



# **The Courtyard**

*Marcia Willett*

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Nell Woodward and Gussie Merton make unlikely friends - one a young married woman and the other a lonely elderly lady. Nell's husband, John, is an estate agent fresh from the Navy, but he is ignorant of the outside world and, as others abandon the collapsing property market, he gets in deeper...

It is at Nethercombe, the home of Gussie's nephew, Henry, that a refuge is found. Henry has developed and sold a cluster of cottages, known as The Courtyard, and the people who buy them form a bond of friendship that embraces Nell and Gussie. But it is going to take all their strength to withstand the crises ahead...

## **The Courtyard Details**

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Author : Marcia Willett

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# **From Reader Review The Courtyard for online ebook**

## **Michele Kallio says**

I enjoyed this book very much.

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## **Ann says**

I nice easy relaxing book, not too demanding but not too shallow either. One thing I didn't like was the character of Nell. She was a bit pathetic, why didn't she get a job when her husband had all his money problems?? It was set in the late 80s, early 90s - you would have have thought we were talking about the 1950s. Apart from that I quite enjoyed the book.

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## **Sonia Schoenfield says**

Marcia Willett is my new Maeve Binchy. A group of people, connected by friendship or family ties, live and share their lives. The Courtyard begins in 1988 two scenarios: with Henry, master of Newcombe estate, as he prepares to marry Gillian, and the unlikely friendship of Gussie (Henry's great aunt, a spinster living on limited means) and Nell, the wife of a navy man who has decided to go into the real estate business. There's just enough tensions in this cozy read to keep the plot moving forward, and all ends as it should. The title of the book comes from the courtyard cottages that Henry refurbishes out of the barns and outbuildings that are no longer used on the estate. These cottages, and Newcombe itself, form the perfect backdrop for Henry, Gillian, Nell and Gussie, along with their friends and relations, to find their way through the financial crises of the late 1980s to security and happiness.

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## **Tory says**

This book was compared to Maeve Binchy (who I like very much) but didn't quite live up to to the comparison. While I could see similarities, the story telling and characters didn't feel as organic as in a Binchy novel.

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## **Joanna says**

Great story...quick read! I particularly enjoyed the dynamics on "The Courtyard," which are so much like living on Wimberly Court. The book makes the point that when houses are really close together, you have no choice but to respect one another's privacy. I agree! The book also makes the point that good often comes out of really bad situations. What an important reminder! I wholeheartedly recommend this book, with the only reservation being that the main character draws on her Christian faith for strength - and if you aren't a

Christian, this might interfere with your enjoyment of the book.

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### **Martha says**

not my usual fare at all, but thoroughly enjoyable. i needed a comfy read for vacation and this was perfect.

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### **Carolynne says**

Gillian and Henry rent out the modest dwellings that surround their courtyard, and become involved in the lives of their renters.

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### **Debbie George says**

This is the fifth book in a row that I've read that I've been disappointed with. It was okay...but one of those books that got so boring midway that I had to force myself to finish it. Nice character development but just dragged out.

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### **Rachel says**

Marcia Willett is a lot like Maeve Binchy, and my feeling about this book is the same. In many ways I really enjoyed it--in that light, British country novel sort of way. I liked the characters and the story and it was a lot of fun. Just like with Maeve Binchy, though, everything is wrapped up just too perfect and pat by the end, every loose end tied up with happiness and joy. I love this genre so much, but still drives me a bit batty.

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### **Franny says**

Marcia Willett's books are always a delight. Yes, they tend to be a bit saccharine and soap opera-y, but they have the feel of a good old fashioned gossip over the back fence. In "The Courtyard", Willett re-introduces the younger generation of the Wivenhoe, Hope-Latimer and Webster families, along with more rural and ex-military Brits. The centerpiece of this one is Gussie, a retired, struggling spinster, and Nell, a young ex-Navy wife whose husband tries - and fails - to establish himself as a civilian businessman.

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### **Sue says**

I must have been tired when I picked up the next Marcia Willett from the shelves, because I had quite forgotten that I re-read this one only fourteen months ago. I didn't actually realise that until about half-way through, although I was a bit surprised at how much I remembered of the book, thinking I had read it at least

eight years ago.

It's a pleasant light read about a group of people who learn to cope together, with financial difficulties. Nice characters; particularly the quiet, reserved Nell and the similarly reserved elderly Gussie, who strike up an unexpected friendship at the start of the book.

There are some shocks in this novel, which I had quite forgotten in the eight years since I first read it, but remembered in the fourteen months since I last read it. However I didn't remember how it ended, or how all the problems were resolved, and I enjoyed it afresh.

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### **Susan E says**

I have read five or six of Marcia Willett's books now, and they remind me of the sweeping family sagas like Rosamunde Pilcher's books.

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### **Nikki Brown says**

I loved this book, about a family estate needing to diversify so a courtyard of cottages is built, the stories of the inhabitants and how they all fit together. Unlikely friendships are made and broken, lots of laughter too. Some characters have appeared in other books by this author but in completely different stories, no need to have read any other books.

I do enjoy reading books by this author, set in the South West sometimes with a Navy setting but always well written with well rounded characters.

Well worth a read.

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### **Mary C says**

Another wonderful story by Marcia Willett, an older book, but I will get to all that she has written. They are refreshing stories set in small villages or towns around England and never the same plot twice, always some mystery put in for good measure and never sappy or too sweet.

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### **Carolyn Hill says**

Although the characters are appealing, this book depends too heavily on melodrama and works everything out so perfectly as to be unrealistic. And the character Henry as the rather clueless, understanding and forgiving cuckolded husband is totally unbelievable. If he'd had any self-respect he would have thrown his young selfish callous wife out on her ear. But then there wouldn't have been a story. I think I may have read this book before because it seemed familiar without being memorable. However, Willett's characters will often show up in different books, so it may just be that. Not one of Willett's best efforts.

