



A Private Hotel for Gentle Ladies

Ellen Cooney

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Charlotte Heath, a lively, independent redhead of humble beginnings, is married to the scion of the powerful Heath family. When, on her first outing after a long illness, she spies her husband, Hays, bending to kiss another woman in the village square, impulsive Charlotte heads her horses straight out of town. Upon arriving at The Beechmont Hotel, Charlotte makes a shocking discovery: The classy Beechmont is a rather unique institution where a different kind of hospitality awaits the all-female clientele. Seductive and high-spirited, *A Private Hotel for Gentle Ladies* is an unforgettable novel of one woman's journey to self-enlightenment.

A Private Hotel for Gentle Ladies Details

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Author : Ellen Cooney

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From Reader Review A Private Hotel for Gentle Ladies for online ebook

Jenny says

I'm not sure where to begin with this book.

I feel a little like Charlotte in the story- Did I like it? Yes. Did I not like it? Yes. Was I keen to finish it? Yes. Did I care about her and her life? Yes. No.

See? I can write just like Ellen Cooney, haha!

I think my most biggest problem with this book is that there was no point to it. It was kind of a coming of age story - but only halfway. I liked that it was set in 1900 but there wasn't a ton of cool time-place stuff. Why couldn't this have happened in 1870 or 1940? What was the purpose of Miss Singleton? Or Miss Blanchette? And I don't get why there was a twist at the end - why!?

I want my book club to read it so we can figure out the purpose of this story.

Sylvia Abrams says

This historical novel is light reading. Ellen Cooney has created an improbable setting for her heroine, Charlotte, to internalize the shock of coming to terms with her life and, more importantly, her husband. After a siege of what appears to be polio, in 1900 New England, Charlotte flees to a small hotel in Boston, where the former Family cook is employed. A frantic set of interactions occurs with the feel of an old-time comedy. For a while I thought the heroine would undergo some major transformation, but in the end the strictures of 1900 prevail.

Heather says

This book was very good. It was about a woman who - after catching her husband in a compromising position - left, and began questioning her entire life. And in doing so, gave herself a taste of being a "modern" woman. I enjoyed it thoroughly.

Devon says

Reviewed on amazon.com January 20, 2009

I was very excited to read this book after reading all of the great reviews I was expecting a funny and enlightening read about an early 1900's reverse brothel. The premise has the makings for a truly fantastic book. Yet, although it was an easy read and the prose was done well, it was...well, boring.

'A PRIVATE HOTEL FOR GENTLE LADIES' centers around Charlotte Heath who just off of her sick bed discovers that her husband is having an affair. At a loss as for to what to do next Charlotte decides to take an extended holiday to visit her only friend, an ex-servant for the very wealthy Heath family. Unbeknownst to Charlotte this ex-servant is now working in a very private hotel where the guests are only women and the men that one may see wandering the halls at night get paid by the hour for their "services". Here Charlotte explores her marriage, herself, her family and what it means to be a true friend.

There was very little humor, that I found, in this novel. Where it could have been full of colorful and fun characters it was actually dull and the quirky characters were never fully explored. Also, I found the story to be extremely one sided in making the main character Charlotte's husband look like the bad guy when clearly the decline of their marriage was the fault of both of parties. I give this story three stars because it did pick up the pace a bit at the end and I was happy with the resolution but overall this was a below average read.

Abigail says

I was surprised by the low ratings on this; I thought it was really lovely. More literary than I expected, but that's not a bad thing.

Kayleen says

The review made this look interesting. It is not. It's like being forced to follow a dithering idle housewife around for a week. And not only have the utter boredom of watching her, but having to listen to her inner thoughts: Do I like this? I don't. I do. I don't. Will I go home to my husband? I will. I won't. I will. (Did I mention "dithering"?!)

Don't bother reading this. Do. Don't.

Amy says

Okay, first of all the cover of the version I had didn't look like this AT ALL! This story started out so well. I was taken in right away. I really felt for Charlotte Heath and was happy to go on this adventure with her. But along the way the story turned weird. I guess I missed that part in the book description. I couldn't understand why Charlotte, as she was presented in the beginning would make the choices that she made. It just didn't ring true for me. I guess I would have been a little more clear on the direction of the story if the cover had looked like this one.

Kate says

Such a good beginning: the likable protagonist observes her husband embracing another woman, and she takes off into the snowy landscape in her pretty little horsedrawn carriage. (See how engaging the whole

scene is... at first?)

And it stays interesting for quite a while-- until we realize... sort of... that she has found herself in some sort of avant garde boarding house where handsome and intelligent young men make cozy love to the female residents. They seem to be simply very obliging fellows(if they were male prostitutes, there would be money changing hands, wouldn't there?)

About midway, nothing about this book mattered to me.

Laura Hine says

Unusual period piece

Although not as unconventional as the character in Kate Chopin's The Awakening, Charlotte combines a delightful sense of rebellion with an understanding of, and willingness to tolerate, the mores of her time and place. The author's style is refreshing as well.

Andrea says

If I had to sum this one up in a nutshell I'd say "A very well-written, lushly described book in which almost nothing happens, very few revelations are made, and there is almost no narrative progress". I found this book frustrating. I liked the descriptions and the setting and the main character it just...NEVER went anywhere. Though I will say my utter impatience with this book may have been fueled by my recent encounter with The Alchemist's Daughter which had a similarly molasses-like pace but a much more engaging plotline.

For example, after getting a sense of what is going on in the Beechmont and quite a number of lengthy musings on her own sexual life (or lack thereof) with Hays, her husband, we finally get Charlotte in a room with the handsome and appealing Arthur. Some clothes come off, some cuddling ensues...and then we cut to an entire chapter of Arthur's backstory. Huh?? Don't get me wrong. I nearly die of blushing with books that are TOO explicit, but after all that faffing about and thinking about things, we get almost no actual information about how Charlotte feels about what just happened. Or at least we don't in any reasonable amount of time. There are tidbits here and there as she ponders her life and what to do next.

Overall – this was just too darned slow for me and the narrative style was at times SO convoluted that I am still not 100% sure I really got what happened in specific moments. The ending with her parents seemed particularly unsatisfying and vague. Heck, I am not sure I really got until we went off looking for her parents that there was any question or mystery about her background. And that to me – introducing some central character-defining past history in the very end of the book –seems like poor storytelling to me.

Charlotte says

If I could give this book zero stars, I would! This is the worst book I've read in years. This book has no real plot or direction, the characters are one-dimensional at best, and the author clearly had no idea where she was going with this book and decided to ramble on and hope a plot came to her (spoilers, it didn't!). The

writing was disjointed and jumbled and made no real sense. One minute, the author would be describing what was happening to Charlotte at that very moment, and the next sentence, the main character would be thinking of something that happened twenty years ago, something that had nothing to do with whatever had been going on before, with no segue at all to this new thought or memory. And this happened every single page! She's in bed with Arthur, they're getting naked, and then suddenly, we're hearing Arthur's life story?? And she sets up this big mystery with Arthur's life story, there's a twist where we learn it's not even his story, presumably thrown in to make it all seem more interesting, and then the book just ends. No resolution to anything, except to apparently go back to a husband she believed cheated on her. It's very obvious the author was trying to make this a less tragic retelling of *The Awakening*, and it's just as obvious that she failed miserably.

Debbie says

Well.... thank goodness that's done. I forced myself through this book hoping it would get better and have some significant point. If it did, I missed it. My biggest complaint with the story however, is the incessant and tedious tangents into the thoughts of the main character that go on and on and on. There is no doubt that Charlotte is full of angst over her life, but these episodes could have been handled in a paragraph or two, not 5 pages. Lines like "I will, I won't, yes I will, no I won't" are cute the first time but the theme does not need to be repeated. Needless to say I think there are far better books out there you can spend your time reading. Skip this one.

DeAnna says

I loved this novel and I'm surprised by the reaction some other readers have had to it. The writing is eloquent and layered, and I was completely swept up in the character's struggle and rich setting.

I wonder if the novel's title and description might have set up false expectations for readers. The story is about a woman striking out on her own after discovering her husband's infidelity. It isn't about questionable goings-on at the hotel for ladies where she takes refuge (though these are part of the story to a lesser degree). I can only imagine that is what triggered some of the lower ratings.

I would have rated this novel 4 1/2 if I could. I didn't give it a 5 because I wish the heroine would have resolved her problem a bit differently, but the conclusion she reaches is in no way unbelievable.

And I am very much looking forward to reading more from Ms. Cooney.

P.S. As some people question whether novelists work together to give each other undeserved praise, I'd like to state that I do not know Ms. Cooney, no one has ever asked me to comment on her work, and this is simply my sincere opinion.

Angelica says

So, I got about halfway through this book and I decided that I just can't go on with it anymore. It's poorly written, the protagonist is boring and confused and whiny, and it just isn't worth it. I hoped that it would get

better, but it hasn't, so I have to put it (throw it) away.

Shannon K says

Mediocre historical fiction in the vein of The Awakening but without the historical relevance. I found Charlotte to be predictable and the rest of the characters to be shallowly constructed. The premise promised intrigue and a bit more spice, but I was disappointed with both the Beechmont Hotel and Charlotte's supposed feminist enlightenment. Yes, she was physically and emotionally stronger by the end, but the book seemed to stop before Charlotte's potential was truly revealed. I was disappointed.
