



Henrietta's Own Castle

Betty Neels

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When Henrietta was left a house in a Dutch village, she decided to make her home there, and settled happily into her new abode. She thought she would like everything about Holland?except Marnix van Hessel. As "lord of the manor," he behaved as if it were still the Middle Ages! Why couldn't he just marry his fiancée and leave Henrietta in peace?

Henrietta's Own Castle Details

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Author : Betty Neels

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From Reader Review Henrietta's Own Castle for online ebook

Fiona Marsden says

The intriguing thing I found gave added depth to this story was the story of Henrietta's great aunt and the heroes Uncle. They fell in love many years ago but he was already unhappily married. He gave her a Dame house on his estate and they lived as friends and neighbours until he died without them ever consummating their love as his wife outlived him. The uncle had no children and it passed to Marnix who had a bad experience as a young man and decided to make a marriage of convenience with a malleable and docile young woman for the sake of an heir.

When Henrietta arrives, she is snappy and not at all like her aunt. Marnix says so several times and this brings to mind the tragic love of the older couple. In the back of your mind there is the question of whether if Marnix goes ahead and married the selfish two faced Loes history will repeat itself. Will Henrietta content herself with friendship with Marnix, or return to England.

Between the interference of Loes, and Henrietta's involvement with the secret love affair of Marnix's agent, there are plenty of misunderstandings. There is humour too. I love his solution to Henrietta's threat not to open the door to him. A nice ending.

Allison says

Quite enjoyed the read. Nice to have a heroine who can stand on her own two feet and stand up for herself.

Nell says

I adore Betty Neels and this was a lovely piece of escapism.

Stacey says

This has got to be one of my favourite Betty Neels stories! I would rate this as a close second to Cassandra by Chance. I liked that for a change our English Nurse was older, beautiful & possessed with a strong personality. She's kind & loving but in no way a doormat & gives as good as she gets, especially when conversing with the hero. I really liked Betty's Rich Dutch Dr too, since you get to see a more rounded personality. You get to see him in all his moods. Amongst these, he has a sense of humour & he has to actually work for the affections of our English Nurse... despite the fact that she already loves him. For those who love Betty's stories, this is a must read. I loved every minute of it!

Janice says

I read this on the kindle

While this follows same sort of format it was different & i got so wrapped up in it i was reading to nearly 2 in the morning to finish this one It wasn't all about it being set in a hospital or going off out in pretty clothes which in other books are more like yes you still have a nurse who goes off to Holland & you have the rich titled Surgeon but that is Betty's style but it really was a good book

Kay says

4 Stars ~ Henrietta is now 29 and has been Ward Sister for the past 5 years at a very busy London hospital. And though she's had a second proposal for marriage from the hospital pharmacist, she's not willing to just settle. When the post brings a letter from a London attorney's office, she's happily surprised that her Aunt Henrietta has left her a small cottage in a quiet village in Holland. Eager to finally shed her life as Ward Sister, she packs up all her belongings in her beat up Mini (Charlie) and sets out on her carefully plotted journey. Though it's dark when she arrives, Henrietta is pleased to find the cottage to be delightful. She's barely inside a few minutes when she's shocked to discover a very tall and very handsome man has walked in, and when she demands that he leave her home, he tells her not to be so "hoity-toity". Marnix holds the leasehold on her cottage, and she learns that while she's entitled to stay for her entire life, the cottage actual belongs to the van Hessel estate. Marnix finds this tall, rather beautiful, woman disturbing, and sets out to annoy her. Henrietta, though grateful for his little kindnesses; introducing her to the villagers, seeing to her water, electricity and heat, and garaging her car (which seems to improve the longer it's under his chauffeur's care), finds herself constantly on Marnix's wrong side. And when she meets the beautiful Loes, the young woman determined to be his bride, Henrietta wonders how she'll be able to watch him make a horrible mistake as she's fallen so deeply in love with him.

This is one of the more wittier stories written by Betty Neels. Henrietta is a confident woman, no longer naive, and though never out right rude, she has a sarcastic tongue with Marnix often at the receiving end. He's abrupt and often ill-tempered, and Henrietta is constantly reminding him of his manners, which only makes him more ill-tempered. It's obvious to Henrietta that he must have been hurt as a younger man, and her tender heart wants to wash away his bitterness. Though all had been more peaceful before Henrietta had arrived to stir up his life, Marnix can't stop himself from finding ways to keep her in Holland. Of course, there's an evil other woman that Henrietta is amazed Marnix even looks twice at. I love the sparks these two created with their heated banter, and smiled from ear to ear at Marnix's last effort to win her.

Teri-K says

I thought this story started a little slowly. It was nice to read about Henrietta's unexpected inheritance of a small home in Holland, but I didn't feel I was getting to know her as much as I wanted to. I liked her cat, who for some reason sleeps in the tea cozy, but she remained a blank to me. Then she decided to help a young Dutchman's love life out, and things became delightful. An airplane crash, mistaken identities, village gossip and a meddling OW kept me smiling as I read.

Jodi says

Another book downloaded on my Kindle for my trip through The Netherlands this summer--just finally got to it. Didn't realize it was a Harlequin Romance. Thoroughly enjoyed it. English nurse inherits a house in the Netherlands, goes there to live, meets rich guy, can't stand the sight of him, falls in love---typical formula. What I got a kick out of was the descriptions of the towns we visited and stayed in. Not many people have heard of Eindhoven but we stayed there for five nights (on train line and less expensive than Leiden). Book took place near there and the heroine explored the entire area. Fun for me envisioning the countryside and towns (albeit the book was written in 1976).

Leona says

Though not in my personal top 5 favorite books ever written by Betty Neels, this still was a very fun and entertaining read. Henrietta was a great heroine, beautiful, tall, loving and in no way shape or form going to take any "guff" from the RDD (Rich Dutch Doctor)! He on the other hand doesn't know quite what to do with the only person in town who doesn't bow to his every whim. There is the requisite evil OW who seems to have her hooks so deep into the hero that even his mother is fretting. Throw in a horrible plane crash where Henrietta's skills and compassion shine for everyone to see, and you can't help but realize quickly that this doctor is falling hard for her.

There were just two very small, very slight negatives I had:

- 1) The plane crash. Though, Betty loves those Dr/Nurse romances, she usually steers clear of over emphasizing the medical profession with all its gore and gorp. Instead she usually focuses on the romance and weaves ways of spending time together outside of the profession. This scene felt too contrived and took me somewhere I didn't really want to go.
- 2) For some reason, I was missing that hidden underlying element of passion and love that Betty is so good at writing. Things felt a little stiff and awkward between Marnix and Henrietta. I can't quite put my finger on it, but somehow that special chemistry was missing.

I give it between 3-3.5 stars. If you read BN a lot and enjoy her books, I would definitely recommend you read this one. If you are just starting to discover Betty, I would recommend starting with some other of her more popular works, such as Winter Wedding, A Happy Meeting, Tabitha in the Moonlight (one of my all time favorites), The Final Touch.

Wunmi says

I'm an avid reader of anything Betty Neels, the warmth, the old fashioned ideals, and yes sometimes corny story line, but this is absolutely one of my fave. I like when Betty's heroine are a bit feisty. And they are so few and far in between. One of the few that I'd read over again.

Sara says

LOVE this book!!!! Have read it before and will read it again!!!!

Ann Keller says

There was no doubt about it. Henrietta Brodie was an old maid. Her career as a nurse helped to occupy her days, but she was shocked when her distant aunt left her a house in Holland. Here, at last, was surely adventure!

Henrietta journeys to the small town of Gijzelmortel in her old car, which she has affectionately named Charlie. There, she meets the lord of the manor, Marnix von Hessel. She is stunned by his handsome appearance. Nevertheless, there is no time for romantic fantasies. The man already seems to have found himself a bride in young Loes, a spoiled young woman who Henrietta believes would make a terrible noblewoman.

Time and again, Henrietta and Marnix are thrown together and they get to know each other better. They share a love of medicine and their desire to help people. Henrietta's cool head in the aftermath of a plane crash really impresses the townspeople and Marnix warms to her.

Although Henrietta fears she may be falling in love with Marnix, she cannot get him to see the truth about Loes. Henrietta is charmed by her little house, her sweet cat, Henry, and she doesn't want to leave her new home. Still, how can she bear to see Marnix married to Loes?

Suddenly, a strange man is seen coming and going from Henrietta's house at odd hours of the day. Has Miss Brodie found a lover? It would be difficult to believe that. She seems like such an upright person. Still, the evidence looks pretty bad and even Marnix is beginning to doubt his true feelings.

I fell in love with these characters, the descriptions of the small little houses and the castle itself. I saw many such structures in Holland and this entire story had the ring of truth about it. Now, who wouldn't believe in a real life fairy tale?

Cecilia says

This is the type of Betty Neels that I prefer - the heroine is less downtrodden, she's actually attractive, and she's got a spine. The hero is a little on the snarky snide, but isn't actually cruel (occasionally, the snarky heroes edge over the line). There's even a touch of pining on the hero's part when he thinks he's lost the heroine to another. Le sigh.

I read this back when I was a youngster buying giant boxes of old Harlequins for \$3 a pop. I enjoyed it then, and it was just as lovely this time around.

Pamela Shropshire says

Henrietta Brodie, a tall, beautiful brunette -an Olivia - is a Ward Sister in London when she is notified that an elderly aunt has died and left everything to her. Everything is a small house in a small village in The Netherlands, near Tilburg, and a small amount of cash. She immediately gives her notice and moves to the little house, despite knowing no one there and not speaking a word of Dutch.

She soon gets to know the other villagers, but she is most interested in the local lord of the manor, Marnix van Hessel, also a surgeon, who lives in a beautiful old castle. Unfortunately he seems to be nearly engaged to the daughter of the Protestant minister, a very young girl - spoilt and bad-mannered - that Henrietta feels doesn't suit him at all.

Henrietta also meets Marnix's mother, who is a dear, like all RDD mums.

I feel like The Great Betty was hitting her stride at this point. So many things I enjoy about this one: the independent heroine; the village; the domestic bits where Henrietta sews curtains and bakes bread; the lovely mother-in-law-to-be; and of course, the tragic plane crash. One of TGB's best! 5 stars!

Janice says

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