



City of Friends

Joanna Trollope

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City of Friends is the twentieth novel from the highly acclaimed number one bestselling author, Joanna Trollope.

She glanced at her phone again. There were appeals from the girls, from her colleagues, a text from Steve reading with uncharacteristic imperiousness, 'Call me.' She couldn't. She couldn't call anyone . . . She leaned forward, gripping the edge of the bench, and stared at the ground. God, she thought, am I losing my mind? Is this what happens when you lose your job?

The day Stacey Grant loses her job feels like the last day of her life. Or at least, the only life she'd ever known. For who was she if not a City high-flyer, Senior Partner at one of the top private equity firms in London?

As Stacey starts to reconcile her old life with the new - one without professional achievements or meetings, but instead, long days at home with her dog and ailing mother, waiting for her successful husband to come home - she at least has The Girls to fall back on. Beth, Melissa and Gaby. The girls, now women, had been best friends from the early days of university right through their working lives, and for all the happiness and heartbreaks in between.

But these career women all have personal problems of their own, and when Stacey's redundancy forces a betrayal to emerge that was supposed to remain secret, their long cherished friendships will be pushed to their limits . . .

City of Friends Details

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From Reader Review City of Friends for online ebook

Lady Drinkwell says

I very rarely give up on a book but I ploughed through half of this and thought "No more". I really enjoyed Trollope's early work but I have the impression that over the years she has purposefully distanced herself from the stories set in cosy villages I enjoyed. This book is about four high achieving women (yawn) who all have economics degrees (yawn) and dress very smartly (more yawns) and live in very fancy houses in London (falls off sofa snoring). It was well written but it was very plodding and just dull. I have nothing against economists, I work with lots of them, but these women were just so conventional.. there was no hint of flamboyancy or eccentricity or anything in any way interesting. As another reviewer said below, I couldn't remember which was which because they all seemed the same with slightly different lives and hair colour. I have the impression Ms Trollope is writing a modern book for modern people leading modern lives but even modern people have splashes of colour and unusualness. I don't think anyone is as ordinary as the people in this book.

Lorraine Lipman says

A little disappointing. I am a great fan of Joanna Trollope, but not this time. Not up to her normal standard. The characters didn't really stand out from each other. I had to keep reminding myself who was who. The ending was unresolved. A very forgettable book.

katy ktp says

A story about four selfish, prickly, quarrelsome, touchy 'friends', none of whom are likeable or show any empathy to their families, or aforementioned friends. The writing is ponderous and frustrating. A waste of time.

Gisela Hafezparast says

This is a decent read which picks up very important issues of our time: i.e. why it still costs women more than men to become successful and powerful; why women still are expected to do the lion share of the "home" organisation plus their own work; how to cope with family responsibilities be it for children or aging parents whilst holding down a high-powered job and why is this still mainly the responsibility of women. So that was all good, however whilst reading it it reminded me why I haven't read a Trollope book for at least 15 years. She sees things mainly from a very comfortable upper-middle class positions. Whilst all the women friends come from working class and lower middle class families they all end up in 2017 with powerful jobs - really? Not one of them does not succeed for the reasons why many hard-working, intelligent women end up powerful in Business and Banking. And when they have a crisis, because they all have well-heeled husbands or are in such a comfortable position, that they can have their life crisis but it never turns into an existential, i.e. putting bread onto the table, crisis. That's too convenient for me and what is more a really missed chance to discuss the issues above properly.

Decent read, but no more Trollope for me.

Dale Harcombe says

Two and a half stars.

I have been a fan of Joanna Trollope's book for a long time, so was glad to see a new one appear on the shelves. The story concerns four women who have been friends for a long time, since their university days. The four friends are Stacey, Beth, Melissa and Gaby. Chapters go backwards and forwards between the four characters.

I thought it was an honest portrayal of these women who were all work oriented, to the extent that they did not value relationships, certainly not that of family members. Even their friendship with each other, which was supposed to be so important to them, gets pushed aside at times because they are so focussed on their own lives and own desires. I found some of the attitudes strange especially when it came to caring for someone you supposedly love.

Although I found this an interesting read in some ways, I also found a certain sameness between these four selfish women and did not like any of the characters. At times it took me a minute to work out who was who. That is not helped by switching between the characters. In the end I was left somewhat disappointed and feeling like the author was too busy pushing an agenda. Other people though may well like it more than I did.

Katy says

Such a lovely quartet of friends!

Liked the characters and the surroundings which is a given as I love books happening in London :)
Another great book by the author , she doesn't disappoints.

Bookread2day says

I have read all of Joanna Trollope's early novels. But my favourite books by Joanna Trollope were Friday Nights and Balancing Act, but I'm afraid City Of Friends didn't hold my attention to finish it.

Emmkay says

What my kiddo calls a 'mom book.' Tells the story of four women friends in their 40s, foregrounding their relationships with their work, which I thought was neat, if a bit over laboured (oh, ha ha, didn't mean to make a pun). The interpersonal dilemmas were sometimes odd - I didn't understand what the big deal was with some developments that sent characters into a tizzy, and yet the author quickly dispatched the interesting struggle of one character dealing with her mother's dementia. Even so, it was a decent read, and I appreciate the effort to write about women's work lives and friendships.

Ruth says

First, and last, Trollope. Inane story of 4 high-achieving shallow women. The conflict set up by the author (because books have to have something to resolve, don't they?) is about as troubling as whether there's going to be another courgette crisis. 'Oh no! I recommended my best friend's husband for a job! Just when she gets sacked! Will she ever forgive me? How will I sort this out? What's this new-fangled invention called the mobile phone?'

Sacked character decides to put the world right by setting up an agency to help POOR women get jobs by interview practice with a dog and the loan of a nice handbag. I've interviewed a fair few people in my time and let me tell you now, if you ever fail to get a job because you have the "Wrong Bag" then it ain't a job worth having. And if you are so shallow that you think having a designer bag is going to swing it for you, I suggest you think long and hard about your self esteem.

That's before I get on to the unrealistic dialogue; sexist comments like 'she wanted something that in her experience a woman could better supply: a rigorous attention to detail' (that'll be because women's brains are wired to look at little things) and daft sentences such as 'There's a new Creative and Media Academy in Manchester. I'd like to start something similar in the south.' (because, as we all know, there's NO creative or media industry ANYWHERE in the South East).

What is is with 2017? Why can't I find a good book?

Sandy says

Either the author is not trying very hard any more, or my taste has changed. It was not particularly engaging and the main characters were practically interchangeable.

Esil says

3.5 stars. I used to love Joanna Trollope's books. And then we parted ways. I don't know if her books changed or I changed, but I found myself losing interest in the struggles of her characters who were inevitably involved in different permutations of domestic life.

When I saw City of Friends pop up on Netgalley, I decided to give Trollope another try. I wasn't wowed, but I was engaged. The book focuses on four women in London in their mid forties going through various crises and changes. Much of what is happening to them has to do with the eternal challenges faced by women trying balance work and family. There are also tensions that have crept into these lengthy friendships.

Part of what I liked about City of Friend is purely idiosyncratic. I have just returned from a one week trip to London, and I loved the London setting. But I also liked the characters, the fact that they are middle aged, and mostly that the work/life balance discussions were a bit more nuanced than what one usually finds in novels. The four women approach this challenge from different perspectives and Trollope doesn't purport to offer one solution or one moral view point. In fact, I loved that Gaby, who has three children, unabashedly

states that her work is crucial and a necessary source of emotional energy to her ability to cope with her family.

What I like less about City of Friends is that at times I felt like the tensions between these four friends were petty and overblown. I couldn't relate to some of the drama. I felt it bordered on portraying some of my least favourite stereotypes about women.

So I'm not sure I'll be rushing to read Trollope's next book. But overall I'm glad I read this one. Thanks to Netgalley and the publisher for an opportunity to read an advance copy.

Phrynne says

I have been enjoying Joanna Trollope's novels for many years now and this was no exception. She has a talent for creating interesting characters and then putting them together to see what happens. In this case it is four working women, all of them high flyers in their own particular areas and all about to be affected by varying degrees of misfortune.

I particularly enjoyed the way none of them allowed themselves to be walked on. They made decisions and stuck to them and they talked back when being accused of wrongdoings. As long term best friends they made mistakes, disappointed and upset each other and argued, but they also owned up to their mistakes, discussed their problems and made up.

Trollope writes really well and knows how to tell a good story. This is an easy read which keeps the reader turning the pages but also gives food for thought about a number of issues.

John says

For me, this was not Ms Trollope's best books and I think I have read them all except Pride & Prejudice (I didn't think that the original book could be bettered). By the time I finished "City of Friends", I still hadn't got the four characters sorted in my mind i.e. who was happily married (were any of them?), who was the single mum and who was gay. I am not sure that a chapter per character in rotation worked for me. I understand why Ms Trollope writes about women's rights and as a father of three daughters, I applaud that but, for the first time, I felt that there was a touch of the misandrist creeping in. Each of the 'blokes' had slightly negative adjectives used to describe them when there was no necessity as they really were minor characters. None of this will stop me reading the next book but maybe, I will look at the critics more closely before I do.

Kara Hansen says

3-stars...Joanna Trollope, an author whom I really enjoy and find her books comforting, quiet and endearing. Unfortunately, this one did not ring true with me...she is a good writer but the plot was just meh. Trollope was trying to deliver a message with this book, but it seemed to have gotten lost. Friendship, relationships, feminism...they were all touched on, but weakly. Character development was non-existent. Disappointed overall. Not on my highly recommend list...thanks to Netgalley and the publisher for the opportunity to read this book and provide an honest review.

FIONA NORRIS says

Years ago, when I was young, I went through quite a Joanna Trollope phase -although quite what I thought I had in common with middle class angst in country rectories, I'm not sure. But I seem to remember that the characterisation was strong, and the novels engaging. So it was with some interest, that years later I decided to try a much more recent Trollope, to see how her writing was holding up. Sadly, the answer based on this novel is - not really. On the surface, it seemed to have much that would have engaged me - 4 middle aged female friends dealing with professional and personal crises. Lots there to enjoy, I thought - I have had a professional career, I have been (still am??) middle aged. I have had crises.

However, it was incredibly difficult to plough my way through this banal and unengaging account of 4 London high-flyers with negligible problems. The most potentially interesting storyline, the development of vascular dementia in Stacey's mother, was barely dealt with, before a handy nursing home costing £1,000 a week (yes, a week!) was found, and everyone was free to get back to agonising about the ethics of their jobs in the financial sector. I may have been a bit generous with the two stars...
