



The Silver Thaw

Betty Neels

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SO MUCH FOR AN EAGER GROOM!

Amelia and Tom had been engaged a long time—too long! She was beginning to worry about why he was so reluctant to set a date. So when her father first suggested that the three of them should have a holiday in Norway, Amelia thought that in such relaxed surroundings she and Tom would finally be able to settle their future. Instead, Amelia found Gideon van der Tolck often at her side, and his company became increasingly appealing....

The Silver Thaw Details

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From Reader Review The Silver Thaw for online ebook

Kay says

4 Stars ~ The heroine in this story is a operating theatre nurse from a well-to-do family, and she's quite beautiful. She's not the usual plain-Jane, under-privileged heroine found in previous books. The hero is the usual good looking rich Dutch doctor, not just any doctor, but a specialist in his field, which in this story is anesthesiology. Amelia is 27 and she works in a busy London hospital, She's engaged to Tom, a registrar, soon to be looking to start a practice of his own. Tom's a bit of a washy fellow and is happy with a long engagement. He wants to be established in his career before they marry, and in the meantime, Amelia will continue working. Of course, Amelia isn't too thrilled with this idea, especially as she has inherited money from her mother and they need not struggle. When her father suggests that she and Tom accompany him to Norway on a fishing trip, Amelia thinks this might be just the opportunity to tie Tom down with a firm wedding date. Tom only has a week's leave, and Amelia is owed three weeks, so she'll stay on with her father longer.

They meet a Dutchman, also on a fishing holiday, but travelling on his own. Gideon is in his later 30's and is very well off. From the moment he sets eyes on Amelia he's quite taken with her and she is thoroughly disturbed by him.

Amelia, meeting the Dutchman's sleepy gaze, had a sudden strange feeling, as though everything had changed; that nothing would ever be the same again; that there was no one else there, only herself and this giant of a man, still staring at her.

Amelia's father invites Gideon to join their holiday threesome and to Amelia's displeasure he agrees. Amelia doesn't know why Gideon rubs her the wrong way, but she mistakes the gleam in his eyes as mocking. Tom knows Amelia wants to push their wedding date nearer, and he manages to avoid the topic, so when he returns to London, Amelia is left feeling disappointed. Gideon takes advantage of Tom's departure and invites Amelia and her father to end their Norway holiday early and join him at his home in Holland. Amelia is quite taken with Gideon's family home and discovers that they have parallel ancestral backgrounds. She finds herself thoroughly confused when she's with him.

Gideon with his two dogs came into her view, and this time, carried away by some impulse she didn't try to understand, she opened the casement and called good morning.

He stopped and looked up. 'Good morning, Amelia. Put on some clothes and come down. A walk'll do you good. You can have five minutes.'

She managed it somehow, bundled into slacks and a sweater and her quilted jacket on top. She cleaned her teeth, but there was no time for her hair or face; the latter was rosy with sleep and her head a dark tangled curtain as she raced downstairs to meet him.

His quiet: 'Lord, what a lovely girl you are, Amelia,' brought her up short. She had wanted to be with him, so much that she hadn't cared what she looked like, and the sudden knowledge of that shocked her into a frozen silence. She stood in front of him, her face a stiff little mask of bewilderment and embarrassment.

He studied her slowly, his head on one side. 'Oh, dear—why have you gone all frosty?' he wanted to know, 'just when I thought...well, never mind what I thought. You remind me of a winter's frost waiting for a silver thaw, Amelia.'

'A silver thaw? What's that?'

'Something only to be found in Oregon, I believe; after a frost when the thaw sets in, it turns to silver in the warmth of the sun. It is reputed to be beautiful, just as you are beautiful—only you haven't found the right warmth to thaw you yet, have you, my dear?'

Gideon questions her on her wedding plans, and when Amelia tells him that Tom wants to wait for them to get married, he quietly asks her, *"Why not marry me?"* Amelia doesn't know how to take this, so she chooses to think he's joking and makes light of it, replying that she's marrying Tom. Gideon simply shrugs and says, *"Ah, well, there was no harm in trying."*

Back in London, Tom excitedly tells Amelia that he's accepted a five year contract in Australia. When she protests that she'll be away from her father for so long, Tom tells her that the position is only for a bachelor and he expects her to wait for him. Smart girl Amelia won't have any of that and she returns his ring. Weeks later with Tom off to Australia, Amelia and her father attend her cousin's wedding and much to her surprise...

What she saw was Gideon at the other end of the room, standing head and shoulders above everyone else, talking to a pretty red-haired girl. At least, he had been talking to her, presumably, now he was staring at Amelia over everyone else's head. She tried to smile, a meaningless social smile, but her mouth shook so that she turned her head away quickly.

When Gideon asks after Tom, Amelia says he's fine and avoids telling him that they have broken their engagement.

She wondered instead what he would say if she told him that she had made a discovery; that it wasn't Tom at all whom she loved but he, standing there smiling at her. 'Across a crowded room,' she thought a trifle wildly. She felt peculiar again; she had felt like that when she had met Gideon for the first time and she knew now, with all the clarity of hindsight, that she had fallen in love with him then and had never allowed herself to acknowledge it.

Devastated by her discovery, Amelia tosses off glasses of champagne and tries to evade him, with an *"I really ought to circulate"* but Gideon halts her.

'Presently. There's a song—I'm strongly reminded of it—"Some enchanted evening," although the only line appropriate to us is the one "Across a crowded room".'

'Oh, did you think of that? So did I.'

'Now that's interesting, Amelia. And why do you look so sad? You looked sad in church too,

but perhaps you don't know that.'

She wanted desperately to put out her hand and clutch his arm and explain why she was sad, and not because of Tom, who had suddenly become quite unimportant, but because she loved him so much and he didn't care two straws for her.

'I'm very happy,' she said a shade too loudly. As the waiter went past she took another glass of champagne.

'Happy? Oh yes, and I'm sure you will be—because you will make your own happiness. You'll tend it with all the care of someone holding a last candle in the dark. You'll learn to make do with second best; a great many men and women do, you know. Just a few know what real happiness is—to love someone so much that nothing else matters any more, only the two of you and the life you share.' Gideon smiled faintly. *'We could have been like that, you and I. You know that deep in your heart, don't you, my darling? And do you know something else? If it would make you happy, I would give up all I have and live in a desert with you, or on top of a mountain. I'd pluck the moon from the sky and hang the stars round your beautiful neck. The world could be paradise.'* He sighed. *'But most of us, as I said, make do with second best.'*

Amelia drank in every word, her insides glowing with excitement. He loved her—he must, to talk to her like that. She had only to explain...

The next minute she knew that she never would. He laughed suddenly and the mockery in his laugh was so blatant that she winced. 'What nonsense one talks at weddings! Come and meet Fiona; we came together—we've known each other for a long time.'

For the remainder of the story, it's obvious to everyone except Amelia that Gideon is head over heels in love with her. And when he eludes to having made up his mind on who he wants to marry, Amelia is positive he means red-headed Fiona. Gideon, of course, thinks she's still pining for Tom. They give each other a merry dance, until Amelia is ready to admit she loves him. This is another charming love story from Ms. Neels, that I'm sure to enjoy again.

Harlequin Books says

Miniseries: The Best of Betty Neels

Laura says

Eh, felt Gideon was a bit pushy. I mean, all of Neels' heroes are, but it felt especially so in this one.

Sunita says

A reread of one of my favorite Neels romances. It's a bit unusual because the heroine is attractive, has a good job, and is comfortably well off, and the (Dutch) doctor's career is mostly offpage. They meet when Amelia, her father, and her fiance Tom go on a fishing holiday in Norway. Tom is rather selfish and oblivious; they've been engaged for five years and he won't marry until he's financially secure, even though Amelia's money could help with that. The meeting between Amelia and Gideon van der Tolck is prickly and of course she's sure he doesn't like her.

When Tom tells Amelia he's taking a good job in Australia and she should wait for him, she finally wises up and breaks off the engagement. She keeps running into Gideon at family parties (wonderful descriptions of holiday parties, aged relatives, and a chance dinner at Le Gavroche, for those who remember the 80s), and they banter and bicker, but she refuses to acknowledge, even to herself, that she's falling in love with him.

Of course Gideon is in love with her and he asks her to marry him, but Amelia can't believe he's serious. She's an interesting Neels heroine because here it's Amelia who can't see what is in front of her face. The thaw is about Amelia letting down her defenses and admitting her feelings. When it finally happens, right at the end of course, it's a very satisfying scene.

Teri-K says

Lucky Amelia, on vacation from the hospital, in Norway with her father and fiance. Somehow the vacation doesn't go as she expected though and she finds her fiance pulling away while a RDD slowly moves in. He plays his cards pretty close to his vest, so I'm not surprised it takes Amelia a little while to readjust her plans. She's a smart girl however, and eventually we get our HEA.

I liked Amelia and he father and enjoyed the tour of Norway. Good story.

Katie says

can't get into it

Jessie says

One of the best Betty Neels books I've read.

Megzy says

Not the typical Betty Neels book. She is a staff nurse in charge of two theater/operation room but she is also the only daughter of a well to do squire and she has plenty of money on her own... so unlike most other

Betty's books, this girl buys a new expensive outfit every time you turn around, mostly after her engagement falls apart... she is tall, smart and very pretty. She comes from a big extended family and her father adores her. She is engaged to an English doctor three years out of school. Their relationship is lukewarm and he wants her to wait another two years before they get married and continue working even afterward because he doesn't want to touch her money. He criticizes her for buying new clothes and the readers can feel his animosity for her family's lavish lifestyle. Her dad's favorite hobby is fishing and he takes his daughter and her fiancée to Norway at the end of September so he can try his hand on fishing salmon. She is going to be with her dad for an extra two weeks because Tom, the fiancée, can only take one week off. On the second day of their vacation they meet the good old Dutch doctor who basically falls in love with the girl on first sight.... She can feel her life changing as soon as they meet but she also resents him.

Unlike most other Betty's books, the main characters do not work together... Even though he proposes twice, she thinks he is joking. She actually realizes she is in love with Gideon, the Dutch doctor, shortly after her engagement falls apart, but she believes he is with another girl.

I really liked Gideon and the storyline was refreshing.

Barb in Maryland says

Ah, another fine outing from LaNeels. You either buy into her standard plot (which varies only in the small details from book to book) or you don't. This is not one of her angsty books. Our Rich Dutch Doctor is not overly snide or obnoxious. It is obvious to the reader that he has fallen for our British Nurse (beautiful and tall variation), though she is being just a bit dim about the whole thing. After all, she has been engaged to steady Tom for years (good old Tom, who shows No Signs of actually wanting to get married).

So the only drama for the reader comes from wondering when/how our BN will break up with Tom, how soon our BN will realize that she's in love with the RDD. In the meantime we get good hospital action and a nice tour of Norway (fishing holiday), the RDD's home in the Netherlands, and the English countryside before we get to our final declaration of love and the big kiss.

Not a bad way to spend a couple of hours.

Figlet says

This was one of the Betty's that I had never read. A fellow BN fanatic gifted me with the original 1981 paperback (excellent condition too) a few months ago so I am grateful I finally received the opportunity because it is just lovely.

Fact: I laughed out loud a few times reading this which isn't a normal reaction from me while reading a Betty (usually it's just heart-clutching sighs and tears), but Amelia could be downright snarky at times. I liked it. I liked her snappishness too. It was real.

Another Fact: I learned more about fishing in Norway than I ever thought I needed to. I mean, after spending 20+ years learning the ins and outs of Holland through Betty, I had to pull up a map of where Amelia, Gideon, and her father travel because it is all so different and fun.

Last Fact: This is my favorite type of Betty where the romance is a slow burn to our heroine, but totally

obvious to the reader and everyone else in creation. Gideon is rather romantic and impetuous which is what a single, fishing, Dutch anesthetist should be, and he owns a CASTLE!

Allison says

More of a story than her usual. Her male character seems more living and jovial than normal.

Pamela Shropshire says

3 1/2 stars. The alternate version of *Midnight Sun's Magic*. Fishing trip instead of nurse-cum-secretary-cum-cook; same boring fiancée; etc. Amelia turns down the half-hearted MOC proposal in this one, insisting she is going to marry Tom (we all know it's never going to happen) and the rest of the book consists of Amelia and Gideon (I do love the names!) dancing around the truth.

I like the scenery. I like the H/h. I like Amelia's posh background that matches Gideon's. So why do I not like the overall book more? Amelia gets a little annoying with her refusal to see that Gideon is attracted to her. I wanted to smack Gideon over the head when he took back his lovely speech at the wedding reception (remember *The Nanny* TV show when Mr. Sheffield told Fran he loved her and then took it back?).

The ending is lovely, though. I love Gideon's response to the woman in the "deplorable hat."

Fiona Marsden says

This was another good read from Betty Neels. A little different in that the initial meeting with the hero takes place when Amelia is on a fishing holiday in Norway with her father and her fiance Tom. Gideon is also on holiday and seems to be a little smitten with our heroine.

Tom meanwhile is resisting all pressure to set the date for the wedding and toddles off home leaving Amelia frustrated and forced into Gideon's company. Amelia realises just a little too late where her heart lies and so we have quite a bit of angst in the later half of the book. There isn't too much of the other woman thing happening though there is a pretty girl who Amelia thinks Gideon is serious about.

We get to see Amelia's hospital life, some areas of Norway and the doctor's home near Hilversum in Holland. A little less enigmaticness (is that even a word?) from our hero would have turned this into a novella but otherwise an enjoyable read.

Leona says

Betty is always a gentle read and a fun way to spend a few hours.

However, this one was a bit middle of the road for me even though the hero is definitely one of my all time favorites by BN. (Oh, if I were 20 years younger, I would want my very own Gideon)

It's very obvious to everyone, except the heroine, that he is madly in love with her. Yet, she continues to pine away for a worthless fiancé, who ditches her for a job in Australia. Gideon proposes, and she would rather chase after the worthless fiancé.

"Marry me and I shall be able to look after you and cherish you until my last breath"

"I'm going to marry Tom"

Needless to say, she wasn't exactly the brightest bulb in the box.

Mudpie says

3.5* 1980 copyright

The romance is rather weak in this story; the Norwegian holiday trip stole the show! Oh and the beautiful clothes, rich and delicious food and houses! Not to mention they drank more champagne than tea!

I must say so far, Amelia was the wealthiest BN heroine I've read. Gideon was a RDD Rich Dutch Doctor, but not a baron. However his family castle dated back to the 14th century and he could most likely trace every ancestor to back then! Amelia mentioned that fishing in Alta was even considered too expensive for her father who had seemed rich and generous, so that must be saying something about Gideon's wealth. No wonder he was so evasive talking about himself as with all BN heroes; probably to keep gold diggers away!

Now it's clear as glass to us readers that Tom was all wrong for Amelia. Her father did not share a warm relationship with him, and his reluctance to set a wedding date was obviously a huge sign. When Amelia first met Gideon, she could not help but feel the instant connection, but seeing how she's engaged to Tom, she told herself she disliked Gideon, most likely to stop herself from betraying Tom.

SPOILERS

Gideon then invited Amelia and her father to return to England via Holland; he'd be happy to host them. And we knew what it meant, when a hero showed the heroine his house, especially the ancestral home! But he really needed to work on his timing; his proposal came so out of the blue that it shocked even me! Or one could say Gideon sure knew his mind: he saw and he wanted Amelia...like someone he'd been waiting for all his life (36 years of it.)

Of course Amelia rejected him; she'd only met him 3 weeks ago and she's still engaged to Tom! Moreover

she was sure she did not love Gideon...then.

From then on, it's a lot of frustration for me. Gideon tried to downplay his rejected proposal, and maybe to ease off pressure on Amelia he acted friendly but impersonal, but boy he sure turned up in places where Amelia was! Everyone in her big family liked Gideon, it seemed.

By then the free and single Amelia realised she could not get Gideon out of her mind, unlike Tom! Then she realised the one she truly loved was Gideon, but too late, he seemed to be attached to this Fiona!

While it was apparent to us that Gideon was smitten by Amelia (look at his family's behaviour in Holland), Amelia was too blind and confused by Gideon's words and actions. She mistook being Gideon's second choice, and he's on the verge of marrying Fiona. He thought she was still hung up on Tom, and joked about marrying him a second time.

If they could just speak frankly the book could have ended 50pages earlier! The way Gideon 'proposed' a second time...was it even one? Wait, Amelia had said she's too busy and he replied he wouldn't propose then. *Jaw drop* I feel for Amelia...what's a girl supposed to feel?! Never quite knew what to make of him... Most frustrating to read.

Other than that, I very much enjoyed the descriptions of the places, dresses, and food. I cannot believe Gideon was always making comments about Amelia 's size and so soon upon acquaintance! Beautiful Amelia was junoesque, smart and sweet in general.

I must say the book grew on me upon a second read 16/3/18
