



Once Upon A Winter

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Imagine the man of your dreams. Now - imagine being married to him.

For Nell Jones the dream wasn't to last, and after struggling for years to bring up her twins on her own, she returns home to her family and the picture-book Welsh village where she grew up.

While Nell's daughter seems more or less a typical nine-year-old, her son isn't exactly average. No one can quite say why he is the way he is, until the village 'psychic' meets him for the first time. Suddenly, Nell has to question whether the husband who abandoned her seven years earlier was everything he seemed.

One winter's night, he reappears in her life, throwing everything into disarray again and jeopardising a potential new romance. But whether she wants to or not, and regardless of the consequences, Nell is about to discover just how fine a line it is between fact . . . and fairytale.

Once Upon A Winter Details

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Author : Valerie-Anne Baglietto

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From Reader Review Once Upon A Winter for online ebook

Jaimie says

Interesting romance concept

This wasn't what I expected necessarily by the description. I don't normally read romance stories. It was a sweet simple love story and was enjoyable enough. The thing that made me give it 2 stars was the distracting switching of the POV characters. I would have preferred the story from either 3rd person solely or Nell's point of view.

Moon Love says

I'm not quite sure what I was expecting when I started reading this book, but I was blown away. There is a line on the cover that says, "a modern day fairy tale" and it is. However, it's hard for me to put my finger on what fairy tale I've read that it's most like. The story seems to be a brand new fairy tale, and a lovely one at that. I've read one of Ms. Baglietto's previously published books and this fantasy fairy tale is nothing like the contemporary novel I'd read. The story was slightly reminiscent of Patricia McKillip's writing. Anyone who is a big fantasy/fairy tale fan will know what I'm talking about.

Going back to the story, I was hooked from the first page. Why is Nell moving home? What happened to her husband and what's so special about Joshua? Let me tell you, as someone who reads between 500-600 books a year, I thought I'd easily be able to forecast the big and little events in the story. I was wrong. Ms. Baglietto did a phenomenal job of keeping me on my toes and let me tell you, I didn't see anything coming!

The premise of the story and its execution is unique and any one who reads this book is in for a treat. I laughed and cried and fell in love with the characters. There is such a depth to all of the characters. They're some of the most three dimensional like characters I've ever seen in a two-dimensional setting. I found myself changing my perceptions of characters as I started reading and they kept changing as the book progressed.

I wish this book was available in paperback. It'd nicely compliment all of her other books which I already own, which I need to pull out of my to-be-read pile and read.

Elle Field says

Did not finish.

Crystal w says

This was an interesting book where a mother of two moves back to her families house after being on her own for a while. she learns different things about her husband and her child. Really good book will have you guessing the whole time.

Evie says

Once Upon A Winter is a lovely book for winter, full of charm and fairy-tale magic. The setting is perfect - a cozy Welsh village complete with a Gingerbread cottage and mysterious folklore. It's an unusual story, where reality and fantasy meet, but the characters keep the plot grounded and interesting. Thoroughly readable, it's easy to lose yourself in this adult fairy-tale, especially on a cold winter's night!

Jasmine says

I was really confused about how I was going to review this book. The fairy tale element of it was extremely well done, wasn't too over the top while still engrossing and believable. It was almost effortless the way this book flowed, and the beautifully written passages were almost lyrical at times, without seeming forced in any one direction.

That said, this book could have been just as good without the fantasy element. I honestly would really like to read another book by this author without any fantasy in it. As good as it was, there were times in the book that I really wished there wasn't superhuman abilities at play. Baglietto just did such a good job with the different characters, that everything else came secondary to the character development. It was just distracting at times.

Either way, I still loved the book.

Beverley says

Although a sweet story and one which I enjoyed reading, I did find the plot very predictable.

Annie Burrows says

A modern fairy tale with a hero who has stepped straight out of a story book, only to lose some of his gloss when confronted with the reality of mortal life.

Sharon Booth says

I wasn't sure what to expect from this book but from the first chapter I was hooked. The story is very well-written and the characters are immediately likeable and intriguing. The setting is beautiful and the book was very easy to "get into". The character of Nell was well observed and I also felt that the author wrote well when writing from the children's point of view.

Nell arrives back in her old home village after years of living away in London as a single parent of twins, nine year old Joshua and Freya. Abandoned by her husband Silas when the children were just two years old,

the shy, timid Nell has become stronger, determined to give her twins the best life she possibly can despite her own feelings of grief and inadequacy.

Her strength is tested when she runs in to Daniel, who was her major crush at school. Many years ago he had been party to a cruel trick played on her by Lauren, the school queen bee who was dating Daniel at the time and is now his ex wife. Despite her reservations, Nell is won over by Daniel who is genuinely sorry for his part in the incident and the two of them begin a tentative relationship, despite the scars inflicted on them by their previous marriages.

Never far away, though, is the shadow of Silas. Who is he? Why do some of the older residents of the village remember him with adoration? What is in the box hidden in Nana Gwen's bedroom that he has asked her to keep secret? And what is so special about Joshua?

When Silas returns to seek out his son, life is completely shaken up for Nell, Daniel, her children, and for several of the other villagers, but Silas himself makes a discovery that changes everything he had assumed about himself. All of them must face up to the truth of the past to find a way to the future...whatever that future may hold.

This is a beautiful romance with a sprinkling of magic. Read it and be enchanted

Liz Balaam says

I actually found this book just a little bit weird. It started well, but I got a bit bored towards the end.

Martine Lillycrop says

The apparent premise is fairly straightforward. Boy meets girl, girl has baby(ies), boy disappears. Left to raise her twins alone for seven years, Nell heads back to her home town in Wales, hoping to pull things back together and move on with her life. Just as new romance shines, though, who should reappear, but... Hello!

The difference with this story is the hero - though more accurately anti-hero, since he doesn't appreciate the consequences of his actions - isn't your regular 'boy'. This is the twist in an otherwise run-of-the-mill story.

On the face of it, this ought to make the book an interesting read. Sadly, there's something lacking.

The book itself is well-written with good attention to detail, but I felt it had problems on a couple of fronts.

First, the pacing. Slow. Very slow. I found it something of an uphill grind, time and again, getting to what I hoped was the point, only to be disappointed.

Second, the characters. While there was a lot going on there, I felt some characters weren't believable. I won't start on Joshua, who is annoying from page 1, so I'll mention Daniel, instead, who was Nell's latter love-interest. His pursuit of Nell felt decidedly creepy in places. Not to mention Nell had barely agreed to a date and he was running to his ex-wife asking her permission (!?) to see someone else. Similarly Nell was so reserved that any normal guy would have been put off long ago. There were some icky scenes involving kissing that were obviously meant to be romantic but felt, frankly, awkward.

Forgive me. I'm a cynic.

There's scope here for someone who enjoys a drawn-out love story with a twist, but, in summary, meh.

Wendy says

Worth a read, although I could guess where the story was going.

Mai says

i wasn't quite sure what to expect from this book when i first started to read it, but within the first couple of pages i was hooked. On the cover it says it a 'modern day fairytale' and i believe it is, it's an unusual story as it combines reality and fantasy.

I love the fact that the author kept me on my toes throughout the story, as whenever i thought i guessed something, it turn out to be completely wrong, which is one of the things that i really liked about it.

Donna Irwin says

A nice gentle fairy tale. Loved the central character of Nell. Passed the time well on a boring plane journey!

Natalie TBGWP says

As the curse of the book bloggers reading slump had me grasped in it's evil hands, I half heartily started Once Upon A Winter. Not knowing what to expect at all I started with a sigh. An hour later I put aside my kindle and smiled to myself, already Once Upon A Winter had restored my heart and pulled me out of my reading slump.

From the very beginning I was mesmerised and calmed by the unique and soothing flow it has upon you. The gripping plot thickening had me not wanting to do anything else at all but read. A book so mesmerising I am in awe of. A story about love so deep, so pure and so true that you find yourself swept into the heart and mind of Nell Jones. A timid, but hard shouldered woman, who lives for her Twins Joshua and Freya.

I cannot put into words properly how impressed I am by this book. I am so utterly thrown that I'm finding this review so very hard to write. So on that note all that I can ask you to do for me dear readers is trust me with my opinion on this one. Download a copy and see for yourself how one small welsh town and a heartbreak so deep can throw your mind into a whirlwind of utter pleasure and magic.

A book of multiple twists and turns in love, life and children. Not enough stars to give this book.

My book of the year so far.

5/5***

