



The Course of True Love (Best of Betty Neels)

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Getting engaged to Marc van Borsele was the last thing Claribel wanted. Marc was the most annoying and exasperating man she had ever met! But, as the engagement was only pretence and she did owe Marc a favor, Claribel agreed. She soon discovered that make believe can come true, even if you don't want it to! Before she knew it, Claribel found herself head over heels in love...and the course of true love never did run smooth.

The Course of True Love (Best of Betty Neels) Details

Date : Published April 16th 2012 by Harlequin Special Releases (first published August 1st 1988)

ISBN :

Author : Betty Neels

Format : Kindle Edition 192 pages

Genre : Romance, Category Romance, Harlequin, Contemporary Romance, Contemporary

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Nefise says

3.5 stars.

It's important to take into consideration when the book was written. Thus, you can tolerate somethings and some scenes make a sense too.

Firstly, I want to thank you Betty Neels, however she's not alive anymore, for decided to write and created enjoyable stories for liadies reading romantic stuff like us.

I don't know what should I tell about the book. What I remember is that they always ate or drunk somethings, they had good time together, even so much years ago London had a traffic problem. :) Also, of course Marc, with his dominant character and hidden agenda towards heroine.

It was a sweet and clean romance. It was nice to read old times that was written by a author who lived that time.

Linda says

When *not to read* a romance by Betty Neels.

1. If you are hungry.
2. If it is a cold, rainy day.
3. If you haven't gone shopping for clothes *for yourself* in over a year.
4. If you don't like old-fashion romances: light kisses only or a buss on the cheek.
5. If you had a recent fight with your spouse, boyfriend or significant other.
6. If you have an aversion to the medical field.
7. If you can't tolerate dominant men who have communication issues.
8. If you are a staunch women's rights feminist.

Betty Neels' romances are simple comfort reads. They are *in no way* a period piece. When they were written in the 1970s, 80s or 90s, most women of that era *were not* like her heroines. It is better to think of the 1950s or early 1960s. When women wore aprons, baked bread, served cocktails, drank instant coffee –Sanka or Nescafe- or maybe brewed Folgers (no flavored lattes, iced frappuccinos, cappuccinos, macchiatos, mochas, espressos and so forth...) or had a cuppa' tea. Lemon, sugar, one lump or two and cream; whatever your pleasure.

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THE COURSE OF TRUE LOVE's heroine, Claribel, had more of a backbone than was typically found in Mrs. Neels' romances. And she was beautiful: a 'looker', not mousy, hum-drum or frumpy. She was twenty-eight years old, single, full-sized and had no problem expressing her opinion.

Then there was Marc with 'his dark hair sprinkled with gray, an aggressive nose, a firm thin mouth and dark eyes'. And tall. Claribel, who was above average in height, had to look up at him. He was thirty-five years

old, a bachelor and a Dutch physician but then you knew that, didn't you?

It was a cold, rainy day in March. Marc, who was driving his Rolls-Royce (or was it a Jag or Porche, no, no, no, it was a Rolls), witnessed Claribel hurt her foot while attempting to get on a bus to go home from work. From the get-go, he had a plan. His mission was to win over this 'magnificently built' and lovely lady. He could be charming; he was a smooth operator but he also was honest to a fault and it got him in trouble with Claribel more than once.

*"Are you hurt? I saw what happened. Get into the car, I'll drive you home."*

*"Thank you; I prefer to go by bus."*

*"Don't be a fool, young woman, I've no intention of kidnapping you. Besides, you look hefty enough to take care of yourself. Don't keep me waiting, I have an appointment."*

Gee, Marc, you don't say, and was that suppose to be a pick-up line? Because, IMHO, you started out on the wrong foot.

*Still smarting from having her Junoesque and charming person referred to as hefty, the girl took his proffered arm and allowed herself to settled beside him. "Where to?"*

Claribel was more of a trusting soul than me. She gave him her address and they went on their way. When they arrived, he opened her door and offered his hand.

*"Thank you. You were most kind. I hope you are not late for your appointment."*

*"What is your name?"*

*"Claribel Brown. What's yours?"*

*"Marc van Borsele. And now that we are introduced, I will come in with you and see to your foot."*

*"You're a doctor?"*

*"Yes."*

*"Very well, though I'm perfectly able..."*

*"Let us waste no more time in polite chat. Be good enough to take off your tights or whatever and let me see that foot. I can spare a few minutes."*

Sometimes your soul just needs a little tilted love.

## MissKitty says

Such a sweet story. The usual Betty Neels trope, except Claribel is one of the beautiful heroines. It takes her some time to realise she is in love with the Hero, Marc, but he is good at playing the waiting game.

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## Cecilia says

Back cover blurb:

She didn't know the rules of engagement

Getting engaged to Marc van Borsele was the last thing Claribel wanted. Marc was the most annoying and exasperating man she had ever met! But, as the engagement was only pretense and she did owe Marc a favor, Claribel agreed. She soon discovered that make-believe can come true, even if you don't want it to! Before she knew it, Claribel found herself head over heels in love with her pretend fiancé. The course of true love never did run smooth....

(Except for my qualms about the heroine's intelligence and/or powers of perception - and to be fair, that's pretty much always an issue - I always enjoy Betty's "pretend engagement" storylines)

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## Kathy says

This was one of my all time favorite Betty Neel's books. I loved the fact that the heroine is self reliant, hardworking and modest. The really nice part about the book was watching the hero - who loves Claribel from the start - "chase" after her waiting patiently for her to realize what a great catch he is. It is a very, very heartwarming and sweet story.

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## Pamela Shropshire says

Claribel Brown, tired after a long day as a physiotherapist at a London hospital, is waiting for a bus home in the rain. The people in the queue push and shove and her foot is trodden on by an elderly man. A Rolls Royce pulls up and the handsome driver offers her a lift. Like any sensible girl, she refuses, but he insists. He is, of course, an RDD, and so it's safe to go with him, Claribel!

This is how she meets Marc van Borsele, a man who knows what he wants – beautiful Claribel with her golden hair and green eyes – and how to get it. He visits her flat so often that she soon learns the sound of his thump on the door, although it takes her much longer to remember to put the chain on before she opens it.

Claribel has two cats, Enoch and Toots, who share her flat in town and also go with her when she visits her loving family in the country. As for Marc – well, she doesn't like him, then she does, then she's not sure. It makes no difference to Marc as he has the confidence to court her anyway. And then a situation arises that gives him the perfect excuse to take their relationship to the next (fake) level.

Marc is driving Claribel to her home when they come upon a car wreck. One of the men involved is dead and

his companion, a pretty young woman, is not injured but desperately wants to get to Bath as quickly as possible. Marc offers to drive her and does. However, she is a girl with an eye to the main chance and she sees Marc as a ticket to the good life. So, even though he makes it clear to her he is not interested and is otherwise engaged, she stalks him.

Marc lays this all out to Claribel and proposes – no, just wait – proposes a FAKE engagement just to convince Irma that he isn't available. Claribel reluctantly agrees, although not until after Marc has already, um, put his plan into action. When he decides that Claribel should go to Friesland with him to put the nail in the coffin, so to speak, she decides that is asking too much and she refuses to go, using work as the excuse.

Well, we all know how TGB gets rid of such flimsy excuses! Bring on the fires, earthquakes, and bombs – a bomb in this case. Claribel actually sees a man come into the physio department and leave a plastic bag between some chairs and prudently reports it to a porter. Marc comes running at top speed, just in time to crash down onto Claribel and her elderly patient as the bomb explodes. And just like that, Claribel no longer has a job to get her out of going with Marc.

Contrary to her worries, Marc's grandmother is a delightful old lady and they get on like a house afire. Don't worry – there are no more disasters. True, Irma is on the ferry to Holland but that is the last they and we see of her. Granny immediately knows which way the wind blows. At last, Claribel has her DR while she is out sightseeing and unexpectedly runs into Marc (contrived on his part, of course). She immediately begins plotting to take a job in New Zealand or Australia – Marc asks if it is necessary to run so far away.

One of the sights that is a must-see is the Oldehove tower, the leaning tower of Leeuwarden. It remains unfinished and never reached its intended height of 120 meters; nevertheless, it is still too high for Claribel, who at the summit, realizes that she is acrophobic. Then the elevator has been shut down and the only way to the ground is an ancient winding stone staircase. She presses herself against the wall and begins reciting poetry in an effort to keep calm.

Marc, meanwhile, has gone to his grandmother's and found Claribel absent; Granny is worried, too, and tells Marc where she had gone. She tells him she will put back dinner half an hour: “. . .that will give you plenty of time.’ And at his raised eyebrows, ‘To propose, dear.’”

Marc hotfoots it to the tower and hears her quoting from Merlin and Vivien by Tennyson – the bit about the “little rift within the lute.” She bursts into tears when she sees him. He tells her they will be married and she will never have to go any higher than the pepperpot towers of his castle as long as she lives.

Then he tells her that he has loved her from first sight and has only been waiting for her to discover she loved him, too. He quotes a bit of Tennyson back to her, too: “Where Claribel low-lieth, the breezes pause and die.” But, he says, he is not a breeze and is very much alive and in love with her. Kisses! A boy whistles rudely, but to Claribel, he could have been a string orchestra playing ‘Moonlight and Roses.’

I adored this book! I love Marc, who is so straight-forward. I love Claribel because she tries to be sensible but is so clearly attracted to him that she just can't help herself.

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## **Morina Lanser says**

A sweet love story...

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## Teri-K says

This is one of my favorite Neels books. It has everything I like in her books - a strong, capable heroine with a supportive family; a hero who's genuinely nice; some humor in their relationship; and descriptions of travel, lovely homes, gardens, clothes and food. There's also a decent plot, for those who want such a thing. lol

I totally enjoyed reading this, to the point that someone in the table across from me at the restaurant commented, "It must be a good book." I agreed - indeed it is.

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## Robin says

Briefly, part of this is from another review, but will explain my bias a little. [Ok, before I go into my review, I feel I have to be 100% honest with you. I am a ~~huge~~ - make that **HUGE** Betty Neels fan. I discovered her when I was 10 or 11 years old. Over the years, I have collected every Betty Neels novel ever in print. Even special ordering them all the way from England because I was having difficulty finding them over here in the States.]

### **OVERALL: 4 1/2 STARS**

**Story/Plot: 5** - Having read any number of Betty Neels books, sometimes I remember others more clearly than others. There are times I go looking for a specific book and cannot find it because although I remember the book, I don't remember the title. I find this deeply frustrating especially when I have so many books I have to go through just to find one specific book.

This being said, I want to help others like me out there, who are fans of Betty Neels or who are looking for a specific title, but feel helpless lost in the sea of her amazing amount of books. So, I am going to post a brief spoiler at the beginning of her books here in this section in the hopes I can help you find that one book you must read again.

**SPOILER COMMENT: First off, the blurb on the book is seriously misleading. Now to the spoiler, our heroine Claribel, who is a physiotherapist rather than a nurse, meets our hero, handsome Dutch Orthopedic Surgeon Marc van Borsele after she has been stepped on, pushed and eventually missing the bus she is waiting for, giving her a ride home and checking her foot out. Our hero also chastises our heroine from accepting a ride from strangers as well as frequently opening her door without the chain on. I will NOT list my favorite part of the book, because if you have not read it, I really don't want to ruin it for you, but it happens near the end of the book ;D** Of course, much more happens, but I don't want to spoil it too much for you.

Those of ya'll that are Betty Neels fans know the general premise is a rich handsome doctor falls for a nurse (sometimes she is not beautiful, she might be under appreciated or from a home of privilege but has recently fallen on hard times).

Those of you who are not Betty Neels fans, I highly recommend her works especially if you like Jane Austen or Georgette Heyer. Her romances are usually light, sweet and quick reads (usually no more than 9 chapters).

Highly enjoyable any volume you pick up.

**Re-read Value: 5** - High. I always re-read Betty Neels.

**Continue Series:** - Not applicable unless you want mention that I read all Betty Neels titles.

**Characters: 5** - Again, there isn't a hero or heroine I do not like in a Betty Neels title. She always wrote such sweet endearing characters.

**Cover: 3** - 50/50. To be honest, if you didn't know who Betty Neels was when you picked up this cover, you might not know it was a romance from the look of it. But prior to her passing and when she did pass, there were a number of her books that were reissued with these more artsy covers. I also have the original cover this was released in paperback, which does say romance.

**Genre Fulfillment: 5** - Romance, check.

**Personal Involvement: 4** - I am always re-reading Betty Neels, although this might not be a personal favorite, I do highly enjoy it.

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## KC 2.0 says

### 2.5 stars

Right from the start, Claribel and Marc rubbed each other the wrong way. That's because they wanted to rub each other in other ways if you know what I mean. But, misunderstandings happened: she thought he's arrogant and terse, he thought she didn't like him (she did, but she didn't want to), making him more terse, which made her like him less, which made him more terse which. . . . It's a cycle. Claribel also believed Marc was out of her league even though it was obvious he was smitten. Why else would he drop by unannounced all the time? Clueless Caribel thought Marc just wanted to drink her coffee. Sigh.

Sounds great, right? Neels' writing could delight, but was too uneven in its execution unfortunately. The beginning held so much promise! I laughed out loud a few times and then later, I was so bored I started skimming. Tons of dry details—eating, drinking, traveling, medical drama—riddled the narrative, adding little to the already simple plot. This resulted in a mild romance that never heated up to exciting levels. Even the declaration of love and climax of the story seemed tame.

I so wanted to be heads over Neels in love with this book (pun intended), but in this case the course of true love ran too bland for me.

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## Luli says

### 3.5 stars.

Esta historia ha sido como un agradable paseo. Ha sido lenta, mundana, prácticamente contada a modo de diario y entretenida aunque no vigorizante.

Si estás interesado/a en leerla deberías echarle un vistazo a la reseña de Linda , y seguir sus consejos, porque los protagonistas están todo el tiempo comiendo, de compras o trabajando en el hospital y además el protagonista es, por decirlo suavemente, un hombre de su tiempo: poco hablador y sabedor de tus necesidades antes que tú misma...la pobre Claribel no tenía la más mínima oportunidad...

El argumento es simple hasta sus límites, las cosas que pasan muy convenientes para el desarrollo del

mismo, Claribel dócil y en la inopia y Marc hubiese necesitado un par de contestaciones bien dadas, IMO, pero nada de esto me ha chocado ni me ha impedido disfrutar de la historia...quizás porque estaba sobre aviso...

No se va a convertir en mi autora favorita pero sirve como *comfort read*.

3.5 stars.

This story has been like a pleasant walk. It has been slow, mundane, almost narrated like a journal and entertaining but not invigorating.

If you are interested in reading it you should take a look to Linda's review , and follow her advice, because the MC's are eating, shopping or working at the hospital all the time, and above all, the hero is, to put it mildly, a man of his time: frugal with his words and aware of your needs better than yourself... poor Claribel did not have the slightest chance...

The plot is simple to a fault and the *things* that happens are very suitable for the sake of it. Docile Claribel is always in the dark and Marc would have required a couple of *well deserved* replies, IMO, but none of this has shocked me nor prevented me to enjoy the story... maybe because I was forewarned...

She (Ms. Neels) will not become my favorite author but the story works as a *comfort read*.

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## Leona says

This one goes into my all time favorite Betty bucket.

The hero falls hard and fast and as a reader you are not confused about his motives. He is out to get the "gel" and it's all about watching him "win" her love. He was one smooooth operator. He was also a master manipulator and our poor heroine never stood a chance. But she does go down swinging. Though, Mr Smooth is cool, sophisticated and very alpha, he isn't the obnoxious sort. In fact, he is quite caring, kind and just plain delicious.

The heroine was not one of my favorites by Betty, but I really enjoyed watching her try to avoid the traps Marc set out for her. There were points in the story where I actually scratched my head and wondered why she was fighting so hard. Personally, I would have been all over Marc, but then again we wouldn't have a story. I think Betty did a great job in portraying that her reservations were mostly driven by her fear of falling in love with a man she felt was out of reach. So I looked past some of her TSTL moments and just went with the flow.

I loved this one and I highly recommend.

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## Teresa says

**A classic!**

The very first romance I ever read was written by Betty Neels.....and I was in the 7th grade. Forty some years later I can still find the same enjoyment.

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## **Megzy says**

He is one manipulative, smart character. She is like a deer caught by the headlight and doesn't know how to run. I even wondered how much of Irma's attention and pursuit was engineered by the good old doctor. She knew where to find them at any time, any where... very convenient. What made me really like this story was the bombing attack that took place at the hospital and it's aftermath.

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## **Fiona Marsden says**

This is one of the later stories by this author. The heroine Claribel is a Physiotherapist. As time passed Betty wrote less hospital based romances, possibly because so much had changed since her own retirement from nursing. Marc van Borsele is one of our typical Dutch heroes with dark hair with a sprinkling of grey.

They are already friends, though Claribel is resistant, when they assist at an accident and Irma is introduced into their lives. Irma takes a shine to Marc and begins stalking him so he tells her he is engaged and produces Claribel as his fiancée. She is still resistant but Marc manoeuvres her into each situation until he gets what he wants. As expected.

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