



## The Meeting Place

*Janette Oke , T. Davis Bunn*

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*A Chance Encounter Forever Changed Their Lives--and Destinies.*

Crafted by two masters of inspirational fiction--Janette Oke and T. Davis Bunn--and combining the engaging historical settings, rich characterization, and heartwarming messages quintessential to both authors, *The Meeting Place* is another timeless story for you to cherish.

Set along the rugged coastline of 18th century Canada in what was then called Acadia (now Nova Scotia and New Brunswick), *The Meeting Place* re-creates a world that was home to native Indians, French settlers, and English garrisons. Such diverse populations did not live in accord, however. Instead, they were isolated within their own groups by a brewing political tension under the difficult English rule.

Amid such chaotic times two women, both about to become brides and both trying to live lives of quiet peace, meet in a lush field of wildflowers. Louisa, a Frenchwoman, and Catherine, who is English, continue to meet secretly through the seasons, sharing both friendship and growing faith.

The outside world does not mirror their own tranquil happiness, and the dreaded crackdown by the English throne threatens far more than their growing bond. In the face of a heart-wrenching dilemma, Louisa and Catherine strive to maintain their faith and cling to their dreams of family and home.

Winner of the Christy Award, presented by the Christian Bookseller Association to honor the best in Christian fiction.

## The Meeting Place Details

Date : Published April 1st 1999 by Bethany House Publishers (first published March 31st 1999)

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Author : Janette Oke , T. Davis Bunn

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## From Reader Review The Meeting Place for online ebook

### **paperdollmom says**

This was a favorite book of mine for many years. I love the characters in the book, and how well they were developed. I was unaware of this part of history, and what had happened to the Acadians prior to this book, and I think this book really helps one to understand how hard that time must have been for those people. I have read the other books in the series, and think all of them deserve 5 stars. These books are definitely keepers! To comment on other reviews that keep comparing this book to other Oke books, it is good to keep in mind that this book was co-written with T. Davis Bunn. T. Davis Bunn also has written a continuation of this series with his wife. The writing style is much different than Oke's other books...but I personally think this one shines above the rest!

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### **Anna says**

I couldn't finish this book - the only one I've read by Janette Oke that I didn't really care for. I had some trouble keeping the characters straight, and the historical/political context of the book confused me even more. I finally gave up on this one.

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### **LanaDwire says**

It was hard to put this book down. I just wish it didn't leave me hanging at the end.

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### **Ron says**

[Historical errors abound: Fort Edward was just four years old when the story opens, not seventy as Oke reports. Likewise, Louisburg was already in England hands. Muttonchop sideburns were almost a century in the future. (hide spoiler)]

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### **Traci says**

For the most part, I don't understand Christian fiction. I don't understand fiction of *any* religion, really, because overall it seems like it's preaching to the choir. If I pick up a book that's marketed towards a specific religion, I tend to find it is full of validations about why that religion is awesome above all other religions. I'm not saying that's a good or bad thing. And I mean, okay, I'm starting this review in a possibly unnecessarily harsh way, but since one of the main plotlines of this book was for two families to come to realize their religion and how much it means to them, I think this is a relevant thing to bring up.

Because, you see, I am a person who's perfectly content with her level of spirituality in life and I have absolutely no desire to change that in any way, shape, or form. I've been wanting to read this book for a

while, but the marketing as a Christian book really turned me off. I don't want to be preached to. And I know I'm not the only person who hesitates to pick up an otherwise delightful book because it's marketed as religious. In my sphere of the world, people who read Christian fiction tend to be already fairly devout Christians and therefore the message of discovering God's love is lost on them. People who aren't as devout don't tend to pick them up as often, and so the "discovering" part is lost.

So why did I read this then, right? Because, like I've said, I've wanted to read this for a while. I'm not the kind of person who is going to condemn an entire work as crappy just because I believe differently than the person who wrote the book. If I had to agree with every author I chose to read, my bookshelf would be a lot thinner. I've made a (very loud) point of not judging my historical fiction based on sexism or any other sort of -ism and I don't see why religion should be any different. And lastly, because the historical setting of this book is one with which I am not familiar but in which I am very interested.

*The Meeting Place* is the story of two women (and later, two families) living in Acadia in 1753 (Canada, just as the French & Indian War is about to break out—and as a sidenote, I hate that name.) who form a close friendship with each other despite their differences—one, Catherine, is British, and the other, Louise, is French. Their lives oddly parallel one another—they're married on the same day, to gentlemen of similar social standing (once you get past the titles, anyway), and their daughters are born just a few days apart.

They meet by accident and are only able to communicate because Catherine speaks a little French, which improves through the course of their friendship. (The novel is written in English, with the exception of just a few phrases which fit in *very* well and only add to the atmosphere.) Catherine Harrow is the new wife of the acting commandant of the fort where they live, and Louise Robichaud is the new wife of the man who'll become clan elder (which the vicar explains is like the mayor). While their husbands initially feel some reservations about the friendship, they don't stop it, and even become something like friends themselves. I say "something like" because they only meet one time, when their wives are too pregnant to meet themselves.

And by the end of the book, when the two families have to do something absolutely *heartbreaking* in order to save a life, I was in tears and just absolutely awed by the level of trust and friendship these people had in each other. (view spoiler)

I definitely came out of this book feeling way more sympathetic towards the French than the British, which both surprises me and doesn't surprise me. I wasn't really taught a whole lot about this particular conflict in school ("Canada's a long way away" would have probably been how it was justified) and I can't remember if there was a lot of neutrality involved in what I did learn, but I can remember the textbook pictures of the neatly formed and organized British forces against a wholly underwhelming and savage opponent, so I guess that's all the bias I had coming in to this story.

It seemed a lot like the colonies just got caught up in a war that wasn't really theirs; the British troops in Acadia just kind of started terrorizing everybody and there wasn't much justification other than "British and French have never gotten along." And then there's the whole part where the Robichauds go somewhere else, and thanks to history you just kinda know that even they're they're hopeful about where they're going, they're not really wanted there, either. It's really easy for a gut-clenching angry response in favor of the French, who kind of came off as pacifist, but then I guess I kind of have to take a step back and think that they *all* thought they were right; hindsight 20/20 and all that.

I still don't feel like I'm a big fan of the preaching. The Christian element came into play a lot, and it worked well. The two women did what two women tended to do—they met, they exchanged recipes, they studied the

Bible. They *did* formulate their own opinions and they were the ones who influenced their husbands, more than the other way around, so I enjoyed that part.

That being said, I think the husbands ended up being my favorite characters in this book. They were quiet and didn't really inspire a lot of thought from me, to be honest, until the part where Andrew and Henri met in the meadow to pass on the journals their pregnant wives had been keeping. Up until then, you kind of see most of the book through the womens' eyes, but (view spoiler)

I cannot wait to read the sequel for this one.

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### **Celeste says**

4.5

Man... I'm crying. This book was a pleasant, quick, and thoroughly addicting read. I don't really know what more I can say without getting into spoilers so I guess that I'll leave it there for now!

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### **Amy says**

I enjoyed the characters of the story and the storyline. I felt that it was slow and hard to get into, although it picked up much more at the end. I also wish there had been more detail as to the conflict between the British and French going on during that time period. I was not familiar with the history, and so the storyline did not impact me as much. I am going to read the sequel though, because I have to find out what happens next!

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### **Olivia says**

There are some books that are amazing every time you read it. This is one of those. "The Meeting Place" is an example of why I've gotten so picky with the Christian fiction I read ;) I'm totally for description, and Janette Oke and T. Davis Bunn describe things so beautifully.

The story itself is unique. French and British young women meet in a meadow, and strike up a friendship. Despite the trouble between these two countries, the two women find common interests and when Louise needs help Catherine knows what she must do.

I loved their husbands, Henri and Andrew. I've always loved reading things with the military, so Andrew's scenes especially interested me. I so felt for him when he had to make a hard decision that put his position in jeopardy.

And the romance. It is so much deeper and real than a lot of books I read. I wouldn't hesitate giving this book to a younger teen. There is one kiss (after they are married), a few touches, but most of the book the two couples are married.

Interwoven with the story and historical details, is a spiritual strain that is also deep. I just wanted to cry for Louise toward the end with everything that happened. Yet neither she, Catherine, or their husbands were angry at God. They trusted in Him even if they didn't understand everything that happened. One good Henri

said was that it was man's fault that all the bad things were happening to them. He couldn't blame God. Oh, that was good!

I highly, highly recommend this book. The fact that I've read it three or four times and loved it every time shows that it's a pretty good (well, don't you think?) ;)

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### **Wen says**

I really liked this book. Sweet story of 2 women from different town and cultures forming a very close bond. It is set with early American settlers. One town English and the other French. The conflicts between make their friendship harder to have but stronger because of it all. The big question of what happened to them and their families at the very end make you want to reach for book 2 in the series right away.

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### **David Gregory says**

This is the first book of a five book series coauthored by Janette Oke and T. Davis Bunn. The entire series is set in the tumultuous era of pre-Revolutionary War days in early America, only in this instance the setting is in Acadia, more recently Nova Scotia.

The authors set a riveting tale of two families, one English and the other French, only a few miles away from each other but never meeting or relating to each other, OTHER than a meadow high up in woods where two young girls, both engaged to be married, go to find wildflowers and smell the wonderful mountain air.

The girls become good friends, thanks to the ability of the English girl to speak some French, and eventually their families find out, and both families are to a degree imperiled by the discovery.

In due season both young married girls are with child and give birth also to baby girls. And when one of the infants develops a life threatening condition, the love of the other mother causes her to do a very self-sacrificing thing, which has very far reaching consequences.

The entire series gave my and my wife a brand new understanding of both the horrors of war, especially the unwarranted hatred of the French by the English, but even more so of the conquering power of the love of God. It also gave us knowledge of a little known but highly importance and very dramatic event in the decades preceding the Revolutionary War.

The above rating goes above the five stars, it is beyond excellent, as are all five books in this series, and there IS a second series.

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### **Lindsey (Books for Christian Girls) says**

About this book:

*"Set along the rugged coastline of 18th century Canada in what was then called Acadia (now Nova Scotia and New Brunswick), The Meeting Place re-creates a world that was home to native Indians, French settlers,*

and English garrisons. Such diverse populations did not live in accord, however. Instead, they were isolated within their own groups by a brewing political tension under the difficult English rule.

*Amid such chaotic times two women, both about to become brides and both trying to live lives of quiet peace, meet in a lush field of wildflowers. Louisa, a Frenchwoman, and Catherine, who is English, continue to meet secretly through the seasons, sharing both friendship and growing faith.*

*The outside world does not mirror their own tranquil happiness, and the dreaded crackdown by the English throne threatens far more than their growing bond. In the face of a heart-wrenching dilemma, Louisa and Catherine strive to maintain their faith and cling to their dreams of family and home.”*

Series: Book #1 in the “*Songs of Acadia*” series.

Spiritual Content- Matthew 5:9 at the beginning; Many, many Prayers; Many talks about the Bible & reading it; 'H's are capital when referring to God; Bible reading & many Scriptures are quoted or mentioned; Very, very strong Faiths!

Negative Content- Eel hunting (semi-detailed; Yes, it's a thing, call me naïve but I didn't know that!); Blood (barely-above-not-detailed); Mentions of wars, fires & guns (barely-above-not-detailed); Mentions of killing and hanging (not-detailed).

Sexual Content- A couple kisses between married couples (barely being barely-above-not-detailed); An urge to kiss someone; A mention of touching his wife's hair (barely-above-not-detailed).

-Catherine

-Louise

P.O.V. switches between them, Andrew, Henri, & John (three times)

Set in 1753-1755

281 pages

## Pre Teens- One Star

## New Teens- Two Stars

## Early High School Teens- Three Stars (and a half)

## Older High School Teens- Five Stars

### My personal Rating- Four Stars

I'll admit I really didn't know much about the French Acadians or King George's War before reading this book, so this was educational! This also was my first Janette Oke book! (Though I've been watching the *"When Calls the Heart"* series on Hallmark, #Hearties unite! ;D ) I was a little worried at first because of the married couple being the main characters, because most married couple books have a lot of Sexual hints...it gets awkward for us unmarried, young girls (and I would think those who are married, too, but I can't speak for them) but Oh. My. Goodness. There was seriously nothing! Like, look at the Sexual Content! Can we get all "new" Christian authors to do like Janette Oke?! It was so refreshing with the super strong Faiths and lack of icky stuff! ~~And another note: Eel hunting. Okay, what? It's makes since I guess, but I've sure never thought about that before!~~

Link to review:

<http://booksforchristiangirls.blogspot.com/2013/07/review-1775-acadia.html>

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\*BFCG may (Read the review to see) recommend this book by this author. It does not mean I recommend all the books by this author.

### **Sarah says**

In the place we now call Canada, descendants of French and English settlers live separate but peaceful lives. Their villages exist side by side, yet they keep no contact because of centuries-old hostilities between their old homelands.

Across the Atlantic, England and France are fighting again. The British governing forces in Acadia are forcing the French-descended Acadians to swear an oath to the King. The Acadians may be willing, had there not been a demand in the oath that they take up arms for the King. The Acadian people refuse to take up arms for France, why would they do it for England? Still, the British refuse to see that fact and view the Acadians as the cause of real or imagined problems.

Into this atmosphere, an unlikely friendship is born. Catherine - a British woman - and Louise - an Acadian - meet one day in a meadow. Catherine speaks a little French, so they can communicate some. Their meetings are not frequent, not at first. But they slowly begin to grow closer. Catherine studies French again to speak better to Louise. They study the Bible together. Catherine even visits Louise's village.

Catherine and her husband can see that the Acadians are not dangerous, nor are they an enemy. But sadly, no other British officials share their views. One day, it all comes to a head, as the Acadians are rounded up and sent off for other colonies - Louisiana, Charleston, New York, etc. Divided so that they can not come back together. In the midst, the unthinkable happens - children separated from their parents. Will the parents ever see their child again when they are so far apart?

I really enjoyed this story, so much so, that I read it almost in one sitting (I had a free evening). I liked how Catherine and Louise's friendship was portrayed. They seemingly have nothing in common, yet they discover that all their differences don't really matter. What bonds them most, although not the first thing, is reading the Bible together. God is what brings them the closest. They would do anything for one another, even though their heritages say they should be enemies.

Another theme is that not all citizens or descendants of a certain heritage, culture, or country are enemies. The Acadians were French Huguenots (they were Protestant not Catholic) who wanted to live in peace. They so desired to be left alone, that they would not raise arms for their own "mother country"! Terrible things can happen when we create stereotypes and then shut our eyes to any outliers. Yes, stereotypes occur for a reason, and yes, they are usually accurate for most of a group, but, we cannot ever refuse to see that a stereotype is not all-inclusive. Sorry if I'm on soapbox here. I just liked how Oke and Bunn got across that idea without being preachy or political. It was very well done.

Now I have to get the next book, because the ending was heart-wrenching!

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### **Victoria Minks says**

I haven't read many of Janette Oke and what I have read was more for younger children in years past. I started reading this just to see if I liked it or not, not really sure what I was expecting. At first, the writing was kind of slow, I thought. It was hard for me to focus on the story in the beginning, especially through a lot of the uber-poetic descriptions. I'm a character-oriented person and tend to enjoy punchier and shorter descriptions, so I was having a little bit of a hard time getting through the beginning. Let me say-- the descriptions are beautiful. Some people will absolutely love this element of the book-- and I definitely did once I understood the characters better. But it took me a while to really connect with the characters and so the descriptions in the first part seemed a bit tedious to me. But once I grew close to the characters--wow! I LOVED it! I loved the relationships and the personalities. Yes, sometimes the characters were almost too similar but I forgave that because it ties into the plot nicely. ;) My favorite character was Eli, and he's not even a main character. (He just grabbed my attention as soon as he appeared, lol...please don't die in the sequel, Eli...) I also really liked Henri. His character just really grew on me. I appreciated that the romance was not mushy, was between married couples, and was clean and unsensationalized, and I also really liked Catherine's attitude towards her husband-- her and Andrew's relationship was strong and I thought a good example.

The plot is fairly quiet the first half of the book but then it gets interesting...and definitely plays on your emotions. I have a bad habit of "acting" out things as I read it with some books and I accidentally started doing that in the last few chapters of this book and ended up crying in a parking garage. (Just ignore me, people...)

It's definitely one I'd say have the next book handy to pick up as soon as you can. ;) Thankfully my friend gave me the sequel too, lol.

I almost minus-ed off half a star for the slow/descriptive beginning without feeling a strong interest/connection with the characters but decided against it. I liked it so much once I did get involved in the book that it makes up for it...and almost, if you ask me, makes the tension of the last half all the more real. Read it. ;)

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### **Christa says**

I really enjoyed how this story was so focused on friendship! I'm used to books that are about couples falling in love it's nice to read something different.

I was never board during this book, that said it was a pretty short book haha but I really loved the storyline and reading about a Canadian history!

Sometimes I feel like I give too many books 5 stars but I just really enjoyed this one!

I cannot wait to read the next in the series!

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### **Hosanna says**

This is a great, Christian book for teen, or adult, girls. It shows how everyone, not matter the nationality, is

equal and capable of being a friend and an encouragement. It is captivating from the beginning to end, and I didn't want to put it down! It also forces you to read the rest of the series, ending on an amazing cliff-hanger. :) I really want to read the rest of the series!

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