, and the ending was ultimately predictable.

Hamish the puppy was one of the stars of the book, he was adorable and mischievous and no where near trained enough to be running around a guest house. Thankfully it was closed to customers over the winter so there was time to get him trained.

Eva is an overprotective mother to Jamie, she has her reasons but I felt at times a bit like she was a bit too extreme. Ben was hard to get a feel for to start with, but I ended up really liking his character, I just wish I knew more about him.

For a debut book it was ok, and I am certainly curious as to where the author will go next in her writing career, its just that this book didn't fully work for me.

Thank you to HQ Digital and Netgalley for this copy which I reviewed honestly and voluntarily

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## **Dash fan says**

4? A Fun, feel good, Charming Winter Read

Winter at West Sands Guest House is a warm Cosy Charming read, it's a story of new beginnings, coming of age, Humour, Romance, Friendship, and the star of the book Hamish a loveable scamp of a dog.

Eva owns the West Sands Guest House with her 11year old Son Jamie.  
Eva is a single parent, after she lost her husband in an accident.

Eva's guest house is closed for the winter giving her time to renovate and do maintenance work.

A new neighbour has moved in next door....

Ben has moved to St Andrews from London to teach at the local Uni.

Eva and Ben don't get off to a good start.

He is rude, cold & unwelcoming to Eva when she makes him soup to welcome him to the neighbourhood.

The next day he apologised only to have Hamish jump up him and muddy all his new clothes lol opps!!!

It's quiet clear early on that Ben has sparked Eva's interest and therefore a potential love match! It was lovely to watch their friendship blossom as their paths keep crossing... fate I wonder!!

Eva is very overprotective of Jamie, at times it's like she smothers his need for independence. Which I do understand why but I was willing her to relax a little!

Eva is a born worrier, which I can sympathise with as I'm the same lol

She doesn't appear to have a great relationship with her mother, as all her mother cares about is social class and money oh and Eva's older Sister Sarah who can literally do no wrong!

Eva comes across as a disappointment to her family.

I really loved her friendship with Heather, both their sons are best friends.

But more importantly Heather is Eva's voice of reason. She helps her anxiety with Jamie. Heather has 3 boys so she is more than prepared to offer Eva advice and support.

One thing I do want to point out is how independent Eva is.

It's so nice to see a female role that can do everything a 'man can' From fixing boilers, to renovating, to fixing fences etc... I loved that about her! No sexist roles brilliantly thought out!

I enjoyed the friendship and Romance that was created between Eva and Ben. It was somewhat predictable but hey we all love a cosy warm love story!

But for me the best Character by far was Hamish.

He provided me with endless laughter.

The cereal eating, the chickens, jumping up to say hi, getting on the furniture.

I just loved the lil cheeky scamp. Reminded me of my fur baby. He is cheeky too!! Lol

I really did enjoy reading this cosy winter read. Ok so it wasn't exactly brimming with Christmas but it did Have a wintry feel which I always enjoy!

The story flowed well, the characters were well developed and written.

There was humour, romance, friendship, emotions, it was a Charming feel good read that had a nice mix.

It would also be nice to revisit West Sands in the summer!

The fact it's planning to be a dog friendly guest house... oozes so many exciting adventures waiting to be explored!

A Recipe for doggie fun and mischief, any books that feature doggie escapades I'm there!

I'm looking forward to reading more from Maggie.

I would like to thank HQ Digital for my Netgalley Copy of this beautiful book, In which I voluntarily reviewed.

My Review is also on my blog website:

<https://dashfan81.blogspot.com/2017/1...>

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### **Jacki says**

This is my first book by Maggie Conway.

What I liked:

The characters

Standalone

HEA

I voluntarily received an ARC from NetGalley.

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### **Lesley says**

I had actually read this before, and realised quite quickly.

Whether lethargy to both moving on (I read mainly in bed before sleep), or simply because I enjoyed it first time round, I carried on reading.

Still recommend it as a light read.

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### **poppy says**

This was a cute book and a good holiday read and while I did mostly like it at times it was a little slow. Other than that it was quite good I really liked Eve she is a widow with a teenager to raise and a guest house to run so when her new neighbour Ben moves in she tries to be friendly but he is quite hostile towards her so she decides to have nothing to do with him and he feels the same way having just have his relationship end when his girlfriend changed her mind about moving with him..But they do move past it and become friends and then they start to develop more feeling but can either one of them risk their hearts again?

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### **Grace J Reviewerlady says**

What a lovely warm read .. just perfect for these chilly days! I really enjoyed this book and especially the setting .. St Andrews is a place I visited a lot on day trips in my youth and Maggie Conway gives the town the attention it deserves.

Eva bought her guest house when, as a widow with a young son, she needed to invest her cash wisely in a business which let her combine earning money with being there for her child. She was very lucky to have such lovely neighbours in the MacKenzies and was feeling the loss of such good friends when they had to move to a smaller home for health reasons. Her mother and sister have always seemed to pair up nicely and not need her presence in their lives and with the empty house lying next door, she is feeling lonely. It's not easy being solely responsible for a boy transitioning into manhood.

Ben has given up his high-flying and very lucrative career in the financial industry in London to move to the university town and join academia once more. With the end of his relationship which saw his girlfriend as the only one who had viewed the house, he's not quite sure what he's doing in such a large property in the seaside town. With his mind full of his new start in life, he's rather prickly when he meets Eva for the first time and the meeting leaves them each despairing of their new neighbour.

This is a wonderfully cosy read, with well rounded characters each with their own little foibles. There is plenty going on .. lots of small incidents which all add up to a really heartwarming tale. I think every mother, and especially those of us who have been single parents, will identify with Eva. This is more than just a romance. There are several dysfunctional relationships which grab your attention and – as with all good books – every single one gets the attention it deserves during the course of the story. I enjoyed it so much and have no hesitation in recommending it as a great Christmas read.

My thanks to HQ Digital for providing me with an arc copy via NetGalley. This is my honest, original and unbiased review.

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### **Emma Crowley says**

Winter at West Sands Guest House is the début novel from Maggie Conway. It has the most beautiful, winter themed cover which makes you wish you could stay in the guest house surrounded by drifts of snow curled up by the fire with a hot chocolate or something that little bit stronger. Set in the Scottish university town of St. Andrews, this story follows the owner of the West Sands guest house single mum, Eva Harris as she adjusts to having a new neighbour next door and all that ensues with the new arrival. Fans of Jules Wake, Philippa Ashley and Heidi Swain, all of which I am a fan of, will love this simple story of one woman finding happiness when she least expected or desired to. For me this book was a very light, quick read which may have lacked a little substance but none the less it was a pleasant read and showed plenty of potential from the author.

Eva has been single handedly raising her son Jamie ever since the loss of her husband through a tragic accident several years ago. She can be quite neurotic when it comes to the care and welfare of her son going slightly over board with wanting to know his whereabouts and stopping him from doing anything too reckless. I thought initially in this respect Eva was a bit over the top but as her reasons for being this way are revealed, it all made much more sense and I could see why she felt the need to act this way. It's now been seven years since she took over the running of the guest house and she has it exactly the way she wants it catering for holiday makers in the summer, parents of students during graduation season, and then remaining closed during the winter months. Eva is proud that she has rebuilt her life and of all that she has achieved since the death of her husband but one senses she still longs for a bit more for her life. One should always have hopes, dreams and ambitions to strive for.

When we first met Eva she is devastated that long term neighbours and close friends the MacKenzies have sold their house and gone travelling around the world. This older couple had been like surrogate parents to her and viewed Jamie as like a grandchild. Their door was always open and the same could be said for Eva's. Their absence leaves a deep hole in Eva's life. To be honest when I was reading of Eva's upset at having new neighbours arrive I thought she was being ridiculous. Neighbours come and go, it's a regular occurrence and yes we can be fortunate to have neighbours that become good friends but then there are other occasions where we fervently wish said neighbours would sell up quickly. It came across as if Eva couldn't go on without the MacKenzies in her life and I wanted to give her a shake and say for god's sake you are a grown

woman and you are getting all maudlin over nothing. She says she doesn't like change but she has seen plenty of this in her life and in reality who doesn't like change but we just have to get on with things and adapt as best we can. I suppose in a way despite the success of the guest house, and the good job Eva is doing raising Jamie on her own, she feels isolated and cut off from her family as her mother Helen views Eva's occupation with disdain and her sister Sarah is too caught up in her job as a lawyer. Maybe the MacKenzies were the people she turned to when she needed help and support.

Eva's apprehension is compounded when she meets new neighbour Ben, who appears not to be the most friendliest of people as he is rude to her on their first encounter but later we discover Ben did think Eva was beautiful. Ben has moved to St. Andrews from London in a bid to escape the cut throat world of a city job that he hates with a passion. It's no fun being in a job you detest yet you have stuck it out so long because the money is good. Finally he has bitten the bullet and has gotten a new job teaching at the university. Unfortunately girlfriend Samantha had other plans and he is now flying solo.

Ben despite his abrupt first encounter with Eva came across as a likeable character, someone who was finally working towards their long held ambition. I could understand his stance that he wanted to maintain a polite front but at the same a strategy of distance was employed. He didn't want to get too deeply involved with anyone considering his recent past with regard to relationships but I wondered would Eva get under Ben's skin and vice versa? Ben remains very focused on his work and neglects the house and this is where Eva comes in. It was almost like an opening for a tentative friendship to ensue. As Eva loves decorating she volunteers to do up some of the rooms in Ben's house. I did think this was a bit strange at first considering their hostile first encounter but I suppose it showed the kind, caring and practical side of Eva coming through.

After the initial flurry of meeting and setting up the story I felt nothing much really happened. I seemed to fly through the pages and reached the last few chapters very quickly without feeling this had been a real exciting, riveting, unpredictable read. I felt we only scratched the surface when it came to really getting to know Ben and Eva. I felt Eva wasn't the most memorable of characters, she seemed to mope and complain a lot. I understand anxiety was forever on her shoulders and with good reason but I just couldn't really fully warm to her. I wasn't entirely gripped by the story the whole way through and I felt the storyline with her sister Sarah was all too brief and needed much more development, it was almost like a sideline and it needed more prominence. Nothing much happened for some periods and even though I flew through the chapters to reach the final few there wasn't much for me to take on board. There was the little bit of obligatory drama towards the end but it felt stilted and rushed and I think the inclusion of some more characters would have helped shaped the story more and given an outlet for Eva to discuss things with others. The ending was slightly predictable and one readers could see coming a mile off.

Overall Winter at West Sands Guest House was an OK read. It didn't blow me away, I felt slightly disappointed that maybe I had built this book up too much in my head. It was a nice enough story but I felt I had read it all before and it needed something that little bit different to make it stand out from all the rest. Saying that as I have previously mentioned the author has plenty of potential and I would consider trying some more of her work in the future.

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**Cat Jones says**

Format: kindle ebook

Tissue warning: no



HEA: yes  
Triggers: none  
Narrative: 3rd person  
My reviewer rating: 3 out of 5  
Recommend read: Yes  
Published: November 8, 2017

Thank you, Netgalley and the author, Maggie Conway, for the free e-copy of this novel, Winter at West Sands Guest House.

I had a slightly difficult time with this one. For some reason, it just wasn't flowing smoothly enough for me, or it didn't have enough going on for me, to keep my attention. I had to start and pause this one to read something else 4 times before I could finish.

The storyline is cute, albeit slightly predictable and common in novels. Eva and Ben are cute together, but I just couldn't get into this.

Eva's family has a lot going on, and the author could have given us more to all of that, but I'm left wanting. It's probably not a great sign that I wanted more side story than mainline.

Since the copy I received is an ARC and unedited, I can only hope that it gets better formatting before final release.

I do recommend this story.

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### **Ashley Foley says**

I received this book from NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

I liked this book for the most part. It was cute. I did however think it hopped around too often. Also, it didn't feel very christmasy which was disappointing since Christmas was in the description. I felt like it was rushed a bit as well.

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### **Deanne Patterson says**

What a lovely feel good book, perfect for a snuggle up read this winter. Eva Harris is one busy woman, she runs a guest house, is raising her preteen son after her husband's accidental death and then there's her new neighbor. She had a great friendship with the older couple residing next door to her but due to health problems they had to move where it was warmer. She really misses them and is glad to see the house next door is occupied once again. Does she really have anything in common with Ben, a high flying lecturer at the town's university? Neither is looking for a relationship and Ben may not even be looking for a friendship with her despite her trying to be friendly and welcome him to the neighborhood. He has soured on women and she lost her husband to an accident and worries about her son being too adventurous now. A start over is the last thing on either of their minds. Everyone in town seems to think Ben is terrific and like it happens in small towns they seem to run into each other everywhere. As they spend more time together will they allow

love to bloom?

A rambunctious new dog Eva get's for her son livens up the story and you'll really enjoy reading this.

Pub Date 08 Nov 2017

Thank you to NetGalley and HQ Digital for a review copy in exchange for my honest review.

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### **Alison says**

Just the thing to read when you are laid up in bed with a cold feeling sorry for yourself.

Eva Harris owns a small guest house in St Andrews, Scotland. She is a widow with a small son, Jamie and an unruly dog. Her beloved next door neighbours have moved to a smaller house and her new neighbour is a prickly single Englishman who rebuffs all of Eva's attempts to be neighbourly.

Ben Matthews has given up a life in the City earning megabucks to move to St Andrews where he has a job as a physics lecturer. He had planned to move with his girlfriend but at the last minute she decided a new glamorous job abroad was more interesting. Moving into a large family home that he had never even seen before seems like a huge mistake to Ben, he had visions of a family and a dog but instead he has a huge house that needs a lot of work and he is regretting his decision.

Despite his initial hostility, Eva and Ben soon become friends as their paths cross (often literally) often in such a small university town. First Eva is helping Ben to fix his central heating, then Ben is helping Jamie with his maths homework. But the past casts a long shadow and is Eva willing to risk her heart and put her trust in another man?

I liked this, it was heartwarming and gentle, I had house-envy for Eva and I'm madly jealous of her handyman skills, she and Ben were both such homebodies who wanted nothing more than family.

Thoroughly recommended second-chance romance, especially if you like small children and dogs!

I received a free copy of this book from the publisher via NetGalley in return for an honest review.

Bumped for US release.

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### **Shirley says**

Winter at West Sands was the perfect book to cosy up with, it was such a delightful read, I thoroughly enjoyed it.

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### **FNM says**

Winter at West Sands Guest House was exactly what it promised to be, and just the kind of book you would want to be snuggled up with in Winter, the romance itself took awhile to get going and the while the story was predictable, still an enjoyable read.

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## **Sandra says**

I spotted this book because of the cover on twitter, just shows that covers are so important in getting people interested in the book itself. I think it's fair to say that from reading what I've written above you've probably guessed that I enjoyed this book and you'd be right. This is a lovely winter's tale of love, misunderstandings and the infamous Scottish weather.

While the writing on the book says it's a Christmas romance I would say you can read it anytime, Christmas does happen in the story but as the book starts in August and covers from then till January Christmas isn't central to the story. As long as you want a cosy, light read this will be perfect at any time of year.

We meet Eva, her son and their dog right at the beginning of the book and are introduced to them and their situation before their new neighbour, Ben arrives. Initially the two homes and occupants couldn't be more different, Eva's house is warm and welcoming just like her whereas Ben's is cold and uninviting. Ben has moved north for a fresh start somewhere new but having just come up from London is unused to the friendliness that he encounters in Scotland.

As you would expect things soon start to change but to say more would be giving away too much. Over the rest of the book we learn more about Eva and why she hasn't dated since her husband died, why Ben moved so far from London and whether they will become more than just friends.

This is a light and lovely novel, perfect for a cosy read when the weather is miserable or when you just want to be enveloped in a warm hug. That's essentially what this book is, a warm hug so if that's what you're looking for, regardless of the time of year, this is definitely worth checking out.

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