



Hometown Girl

Mariah Stewart

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***New York Times* bestselling author Mariah Stewart presents a captivating contemporary romance novel in the tradition of Robyn Carr, Susan Mallery, and Barbara Freethy.**

Life was always just about perfect for Brooke Madison Bowers. She was the prettiest, most popular girl in small-town St. Dennis, Maryland, a prom queen, local pageant star, and the pride and joy of her loving parents. She even married the man of her dreams. But the promise of happily ever after fell to pieces when her husband was killed while serving in Iraq. Brokenhearted and longing for the solace of better days, she returns to the idyllic world of St. Dennis, and the familiar comfort of the family farm. Surrounded by her loving family and friends, she's determined to build a new life, complete with her own cupcake bakery. She's equally determined never to fall in love again.

For Jesse Enright, life has been a challenge. A fourth-generation attorney, he's spent his life fighting to escape the shadow of his irresponsible father. Now he's moved to St. Dennis to run the family law practice, and he's ready to find the right girl, get married, and settle down. But his carefully laid plans go out the window when he meets Brooke and finds himself caught between the unbreakable law of attraction and Brooke's resolve to go her way alone—despite the undeniable feelings Jesse stirs in her. But just like catching lightning in a bottle, is it possible to fall head-over-heels, heart-and-soul in love all over again?

Hometown Girl Details

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Author : Mariah Stewart

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Amanda says

This is one of those series that I'm happy to have found after all of the books have already been published. I don't have to wait a year before the next book comes out. I already have the first 11 books on my shelves and am eating them up like candy in quick succession. My biggest like about the series is that all the main characters from previous books still feature prominently in later books so you don't have to say good-bye to favorite characters. I'm wondering if the cast of characters might be too big for someone to just jump into the series at any point. I've had to keep a piece of paper handy to keep track of everyone and I have been reading the series in order. The series is very predictable. I have been able to pick the next couple without even looking ahead at other Goodreads summaries or blurbs on book covers. A perfect book for people who like light romances set in picturesque small towns where you know that everyone is going to have their happily ever after.

Sheryl Jones says

Second one I read in "The Chesapeake Diaries" but I am not ready them in order as I I am borrowing e-books from my local library and they don't have all of the books. I found that it doesn't seem to minimize the enjoyment of reading the book. The characters are interesting and there is enough twists and turns to keep a reader interested. I read a lot of James Patterson and Lisa Jackson so this "home town niceness" is a great relaxation away from terror, death and the savage "real" world.

Catherine says

Love the characters and the small town feeling. This was a easy read. Just like a Hallmark movie.

Jenn says

I wanted a cheesy and fun romance and this was just bad. I don't even care to finish it. All the characters are bland and the story is kind of trite. Here's this small town with all these trendy little shops that you wouldn't find in a small farming community. Not to mention the organic farm and the plans for a microbrewery. Urgh. Too much.

The book reads kind of goody, goodyish then you get to this odd make out scene that doesn't fit with the tone of the first 60% of the book. I'm not going to finish this one. Wish I hadn't wasted the time. The description on the back of the book was more interesting than the book itself. Kudos to whoever wrote it.

Michelle says

If you've read the others in the series, you get more of the same in Hometown Girl (the 4th in the series), but it seemed to all go a little smoother this time. I kind of missed the suspense. Not that it was less enjoyable...these books are all about relaxing into the idyllic hometown you never had, and not having too many bumps in the road is part of that. I enjoy them for the sweet, little diversions they are, and I look forward to the next one (which seems like it might have a little more suspense, regarding the mystery of Grace's daughter, Lucy's, sudden and unexplained disconnect).

Speaking of the next one...BOY! did this one lay the groundwork for future stories. A ton of new (and eligibly single) characters were either introduced or re-introduced (looks like Clay and Lucy are on deck). Still more references were made to the supernatural (which, frankly, I could do without in this series), seemingly laying the ground work for a spinoff. I swear, if this series succumbs to the "we have to have a vampire, werewolf, ghost, or witch in the mix" trend that seems to show no signs of slowing down, I'm probably going to stop reading. It's not that I don't like those things...I'm just reaching a saturation point, and I don't want my perfectly lovely little Chesapeake Diaries sullied. I like them the way they are.

Cheri says

I can't explain what keeps me reading this series. Somehow, I love the characters. Yet these stories take me longer to read than they should. I can put them down for a day or two and be okay with that. It's very confusing to me.

As I said, I love the characters. But it's mostly the girls. For some reason I get the names of the guys confused. I like the characters, but something about them makes it hard for me to keep their names straight.

I am looking forward to the story of Clay and Lucy. Mariah Stewart did a good job of making me curious about them for more than one book. I just hope there's more oomph to the next book. This was not a bad book at all...I just wanted something more.

Shelley Lawrence says

This is yet another delightful addition to a wonderful series I just adore. Chesapeake Diaries is a cozy, sweet series I've come to love and reach for whenever I want a pick-me-up or the reminiscent feeling of going home. It's the town I wish I grew up in with characters I absolutely adore. It's all about real life, everyday issues amongst faithful friendships, sweet, sincere romances and the bonds of people living in an ideal small town. These books are the perfect escape.

Romancing the Book says

Review by Valerie: Book four in this series and while predictable can be a boring thing, in this instance, it's not. Predictable for this series is like going home to put on your favorite pajamas and snuggle up with hot chocolate on a cold night with a fire crackling in the fireplace. You know the two characters will end up together but getting there is most definitely the fun.

Brooke has a lot to overcome in this book. She's returned to town to live with her mom and brother, along

with her son, after her husband's death in Iraq. When she was younger, she was one of those girls, you know, the mean ones. She made fun of several girls in high school and always got the hot guys. Then, she got married and life was still great for her. Now, she returns to a small town as a different person on the inside, grieving, remorseful, but who will believe it? As she tries to make a small business for herself and her son's future, she deals with a lot of small town kindness that surprises her.

Jesse wants Brooke, no way to mistake that look in his eye, but her brother tells him he better play like he's not interested or else she'll run fast and far away from him. Geez, how's a guy to pretend he just wants to be friends? Since he's a lawyer, he offers his services to Brooke and makes sure to plan the visits when it's time for lunch or supper, etc. However, his year at the law firm is almost up. What will he do if his grandfather doesn't accept him and offer him a job?

As things heated up, it was fantastic to read about how the characters coped with their growing attraction, as well as read about some of the other characters from previous books. I simply love this series! A special shout out to Molly Edwards for sharing this book with me!

Quote: "She waited for the stab of pain in her heart, for the ache that would remind her of the finality of this action. But for the first time, she didn't feel as if Eric were watching from somewhere, accusing her of betraying him, of forgetting him too soon. She felt only that she was taking care of some necessary business and that Eric would approve." Page 219

Jeanne (love2cook) says

Hometown Girl is another in The Chesapeake Diaries series. In this story Brooke Madison Bowers is the central figure. The story starts with her living with her brother and mother after her man of her dreams, her husband was killed while serving in Iraq. She is now known as one date and done. As she is determined not to fall in love again. At the same time, Jesse Enright is a fourth generation attorney. He has spent many years trying to escape the reputation of his father. Now he's back in St. Dennis, Maryland, after talking his grandfather into taking a chance on him to run the family law practice. He's ready to settle down, find the right girl, and get married. When he meets Brooke he finds himself battling his attraction for her and her resolve to remain single. Read the story to find out how he goes about having a happy ending. A good read!

CoffeeTimeRomance andMore says

Meeting familiar characters that have starred in earlier stories in this fun and fresh series was a pleasure. Stewart, yet again, crafted a mouthwatering tale of a business owner who has a gift in the kitchen, but instead of Steffie and her ice cream, this story follows a cupcake chef. Although reading Stewart's decadent descriptions—again made me gain about five pounds in my search for tasty treats in reality—it wasn't as romantically exciting as *Almost Home*. Perhaps because of the lack of conflict stopping their relationship and the tenderness that rippled across the pages of the last book, this reader was disappointed with a love story that wasn't what I had come to expect from this author.

Virginia

Reviewer for Coffee Time Romance and More

Marcy says

Life was always just about perfect for Brooke Madison Bowers. She was the prettiest, most popular girl in small-town St. Dennis, Maryland, a prom queen, local pageant star, and the pride and joy of her loving parents. She even married the man of her dreams. But the promise of happily ever after fell to pieces when her husband was killed while serving in Iraq. Brokenhearted and longing for the solace of better days, she returns to the idyllic world of St. Dennis, and the familiar comfort of the family farm. Surrounded by her loving family and friends, she's determined to build a new life, complete with her own cupcake bakery. She's equally determined never to fall in love again.

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Michaela Osiecki says

So far, of all the Chesapeake Diaries' books that I've read - this one seemed to fall the most flat and the most susceptible to tired old tropes and sexist overtones. For shame, Miss Stewart, for shame.

spoilers ahead, beware

At first, I really liked the character of Brooke - even more than Vanessa who has her own somewhat sketch and tragic backstory - because for Brooke her trauma was an ongoing thing and something that still haunted her years later. Which was realistic, but honestly, who just "gets over" the death of a young husband? Especially when you have a small child to consider as well.

My first point of contention that was Brooke hardly EVER spent time with her son, Logan, in this book. It seemed like she would rather just pawn him off on her brother Clay and spend all her time baking her cupcakes, focusing on her studies, and later - making out with Jesse Enright.

Heck, we see more interaction between Brooke and her mom than we do between Brooke and her young son. Does that seem right? I mean, Miss Stewart could REALLY have flushed out the relationship between a grieving woman and her child, the bond she'd want to cultivate with him - but she doesn't. For Logan to be her only tangible link to her dead husband, she sure seems to scooch him off on other people to look after...

And then we have the character of Jesse. To be perfectly honest, I don't think Miss Stewart knows terribly much about law, because it shows in her depiction of Jesse and how he thinks. Don't TELL us that he's analytical and observant of people's behavior and language - SHOW us that in his behavior and thought-

process.

And while I WANTED to like his character, I just couldn't. At the advice of Brooke's older brother Clay, Jesse pretends to be Brooke's friend and confidante all the while running a long-term scheme of getting in her pants. It's duplicitous and cruel, shame on Jesse and shame on Clay. People's feeling and romance are not a game - being up front is ALWAYS the best policy. If you have to fake a friendship with someone to get close enough to shag 'em, you're a scumbag. No bones about it.

I honestly didn't see any kind of chemistry between Brooke and Jesse either. Their "intimate" scenes felt really forced and awkward, so I kind of skipped over most of the later ones in the book. The relationship seemed like it fell together really fast and I'm surprised that Brooke didn't want to properly introduce Jesse to her son and maybe get her son's take on having another man in his life. It all just fell together too perfectly.

All in all, I give this book a 3/5. Here's hoping the next one's better!

Anne OK says

Could have been, should have been but just wasn't up to par for me. The story was there to be told and the characters had so much potential. Instead, we got bogged down in so many different activities being planned, taking place and just plain bungling up the whole main story. There was too much emphasis placed on cupcake baking, wedding planning, party planning, parades, Halloween activities, etc. -- and no relationship building. The chemistry was there - but it didn't even begin to spark the storyline.

For me, the best part of the whole story was watching Jesse and his grandfather connect and then begin to bring their family together again. I think I foresee at least two more books in this series - one for Sophie, Jesse's sister and one for Grace's daughter Lucy, who hopefully will make a match with Clay.

IMHO, even the cupcakes and ice cream couldn't bail it out.

Eva says

I have been enjoying the Chesapeake Diaries' characters...every book brings in one or two more characters and keeps the old ones...so it's like visiting old friends.
Good summer read...light and cheerful.

Ada Iaboni says

I was thrilled to have found all of this series, Chesapeake Diaries, on Hoopla.

I've had much to do, requiring physical labor, the last few weeks that these books were a good companion to me during that time.

I've enjoyed them a lot, even though the stories are simple and most have little drama to contend with. They are family and romance oriented stories that make one wish of life in a small, caring little town.

