



## Sweet Haven

*Shirlee McCoy*

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## **Sweet Haven** Shirlee McCoy

In Benevolence, Washington, the Lamont family's irresistible handmade chocolates are a cherished tradition--and always a reason to celebrate. And now they're giving the three Lamont sisters, one by one, delicious chances to start again, make a change, and have their sweetest dreams come true...

Neighbors who care, a peaceful routine--accountant Adeline Lamont is glad some things about her beloved hometown never change. But when her grandfather is injured, she has to run the family store, Chocolate Haven, and make its legendary fudge. Trouble is, she can't get the recipe right to save her life--or Chocolate Haven. And she doesn't need her ornery new tenant, Sinclair Jefferson, stirring up the pot with his help--and daring Addie to taste her wild side...

Once Sinclair gets his hapless brother back on track, he's leaving Benevolence for good this time. He's made his life far away from his irresponsible family and their scandals. Trouble is, he can't quite stay away from Addie's optimism, enticing plus-size curves, and kindness to those who need it most. But they don't seem to have a thing in common--except that Addie's passion for chocolate, and for Benevolence, is just as contagious as Sinclair's passion for her. Maybe small-town life has its charms after all...

## **Praise for Shirlee McCoy's Apple Valley Novels**

"A delicious treat. Don't miss a visit to Apple Valley!" --Emily March, *New York Times* bestselling author

"Sweet as pie." --*Publishers Weekly*

"A wonderful, warmhearted story." --*RT Book Reviews*

## **Sweet Haven Details**

Date : Published February 23rd 2016 by Zebra

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## From Reader Review Sweet Haven for online ebook

### Luli says

Este es el tercer libro que leo de esta autora y aunque me ha gustado, no ha sido tan encantador como los anteriores.

Ha sido una historia muy dulce y entretenida.

Por una parte tenemos a Adeline, encantada de vivir en el pueblo, siempre dispuesta a echar una mano y (y esto ha sido lo que menos me ha gustado) con un desengaño amoroso en el pasado que la hace huir de cualquier relación amorosa. Esto es un gusto personal mío, me choca cuando los personajes se cierran en banda porque han sufrido en el pasado...

Por otro lado tenemos a Sinclair, encantado de huir del pueblo en cuanto tuvo la oportunidad, con un pasado perturbador y que, en principio, está de paso.

La autora nos da la oportunidad de conocer a fondo los personajes, de conectar con ellos y teje a su alrededor un entramado de secundarios que le da fondo a la historia, esto es lo que más me ha gustado. Ningún personaje es de adorno ni plano, todos tiene su fondo y sus motivaciones.

Creo que ha sido el romance lo que no me ha cautivado. He entendido perfectamente las motivaciones de los protagonistas para actuar cómo lo hacen, pero no me han emocionado. Me ha parecido que ha faltado algo...más deseo de estar juntos, más añoranza...no sé...más algo... pero todo esto, como ya he dicho antes, son mis gustos personales.

Por lo demás, la historia ha sido muy tierna y encantadora y recomendable si buscas algo sencillo, ligero y dulce, que no es poco!

*ARC provided by Kensington Books via Netgalley*

This is the third book I read by this author and although I liked it, it has not been so charming as the former. It has been a very sweet and entertaining story.

On the one hand we have Adeline, happy to live in the town, always willing to lend a hand and (and this has been what I have liked less) with a bad love affair in the past which makes her run away from any romantic relationship. This is a pet peeve of mine, it shocks me when characters refuse to budge because they have suffered in the past...

On the other hand we have Sinclair, happy to leave the town as soon as he had the opportunity, with a disturbing past and that, at least initially, is passing through.

The author gives us the opportunity to get to know the characters, connect with them and she hatches a network of secondary characters that gives background to the story, this is what I liked most. No character is a merely ornament nor is a flat, one-dimensional one. They all have their background and their motivations.

I think that it has been the romance that has not captivated me. I fully understand the motivations of the characters to act how they do, but it has not moved me. I thought that I have missed something... more longing...I don't know... something more... but all this, as I have said before, are my personal tastes.

Otherwise, this have been a tender and lovely story and I would recommended it if you are looking for something simple, light and sweet, which is not small thing!

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### Jeanie says

Welcome to Benevolence, WA, the charming setting for 'Sweet Haven', first in Shirley McCoy's Home

Sweet Home series! Among the best known citizens is Janelle Lamont, a real estate agent and mother of three adult daughters. Two of her daughters are living in big cities seeing guys who have big careers; one is a doctor, another is a prosecuting attorney. And then there is Adeline or “Addie”, an accountant who still lives in Benevolence and is single, much to Janelle Lamont’s chagrin. Chocolate Haven, owned and managed by Grandad “Byron” Lamont, who as a widower lived in the apartment over the store. At least until a fall sent him hospital bound with broken bones.

While Byron was in the hospital, Addie ran the chocolate and fudge shop single-handedly and tried to do small accounting projects until she could return to it full time. When she couldn’t keep up with the daily needs and special orders, she risked hiring a very young, mysterious guy new in town who learned fast. Addie could make chocolates as she had worked at the shop when a teenager, but the family fudge recipe wouldn’t work for her at all. Just one of many things that didn’t, including relationships. Janelle rented out the upstairs apartment while Byron was hospitalized; what a gorgeous guy rented it! Sinclair would be in town just long enough to help his brother clean and repair the family home that was dangerously full of trash while necessary fixtures and appliances didn’t work. His sister-in-law would soon give birth, and he could help give their baby a warm, clean place to live. Sinclair definitely wasn’t interested in dating.

Addie is a heroine to whom many readers can relate, my younger self included. She is not a perfect, tiny size 6; she is like the majority of gals who neither become a doctor or lawyer nor marry one, and like the many ladies who just can’t get recipes to work for them. She is friendly unless too stressed at the shop or when standing up to her mother on behalf of Byron when Janelle tried to put him into a dementia facility.

Adeline’s friend and dog-watcher Nehemiah, whose bride of almost 70 years passed away several months ago, had modeled to her the kind of marriage she would want. Descriptions of Addie and Sinclair, then her assistant, make them come to life. Conversations and actions define them, as well as in a limited fashion for the folks with smaller roles.

I enjoyed the novel because I like Adeline, and because I was wanted to see the family ties improve and folks get along. Much of the plot is woven around preparations for septuagenarian May’s first wedding, Addie trying to maintain Byron’s shop, and the young mystery man she hired. I see several stories within the whole: a young woman coming to terms with her life and what she wants, a young man who knew what he wanted for his life until his small home town began to lure him, and a much younger man who found himself in town with a broken car and empty wallet. ‘Sweet Haven’ is a relationship novel, both within families and romance or marriage. I highly recommend this novel to women who feel like they do not measure up or have interesting family members and everyone who appreciates chick lit with humor, friendships, and a bit of romance.

With a grateful heart, I received a copy of the e-book from the publisher through NetGalley. All opinions are my own, and no monetary compensation was received.

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### **Cathy Daniel says**

Sweet and funny book I read in one day. I did dislike the obnoxious mom but I think she was supposed to be obnoxious

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### **Els says**

I enjoyed the book. There was, of course, romance and the happy ending for two of the main characters but there was also more. You meet a lot of other people and you read a tiny bit about their story, but not enough

to really get to know them. That's fine because this is the first part of a series, so the author keeps you waiting for more.

The author has a fluent style and it's difficult to put down the book. There is always a hint of suspense. If this book sets the pace for the rest of the series, I want to read them all without a doubt.

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### **Andrea Guy says**

Small town romance is probably my favorite type of romance. I also like books that are family centered and that is definitely what this is. If you love authors like Debbie Macomber, Donna Kauffman or Sheila Roberts you will love Shirlee McCoy.

Addie is a fabulous heroine. She's real. I love that she's a chubby girl. I'm so sick all the heroines in novels being skinny gorgeous things. I want reality in my romance sometimes, or at least something close to it.

Sinclair is great too. He's back in Benevolence to help his brother straighten out his life. The two of them start a relationship, albeit a strange one, that includes chasing after Addie's not so tiny dog, Tiny.

There are characters that you will love like May, who Addie is going to be garishly dressed for as a bridesmaid in her wedding, and character's you hate, Addie's mom, Janelle. Am I the only one that found her referring to her mom by her first name a little odd? I've never understood mom's that want to be addressed by their first name.

This book gave me a huge feeling of déjà vu, I think that has to do with the number of books from this genre that I've read, but really all the while I read this one, I felt like I had read it before. How strange is that?

I loved the little bit of mystery that went along with the romance and I was glad that it was also something that wasn't sinister. When I want a more dark mystery, I'll turn to thrillers not romance, so this suited me well.

I also enjoyed Chase, who came to work for Addie in the shop. His story really helps tie things together.

Oh and then there's the fudge and how Addie finally got it right. (That was so flipping sweet)

This is the perfect feel good romance and there's even a touch of mystery to it.

I'm glad this is part of a series, because I look forward to revisiting the town and some of the characters.

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### **June says**

I've always loved Shirlee McCoy's books. Her characters are so real to life, their lives are so easy to identify with.

In this story we have Adeline. She's the middle sister who has always been there but in the background making things work. When her grandfather gets hurt, she takes over the family fudge making business. But something is missing. She's got a crazy life. A mother who is a little hard to deal with sometimes, a

horrendous bridesmaid dress she has to wear, a crazy dog, and she's about to take over the care of her grandfather.

Sinclair is back in town to help out his brother. When he rents an apartment above the candy shop, he's just planning to get the job done then get back to his real life. But the more time he spends with Adeline, the more he's realizing that the small town life isn't so bad.

Add a couple of kids and family drama, and the story is wonderful.

I received a copy of this book from netgalley.com in exchange for an honest review.

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### **Wendy's Thoughts says**

What does it mean when you try to do things for everyone but yourself...Can you say enabler...This main character has real trouble saying no to those she cares about... and they have no trouble allowing her to do for them...

The flip side is the love interest and how he works to show her how wonderful she is and should take a moment and sometimes think of what she wants... that it is ok to say NO.

Mix all of this with small town charm, chocolate, some mystery, kooky relatives/towns people and did I say chocolate...and this could be a read for you.

*A gifted copy was provided by NetGalley for an honest review.*

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### **Patrice says**

First, let me say that I was given an ARC of this book, through Net Galley, in return for an honest review. I'm getting old and I can't remember if I've read anything by author Shirley McCoy before; but you can bet that I will definitely read her books in the future. This was a timeless tale of second chances and new beginnings. I liked the main characters, Adeline (Addie) Lamont and Sinclair Jefferson. They were believable and made you laugh, cry, and ache, along with them. The story takes place in "small town USA"; Benevolence, Washington. Addie is the middle child of Janelle Lamont, the town's realtor. She has two sisters, Willow & Brenna; they high-tailed it out of town just as soon as they could and never looked back. Sinclair was also one of the ones that couldn't wait to shake the dust of Benevolence from his shoes. He never thought he would set foot back in a town where he was "one of those Jefferson's". He was in the Middle East in the army and has the scars, both physical and mental, to prove it. He also has a successful restoration business for old buildings. Addie never wanted to leave town and has her own accounting business that she runs from her home. When Addie's grandfather falls down his steps and lands in the hospital with a broken femur and hip, she agrees to help out and run his family business, Chocolate Haven. She has many trials and tribulations throughout the story, especially with her new puppy, Tiny. This was a delightful story that I really didn't want to see end, I am glad that there will be other stories in this series.

Thank you Ms. McCoy for such reading enjoyment.

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### **Itsy Bitsy Book Bits says**

Sweet Haven, a four-star romance read is simply Sweet. Written by Shirley McCoy, is small town romance has no violence, and besides some kissing there is not sex scenes. This story is written in alternating person narration and you are truly able to know both main characters.

Adeline, never left her small town of Benevolence, Washington like her sisters had. Her grandfather is hospitalized and she is taking over his business while he heals, the family store called Chocolate Haven which is very well known for its amazing fudge. Her adorable dog Tiny, her small home, and guarding her heart after Adam tore it apart is the life Addie wants. Her excitement of her life is Tiny getting out and causing trouble all over town, and Addie is okay with that. But now there is someone now renting her grandfather's apartment, and Addie can't stop thinking of him. Sinclair is returning home, to the town he escaped from to help his brother restore his home for his brother's wife who is expecting a child. Sinclair wants to get the house done and out of the town that pitied him all his life, as the poor Jefferson boy whose fathers drinking killed his mother and his himself. Quickly Sinclair is learning this small town holds many buildings needing to be restored, learning his brother isn't the lazy guy he thought he was, and learning that Addie isn't the little red head girl he remembers. The chemistry Sinclair and Addie have is a page turner, but Sinclair must find a way to break down the walls Addie has built around her heart.

This small town love story is sweet and cute. The only thing I wish is that we had one scene with Addie and Sinclair together sexually, as each time they are together, you felt the passion and attraction they both felt for each other. the sisters make a brief appearance in the book as well as Addie's mother. I am very excited to read the rest of the series, and really hope Addie's mom gets her book, she deserves her happy ending. Shirlee McCoy has written beautiful book, that will touch your heart.

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### **Shan says**

I enjoyed this book. I thought it was sweet and there are some cute moments, and I enjoyed the small town characters. I did hope there would be more development between the main characters, Adeline and Sinclair, in the romance department because I felt it was sort of glossed over, and I wasn't satisfied with the ending; I felt I needed more of a conclusion about their relationship.

Adeline is a do-gooder, even at the expense of herself and her own comfort. She is happy with living in the small town of Benevolence, and even though her mother may think otherwise, she is happy with how her life is. Adeline had some heartbreak in her life, so she is weary of entering into a new relationship, and is content to be on her own. Adeline is filling in for her grandfather at his chocolate shop because he is in the hospital after having a bad fall. She is starting to feel overwhelmed by all the orders she needs to bake for the shop, and is having trouble perfecting the shop's famous fudge recipe, and she has a problem with asking for help, so her life is in a bit of a crazy spot. Adeline has to run the shop, take care of her really rambunctious puppy, be part of a wedding where she has to wear an ugly dress, deal with some mysterious circumstances, deal with her mom's expectations, and her growing attraction to Sinclair. I liked that Adeline is content with her life, and I like that she is a sweetheart.

Sinclair is in his hometown of Benevolence to help his brother fix up his childhood home for his brother's pregnant wife. Sinclair dislikes being in Benevolence because he thinks everyone thinks of his family as a charity case, so he wants to get out of there as soon as possible, so he doesn't have to deal with the preconceived notions he thinks the town people are thinking. Sinclair moves into Adeline's grandfather's apartment above the chocolate shop while he is in town, and when he meets Adeline he feels an attraction towards her, and wants to get to know her better, but with everything going on in her life, it is difficult. I loved that Sinclair is a nice guy, who doesn't play games, and knows what he wants and goes for it.

Adeline is attracted to Sinclair, but she doesn't want to start anything with him since he is leaving town soon, and she doesn't want to get hurt, so she pushes him away often. Sinclair's feelings are growing for Adeline, but he doesn't know if he should continue to pursue her when she keeps being standoffish with him. I did enjoy the scenes between Adeline and Sinclair, but I wanted more. There were too many other things going on in the story, and I feel Adeline and Sinclair's relationship wasn't fully fleshed out. The romance is pretty tame; there isn't any sex scenes, which I didn't mind so much, but I wanted more scenes with just Adeline and Sinclair. I wanted to see them connecting on a larger level. I did like them together, and I thought Sinclair was really sweet with Adeline.

Even though I felt there was bit too much emphasis on the side characters, I did like them all, and I am looking forward to reading the next books in the series. It looks like they are going to be about Adeline's sisters, so that will be fun to read. This book is wholesome, at times funny, and also was heartfelt. I enjoyed Sweet Haven, and I'm glad I read it!

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## **Mave says**

It's a very sweet and funny romance, set in a peaceful town in Washington state, in which chocolate is one of the protagonists.

Addie still lives in the small town where she was born, working as an accountant and she is single. Once she was almost about to get married but then he broke her heart and she decided not to suffer more. She likes her monotonous and peaceful life. But when her grandfather is hospitalized, her life becomes very chaotic and stressful. She must manage his chocolate shop, Chocolate Haven, and she hates chocolate. She should also lose a few pounds to get into a hideous bridesmaid dress. To say nothing of the handsome guy, Sinclair, who has rented for a few weeks her grandfather's apartment, just above the shop. He's really arrogant and grumpy. But some strange events approach them ....

The characters are very realistic with whom it is easy to empathize. Addie and Sinclair are very different, she enjoys her simple life in Benevolence. Sinclair, instead, has never loved his city, soon as he could he had enrolled and never came back. Now he comes back to help his brother to restore their grandfather's house but he can't wait to go away again. They are both willing to make huge sacrifices to help their family. After the first clashes, their relationship evolves and becomes really amazing.

I like Benevolence, a quiet community with some bizarre inhabitants, where gossip travels at the speed of light and in which a mother is informed to the hairdresser when her daughter made her last cut.

I am happy to know that it is the first book in a series, I can not wait to read the next episodes.

It's a funny and heart-warming book, with an aura of mystery and a cute little dog that combines so many trouble.

If you enjoy reading sweet romance, then definitely pick this up!

\*\*\*I received a copy of this book from the author/publisher via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.\*\*\*



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## Terri says

Review also found at <http://kristineandterri.blogspot.ca/2...>

I received an advanced copy of this book from the publisher via Netgalley in exchange for an honest review. The expected publication date is February 23rd, 2016\*\*

I found that I was able to identify with the characters in this story. Just like Sinclair, I could not wait to escape the small town that I grew up in and took the first opportunity I could to get out. I wanted the anonymity of the big city and people not knowing your business or what you had for breakfast.

Now that I am older, I identify with Addie and see the appeal of the small town. So much so that I am moving back to the country for a more peaceful way of life.

I liked the chemistry between the two in this story and how their priorities, or perceived priorities, were at odds with each other. This made for an interesting storyline and I was engaged to find out where it would take me.

One key item I really liked. Addie was real. She was not a stick figure like you find in many stories. She was real sized (I hesitate to say plus sized because even that is normal sized in many cases).

While this story did not offer up any real surprises for me, it was thoroughly enjoyable for me. If you are looking for a romance with some interesting and real characters, this is the story for you

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## Erin says

Addie is stressed. Really stressed. Her To Do list is taller than she is and includes things like running her grandfather's chocolate shop while he recuperates from a fall, losing ten pounds in about a week so she can squeeze into a hideous bridesmaid dress for an elderly friend's wedding, making hundreds of candies as wedding favors for said wedding, coping with her hypercritical mother, and figuring out how to keep her oversize puppy from escaping and wreaking havoc on the small town of Benevolence, Washington. She's frustrated by her inability to replicate the famous fudge the store is known for and worried that the business will fail if she can't learn to master it in time to meet not only walk-in demand from tourists and locals, but also the many online orders awaiting fulfillment. The very last thing she needs is the gorgeous new tenant upstairs distracting her. She's been burned before in the romance department, and she is Not Interested.

Sinclair is only back in town for as long as it takes to help his brother clean out their grandfather's house so his pregnant sister-in-law will come home. He harbors bad memories of growing up where his family name signifies lazy alcoholics, and he's worked hard to build a thriving business restoring old buildings, so he can't wait to get back to it. His PTSD and old injuries don't always let him sleep well, however, and soon he finds himself helping to capture Addie's runaway dog who interrupted his jog. In spite of himself, he's drawn to the frazzled accountant-turned-chocolatier and her misbehaving pooch, and before long, fudge isn't the only thing simmering in the kitchen.

This was a very sweet romance. Only a couple of mild swear words kept me from categorizing this as officially a "clean read." There are some steamy kissing (and almost-kissing) scenes, but no sex.

For readers' advisors: character and story doorways are primary. Only the most particular readers would likely object to the "clean reads" label.

My thanks to NetGalley and the publisher for letting me read an advance reader's copy (ARC) in exchange for my honest review.

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### **Danielle says**

When I saw this story I said well this sounds cute and it was but I didn't totally fall in love with this town or the characters.

Addie is only taking over her grandfathers fudge shop because he was injured but she can't get the recipes correct even though she follows them. Addie's mother was one of the most annoying characters I have read in a long time. She acted like a nice person but the way she treated Addie just got annoying after a while.

Sinclair is back to help his brother pick up the pieces since his wife left him but that means finding a place to stay until his brother gets his head on straight. He decides to rent the room above the store but while living there some weird things start to happen and him and Addie start to become closer.

I have only read McCoys romantic suspense novels so I wasn't sure what to expect from this one. I didn't really enjoy the mystery of who was sneaking in and out of Sinclairs place. I wanted more of a cute romantic love story. Of course this story had some of that but not enough for me.

I just couldn't get into the characters like how I wanted. I didn't really connect with them but if this became a series I think i would give it another try. Addie has 2 sisters who don't live there so just maybe they both will get a book.

Overall this story was just okay for me. Like I mentioned before I would give book 2 a shot if and when it comes out.

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### **Blodeuedd Finland says**

Please someone, give me some fudge! Or chocolate! All the times fudge and chocolate was mentioned. All the times she threw some in the trash cos it was not great, only good and I was all, I want to eat that trash!

Addie has way too many things to do. Take care of her grandfather's Chocolate shop (and learn to make the best fudge in the world), get ready for a wedding. Take care of her puppy that has way too much energy. Find time for her actual job! Avoid her matchmaking mother and well the list goes on and on. Poor Addy, I get that she wants to please everyone but the woman needs to learn to say no. But that is why I liked her, she was so sweet.

Sinclair wanted away from this small town but now he is back. A successful businessowner. And I did like

him, and I got why he was not always a fan of small towns, before he looked deeper and saw the beauty too. But he sure was judgey at times.

They meet, they keep running into each other. They like each other and they will slowly fall in love. All good things.

There is also a mystery involved, why are lights on in her grandad's flat?

A very nice small town and a fun story.

Narrator Vanessa Daniels

One of her voices, one of a 90 year old man was just awesome. I so wanted to listen to his stories. I could even hear his false teeth. Lol.

But her other voices were pretty similar at times.

Still, she was good at what she did and had me enjoying this story.

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