



Bon Courage: Rediscovering the Art of Living in the Heart of France

Ken McAdams , Marian Bingham (Illustrator)

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One year and one arduous home-renovation into their marriage, Ken and Bing head to the French countryside to celebrate their long-delayed honeymoon, swearing they're getting out of the home-fixing business for good. When they fall in love with the village of La Montagne Noire, they find themselves buying a fixer-upper and starting all over again-but this time, in French McAdams recounts their mishaps and misadventures with humor, capturing the essence of French village life, the awkwardness of being foreigners in a close-knit town, the couple's hilarious linguistic pratfalls, and how the mammoth undertaking that threatens to tear their new marriage apart ultimately brings them closer together and helps them find a place in the community they have grown to love.

Bon Courage: Rediscovering the Art of Living in the Heart of France Details

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Author : Ken McAdams , Marian Bingham (Illustrator)

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From Reader Review Bon Courage: Rediscovering the Art of Living in the Heart of France for online ebook

Denise says

This is a fun read about a couple from Connecticut who spend an idyllic few months in south-western France in a walled village and then get sort of tricked into buying a medieval house there that needs major renovations. The struggle with the language is a major issue since they have selected such an isolated location almost no one speaks English. Marital ups and downs, temper fits for good and ill and the joys of finally accomplishing something are all well told. Having lived in Europe for many years (with the protection of the American government), I can still identify with the dream of a European residence in such a restful and pleasant place. I can also identify with the challenges of getting anything done in socialist Europe where things move slowly and no one is much interested working very hard. So the bottom line is that I enjoyed this book but it might not be everyone's cup of tea -- it tends to be pretty self absorbent but not as bad as Eat, Pray, Love, at least!!

Suzanne says

Subtitled *Rediscovering the Art of Living in the Heart of France*, McAdams pens an interesting and honest memoir of a newly married couple renovating a home in a French mountain village.

I was surprised at some of the poor reviews on Goodreads. Perhaps some people are continually looking for another version of Frances Mayes' *Under the Tuscan Sun*. This is a narrative about a couple who hopes to get away for a real honeymoon, and ends up committing themselves to endless months of stress. Along the way, there is beauty and good food and new friendships. But there is also a glimpse at a struggling marriage, attempts at communication when the author speaks little French, and a culture that in surprising ways is quite alien to our American way of living.

One of the aspects of the book that fascinated me was the blue collar work life. The owner of a small business explains to McAdams how his workers are guaranteed six weeks paid vacation, numerous required holidays, long lunch hours and short work days. This means, he explains, that owners like him can never take a vacation or even a day off, and the state taxes them to death to pay for the all the health and retirement benefits France guarantees. McAdams seems convinced that this type of security eliminates the desire for ambition or money, but I'm not so sure. I'd definitely like to read more on the subject.

Another interesting part of the book involved an elderly woman named Madame Fontaine, who told of her involvement with the Resistance during World War II. McAdams asked her how she felt about the people of this region putting their lives on the line while many Parisians collaborated with the Nazis. She explained the Paris is not France is their eyes, and Parisians are not French. I found that perspective fascinating and found it eerily reminiscent of today's America being divided by the patriotic mid-America and the elite urban centers of the coasts.

I enjoyed this book very much and hope that others will love it as much as I did.

Lindsey Lang says

i was hoping i'd win this one, i love memoir-type books and this one sounds really fun and interesting. i so love First Reads!

got my nice hardback copy in the mail today, thanks First Reads! =)

Drucye says

Excellent and very honest.

Kelly says

Really like this story.

Sue Pit says

I picked this book at half price at Anthropologie as it looked like a sweet read of "rediscovering the art of living in the heart of France" (as the cover states). I was rather disappointed by the writing and at first wondered if I would even finish the book. It does recover a bit in maintaining one's interest and in time, I found it a pleasant if not great read. The subject matter is somewhat interesting but could be better told.

Hal says

"Rediscovering the art of living in the heart of France"

The subtitle of this non-fiction book tells it all.

I won't even attempt to review this book other than to say it easily moves to the top tier of my favorite books. The writing is delicious. The word pictures are awe inspiring. The love shared by this couple is beyond measure. And the people you meet along the way are very memorable. The book had a real personal impact on me since the passing of Diane, the love of my life.

I have no hesitation in giving it five stars, and I recommend it without question to everyone.

Penny says

A wee bit pretentious. Felt like a lot of sugar coating and melodrama.

Johnnie P. Byrd says**AUTHENTIC FUN**

Very entertaining and lots of real life encounters. Very good information for anyone planning to live in a European country.

Anne says

I wish the book had been written by the author's wife, Bing because I'm sure there is a lovely story to be told: an older couple rediscovering love after loss and living an adventure of personal discovery in a foreign country. Instead, we're getting anger, frustration and stress!

Suzanne says

A fun and enjoyable book about another Anglo (this time American) renovation of another decrepit old house in rural France. A likeable couple and interesting side stories and unexpected occurrences keep you reading. The only negative is that a smattering of typos and errors slipped through--it could have benefited from a final proofread--but they're not enough to spoil the story or the generally good writing. I liked it.

A Moore says

A well-written story that touches many emotions in the reader - from the humor of challenges with a foreign language to the sadness of love lost to the joy of love found.

Joy says

I won this book from goodreads firstreads giveaway. I enjoyed this book, especially the cultural experiences the author and his wife had. I thought their relationship was written a bit rougher, and that a few threads of the story weren't fully wrapped up (but I like everything wrapped up). A good read for someone who likes renovation stories, or cultural fish out of water stories. This has different perspective, as the couple is older than your average travel writer.

Angela says

I won this book on goodreads. I was really looking forward to reading it, so today when I picked it up out of the 20 other books on my shelf and curled up on my couch with a blanket and a glass of wine, I was ready to be transported to France. Within the first few paragraphs, I was disappointed. I was not enthralled, but to be fair and give the book a chance, I read a few more pages. By page three I understood what it was missing. The writer doesn't capture the mood or moment, many times jumping around so that I am even unaware of the cast of characters involved. All this by page 3! Instead of a trip to France, I had a mere three page look into a two-dimensional world where the author just isn't a very engaging writer.

Elyssa says

This had the potential to be an intriguing memoir, but the author's bland and meandering writing weighed it down.
