



## Uncertain Summer

*Betty Neels*

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A marriage of friends

When her fiancé jilted her, Serena gave up all hope of ever getting married. She was determined to be sensible about the whole thing; that was, until Gijs suggested that she marry him.

She liked Gijs very much, and she knew he was fond of her. Companionship seemed as good a basis as any for a marriage—who needed romance anyway? But it turned out Gijs was in love, and Serena couldn't work out who the lucky woman was.

## Uncertain Summer Details

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Author : Betty Neels

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## **From Reader Review Uncertain Summer for online ebook**

### **NV says**

#### **Sweet**

Sweet charming story set in England and Holland. The description of landscapes and building interiors is very well done. The love story is full of miscommunication and ends happily.

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### **Monique E. Lacroix says**

#### **Wonderful**

One of the better ones although they are all good. I just love to read these stories. They are full of simple love and lots of complications.

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### **Allison says**

The aunt ruined this book for me- who goes to that much work to make trouble? As well, I never did understand the heroine's rambling at the end.

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### **Fiona Marsden says**

Serena, the heroine, meets Laurens van Amstel when he is brought into the hospital after a traffic accident he was responsible for. He is handsome and charming and seems totally bowled over by the pretty Serena. His uncle Gijs is less charmed by Serena it would appear. He certainly doesn't approve of their romance.

When Serena gives up her job to go stay with Laurens family with a view to marriage she finds things aren't nearly as cut and dried as she expected. And somehow Gijs is always around and rather disturbing.

It is Gijs who picks up Serena after her dreams come crashing down, offering to marry her and give her a home.

This story reminded me a little of *Fate is Remarkable* and we get to meet Sarah and Hugo in this story. There are several stories by Neels about heroes salvaging the heroine after a broken love affair (and vice versa) There are usually enough differences not to bother me in any case.

Gijs is lovely and while there is a hint of Other Woman, it is all in the heroine's imagination and the machinations of Lauren's mother. Ending is a little contrived, bringing in Sarah and Hugo but still sweet.

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### **Kay (aka) Miss Bates says**

It took me a long, long time to warm to this Neels. The heroine was in love with a worthless guy for the first half and ignoring the far superior gentle-giant hero. In the end, I think it is one of La Neels's finest achievements. Why, say you? Because the heroine, Serena, spends the entire book in agony (not angst, like contemporary romance does) but an agony of love and uncertainty. She loved Laurens the worthless one and settled for marrying the hero, Gijs, whom she respects and likes. When time, and conversation, and Gijs's qualities have her slowly falling in love with him, she experiences the same uncertainty, the same notknowingness. Laurens hurt her and dumped her and treated her cavalierly. It's so easy once the fantasy of him is over to get over him. But Gijs not loving her, he who is all kindness and gentle humour, consideration and handsomeness ... well that cannot be borne, can it? Neels has written a romance which is actually the coming of age, the maturation, of a young girl who has to learn what people are worth and who is worthy of her love. The emotional highs and lows, the uncertainties and vulnerabilities, whether undeserved for Laurens or thoroughly deserved for Gijs, are so apt and psychologically astute. Neels's *Uncertain Summer* reminded me very much of Heyer's *Convenient Marriage*. I love them both. To whomever's reading, read them both! Onwards with my great Betty read ... *Cassandra By Chance* is NEXT! I've wanted to read this forEVAH.

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### **Shelly says**

3.5 stars. I just finished the latest S. King book so I thought *Uncertain Summer* would be a nice read to lighten things up. This book was written in the early 70's and was reissued recently. I didn't realize this when I grabbed it to read, but it became apparent immediately. Obviously the characters and romances written in that time are a bit different from those written now. It's an enjoyable read if you can step back into time. I think the book is less than 200 pages, but the story has a lot of detail to it. The heroine is young and I varied in my opinions of her, but I liked the hero.

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### **Cindy says**

3.5 actually.

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### **Michelle says**

#### **Lovely**

A rather old fashioned and clean little romance. But a nice little visit to how things might have been back then

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### **Pamela Shropshire says**

Beautiful brunette Serena Potts, Casualty Sister, falls in love with Laurens van Amstel when he comes in the

hospital after he has a car crash (in his E-type Jaguar). He is very handsome and quite a charmer, given to lavish, but unfortunately insincere, compliments. Laurens makes vague references to a future for the two of them and invites her to his home in Holland, convincing Serena to resign her position.

Once Laurens is released from hospital, Serena actually sees more of his cousin, Gijs van Amstel, whom she discounts as being dull and lazy, influenced by Laurens' dismissive, almost contemptuous remarks about his cousin.

So Serena arrives in Holland to a cool welcome by his mother. Soon she sees Laurens talking to a lovely blond girl, Adriana; and soon after that, finds them kissing. Gijs makes excuses and pretends that Adriana is his girlfriend. But after another such occasion, Serena can no longer deny the evidence of her own eyes and fortunately, Gijs is there with a shoulder to cry on. Overwrought, Serena takes out her anguish on Gijs, saying that he is glad and that he never wanted her to come to Holland.

Gijs replies that she is wrong: "I was delighted that you came, but for all the wrong reasons." She doesn't even query this remark!

For a few days, things are smoothed over. It is Laurens' mother who sets Serena straight, telling Serena that Laurens and Adriana are to be married soon; that both are from the "adel," the Dutch aristocracy. "In Holland, adel marry adel. And that is that.

Serena confronts Laurens, who shows his true colours: ". . . I know I hinted . . . But I never asked you to marry me. . . If I've been thoughtless - I'm sorry, and I was going to tell you about Adriana. . . We were having such a good time . . . I didn't think you were quite so serious - no harm done."

Serena runs out of the house - straight to Gijs. He tells her that he's been expecting her. He listens while she gets it all out, lets her cry all over him, and then proposes a marriage of convenience. "You need a safe anchorage and I need someone to help in . . . emergencies, listen . . . when I need to air my views. . . someone to share my table, but not, I hasten to add, my bed." Serena splutters, "Not - not . . ." and Gijs tells her he is a perfectly normal man but not impulsive; that they will get to know each other, yada yada.

Gijs takes Serena to meet his parents, who are warm and friendly, unlike Laurens' mother. Later in the evening, Jonkvrouw van Amstel comes to Serena's room and they have a frank talk about the situation. Serena, upon learning that Gijs is also a Jonkheer, says that she cannot marry him. His mother replies that, "We are proud to welcome so lovely a girl into the family and with a good man of the church for a father." Such a sweet lady will be a good mother-in-law, Serena!

Later, Gijs asks if Serena has heard from Laurens. Serena tells him that Laurens called but she didn't talk to him and isn't ready to do so yet. "Later perhaps, if you're there." Which is music to Gijs' ears and causes his heart to leap in hope!

So, Serena marries him and wears a Real Bridal Gown - one of only a handful of TGB's heroines to do so. She and Gijs return to Zierikzee and settle in to married life. Serena helps Gijs at his surgery - another rarity among the RDD/RBD wives. There is no marathon shopping because Serena had nice clothes already, but Gijs does give her some lovely gifts: a strand of pearls, a brand-new Mini (dark blue), a basset hound puppy (she names him Gus), and ruby and diamond jewelry set - bracelet, earrings and brooch. Well, he did tell her he would be a good husband!!!

Of course it isn't long until Serena realizes she loved Gijs - honestly, Laurens shows very poorly next to Gijs!

There is a minor medical emergency involving some small children. After Serena is cleaned up at the hospital, Gijs stays and works. He gets home late, then goes out again. The next morning he tells her he went to see Adriana, but is rather mysterious about it. Later he mentions it again, saying that he needs to tell her something; he hesitantly asks her if she has guessed. Serena imagines that Gijs is in love with Adriana, and says that yes, she has guessed and doesn't want to talk about it, and she runs out of the room.

Next day, Laurens' mother invites Serena over for coffee, er, to make mischief. She maliciously drops a few hints that feed the beastly scenario that Serena has trapped in her mind and suggests that Serena go to see Adriana. It's a wild goose chase that leaves her more confused than ever.

Serena decides to go to England and allow Gijs to take Adriana away from Laurens. She gets up early one morning, leaves a note for Gijs, says goodbye to the dogs, and goes to Sarah van Elven's house in Richmond. Gijs is there. He explains all to straighten out her jumbled ideas, tells her he fell in love with her at first sight and observes that he is glad they "don't have to get married, and how equally nice that we can go home together," and that they are having a week's honeymoon at Hugo's cottage in Scotland. But first they go back home to Zierikzee, to get started on the half dozen children Serena decided she wants.

I've always liked this one. Gijs is one of the best RDDs, but Serena is sometimes TSTL. It's nice to see Sarah and Hugo even briefly. Adriana, despite being the Otger Woman(at least in Serena's mind) isn't a Veronica. The book is weak on secondary characters. Not much in the way of food or fashion descriptions, but a lot of scenery details. Not quite 4 stars.

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## **Kay says**

4 Stars ~ Serena is Trauma Nurse in a busy London Hospital and she's rushed off her feet when a young man comes in after a car accident. He's quite handsome and when he awakes he flirts shamelessly with her and insists that she must get to know him better. Laurens is from Holland, a doctor in a private practice with his cousin, Gijs. It's Gijs that comes to London to see to Laurens problems, as he was the cause of the accident, there are police matters to attend to. At first Serena view Gijs as a rather sluggish man not in any hurry, pandering to Laurens whims. Lauren keeps up his pursuit of Serena and from his hospital room he woos her. As he's about to return to Holland, he asks Serena to put in her notice at the hospital and leave with him when he returns to London to pick up his new car. He leads her to believe that he wants to marry her. Normally a level headed girl, she's lets herself be flattered by Laurens attention, and she agrees. Only when she arrives in Holland she discovers that his mother has other ideas for Laurens, and so it seems does Laurens. And for some reason Gijs keeps turning up just when she needs him, so when Serena catches Lauren and another woman kissing, it's perfectly natural for her to run to Gijs. He takes her to stay with his own parents until he can take her home to her family in England and he proposes a marriage of convenience between them. Serena accepts his proposal and is surprised when he insists they have a white wedding from her father's church. Settling down to a routine in Holland, Serena is quite happy looking after Gijs and feeling needed. But when she suddenly realizes that's it's Gijs that she loves, she learns from Lauren's mother that Gijs loves another woman.

Betty Neels enjoys her marriage of convenience love stories, especially where the hero is already in love with his bride, and he patiently waits for her to catch up. We are reacquainted with Hugo and Sarah, a previous couple of convenient marriage, and who help Gijs in his conquest of Serena. Of course, we can easily see that Gijs adores Serena, he has that constant gleam in his eye and a tiny curve to his lips when he looks at her. And of course, he kisses her with verve which quite flusters her. Serena is really quite a level

headed woman and is sharp in a crisis, it was lovely to read how totally confused she is over her own heart. I'm sure I'll enjoy reading this love story again and again.

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### **Cecilia says**

This was fairly typical fare for Betty Neels, and enjoyable enough. I would have liked it more, however, if she hadn't wrapped things up the way she did. Appearing in the story are the two protagonists from another of her books (*Fate is Remarkable*), which is not unusual - we often see a blissfully happy and babified couple from another of her books. However, the older book had a particular dramatic bit towards the end, which is mentioned in this book. And then it's also pretty much copied. Now, the device is acknowledged as being basically the same twist, and the old couple gives the new hero a bit of a helping hand to get him to solve his problem faster than the old hero was able to, but it still came across as bizarre. And weak. So only 3 stars.

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### **Mudpie says**

3.5\* 1972

The nonsense with Laurens went on for far too long! Serena was naive and impulsive to throw away her job for Laurens the Louse. I wish Serena had given him a few tight slaps, seeing how he was so nasty to her in the surgery! How on earth could Gijs work with such a guy like the Louse?! Good riddance to him!

#### **SPOILERS**

That mystery at the end with Adriana was so contrived and ridiculous! Silly Gijs would not give direct answers and what was Serena to think? And Tante Emilie was nasty and evil as hell. She had no reason to play mind games with Serena; her precious son was going to marry the aristocratic Adriana, and Serena safely married to Gijs, so why, why why send Serena on a merry chase?! Bloody hell!

But in a rather startling departure from the norm, Betty let us know very early on that Gijs had deep feelings for Serena. His eyes sure said lots! When he gave Serena a white wedding with all the family around I knew he was in love with Serena! Serena's mother also betrayed the fact when she seemed like a child with a secret, when Serena bemoaned that she liked but not loved Gijs and neither did he love her...Gijs must have confessed his love to her parents BEFORE the wedding. Aww...

Their story so closely followed that of Sarah and Hugo, no wonder the couple made cameo appearances and played a pivotal role in the end. The van Elvens had twins! A Hugo and Rosemary, so Sarah kept her promise to Mrs Brown. Refer to *Fate is Remarkable*!

Gijs was a very KIND hero and good husband but I hated how instead of clear speaking, they wasted precious time together talking about nothing!. Serena was too silly over Laurens so I deducted stars. The vaccination fiasco was too contrived so minus star too!

PS. I LOVE Gijs' mother! She's toooo sweet, when she offered her listening ear to Serena whether she married Gijs or not!

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### **Heather says**

The problem with reading a whole bunch of Betty Neels in a row is that they all start to run together. Gijs runs into Gerard who runs into Roele. But on the upside, I sleep well at night.

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### **Livia says**

A rarity, UNCERTAIN SUMMER is an off-shoot of FATE IS REMARKABLE.

Doctor Gijs van Amstel is the good friend of Dr. Hugo van Elven featured in Fate Is Remarkable. Gijs meets and immediately falls in love with Nurse Serena Potts but, there is a troublesome cousin of Gijs standing in the way, constantly murking up the waters.

Gijs and Serena enter into a marriage of convenience that is rocky and romantic. Helped along by the heroine and hero of a previous book the two take a rough path to happiness.

UNCERTAIN SUMMER is a delightful, traditional Neels doctor/nurse story.

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