



The Coach House

Florence Osmund

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2012 BRAG Medallion honoree!

What They're Saying About "The Coach House: "

Rebecca's Reads -- The Coach House is a well written saga I'd happily recommend to any reader.

Mary Crocco -- The Coach House is a superbly written book. It will leave the reader thinking about relationships, adversity, independence and growth.

Best Chick Lit -- The Coach House both inspires and captivates as it explores the ins and outs of life as a mixed-race woman in the 1940s.

Synopsis: Newlyweds Marie Marchetti and her husband Richard have the perfect life together. Or at least it seems until Marie discovers his involvement with people and activities that make her run for her life. Fate draws her to Atchison, Kansas, where she rents a coach house apartment tucked away behind a three-story Victorian home that she believes is a safe refuge and perfect place to start over. Richard isn't about to let her go so easily and continues to seduce her into his world, yet it is the discovery of her real father and his surprising heritage that changes Marie's life more than Richard ever could.

The Coach House Details

Date : Published April 27th 2012 by CreateSpace (first published April 26th 2012)

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Author : Florence Osmund

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From Reader Review The Coach House for online ebook

Joyce says

There was just too many sub-stories. It made the book disjointed.

Pete Loveday says

Review: The Coach House

Author: Florence Osmond

Published: - Published April 27th 2012 by CreateSpace

ISBN: 1467946516

Reviewed - Monday, 11 March 2013

Synopsis: 1945 Chicago. Newlyweds Marie Marchetti and her husband, Richard, have the perfect life together. Or at least it seems until Marie discovers cryptic receipts hidden in their basement and a gun in Richard's desk drawer. When she learns he secretly attends a mobster's funeral, her suspicions are confirmed. And when she inadvertently interrupts a meeting between Richard and his so-called business associates in their home, he causes her to fall down the basement steps, compelling Marie to run for her life.

Ending up in Atchison, Kansas, Marie quickly sets up a new life for herself. She meets Karen Franklin, a woman who will become her lifelong best friend, and rents a coach house apartment behind a three-story Victorian home. Ironically, it is the discovery of the identity of her real father and his ethnicity that unexpectedly changes her life more than Richard ever could.

Status: Read on March 9 2013 – I own a copy

My thoughts:

This is a debut novel by Florence Osmond and it is an excellent book.

We are introduced to Marie Costa prior to her marriage to Richard Marchetti in Chicago, USA, 1945.

Richard has literally swept Marie off her feet and in his typical 'go-getter' style; they marry soon after they have met. Life is wonderful for Marie: married life is all that she could desire, she has an attentive, loving and caring husband and in addition her career at Marshal Fields Department store is blossoming.

What more could a girl ask for?

Well, a family for a start. Orphaned at a young age, Marie knows nothing of her father and very little of her mother. She is disappointed to find that Richard has a dysfunctional family and does not want to talk about it. This is the first of many incidents and issues that Richard keeps from Marie and as time goes by she becomes suspicious of the company that Richard is keeping and finally an escape is necessary for Marie.

The well crafted and excellent writing is complimented by absorbing and rich characters that fill the bigger picture of life for a woman with a controlling husband and the plight of women confronted with domestic violence. In addition, the book is a commentary on the prominent social issues in America in the 50's +. I would recommend this book to anyone.

Available: Amazon : Goodreads

Terry Crawford Palardy says

The Coach House by Florence Osmund is a beautifully written story of the immediate years following WWII. Marie is a young college graduate who has studied Interior Design and is using her skills at Marshall Fields in Chicago during the store's heyday. She is a window dresser, but is soon recognized for her talents and work ethic and is promoted to assistant buyer and ultimately to store manager. Richard is a medical supply salesman who is smitten with Marie's beauty and grace when he sees her working in a window. Romance is a new experience for Marie, and she quickly falls in love with her attentive suitor.

Despite her hesitations, they soon wed, and live the life of a happily married, affluent couple, flying to New York City for shopping and shows. Their differences gradually emerge in their relationship, as Richard is detached from his family, while Marie sorrowfully misses her mother, the only family she had. Richard continually asks Marie to trust him, and all will be well for them. This becomes an increasingly difficult task, as she begins to discover more and more about her husband's working life.

Florence Osmund skillfully interweaves musical interludes throughout her characters' experiences, quoting songs from the post war era - lyrics that so perfectly fit the young couple's thoughts at the moment. Osmund also uses movies of that time to provide insightful dialogue that reveals each of their inner thoughts.

As Maria walks through the city of Chicago, and later through small towns beyond the city, the reader easily strolls alongside, taking in the nostalgic views of small town life in contrast with big city events. The gangsters of the forties, the early civil rights strife and slowly developing societal awareness of such complete the tapestry this author carefully weaves around her characters.

This book is a love story, a chapter in our history, a picture of divergent cultures, and a strong female character's journal. I strongly recommend this book for readers aged 16 and over who want a true look at this time period and all that it encompassed. Five Stars!

Lynne Dooner says

Enjoyed this book, definitely a page turner. Few twists and turns, although at times a little predictable, still thoroughly enjoyable. The story follows Marie, the main character, through marriage and discovery, My only complaint is the abrupt ending, luckily I had the follow on book to hand.

Tiffany Wacaser says

I wanted to give this book a higher rating, but the flow of the story was very choppy and I think the writing could have been improved. I thought the story was very intriguing but the author's style seemed juvenile--lacking sophistication or at least more skill.

The Coach House tells the store of Marie, a young woman who has grown up with a loving single mother and without knowledge of her father. The story is set in Chicago immediately following World War II. Marie has recently completed design school and is working at a department shop when Richard, and up and coming medical equipment salesman spots her. They have a whirlwind courtship and marry very soon after they meet. Marie ignores the warning signs about her husband's strange business dealings and his access to a lot of money for two years until her unease causes her to search for more information and make decisions about her life.

Mixed within the drama of her strange marriage, Marie seeks to learn the identity of her father and is stunned to learn that she is the child of a bi-racial couple. Her mother was white while her father is black.

Strengths: The story is interesting. I was genuinely curious about the characters and where the story would go. The obvious tension of being bi-racial in a very segregated United States created a believable and interesting plot line. Marie is a strong character whose weaknesses and flaws make her real and personable.

Weaknesses: Marie's husband, Richard is a flat character. You are meant to dislike him but he seems more like a caricature rather than a believable character. The beginning of the story is choppy and difficult to follow. Flashbacks have to be handled deftly and this author was rather clunky in the way she flipped around to aspects of Richard and Marie's relationship. Throughout 20% of the book, you know something is clearly wrong with Richard and that he is involved with something shady but that part doesn't really progress at a decent pace.

The two story lines of Marie's hidden heritage and Richard's questionable dealings are too jagged and choppy. Still with all of that said, I was interested enough to read the sequel.

Harry Osborne says

The Coach House takes place in the mid 1940s. It begins in one of America's finest cities Chicago which by the mid-forties had a reputation as a gangster city.

We follow Marie Marchetti through her life in Chicago and later Atchison, Kansas. In the beginning she has what appears to be the perfect life. She's beautiful, smart, successful and married to Mr. Wonderful. But when she overhears her husband's late night phone calls and discovers cryptic receipts hidden in the basement and a gun in his desk drawer she suspects he's mixed up with the wrong people and decides to leave him.

I felt like I was right there with Marie on her journey of letting go of her old life as she faces confusion, anger and fear along the way. But ironically, it was the discovery of the identity of her real father and his ethnicity that unexpectedly changed Marie's life.

Without spoiling the plot it is easy to empathize with Marie. Written in a wonderful style the author reels you into the story and characters.

I believe the author's insight into our most basic need for trust and connection and her compassionate portrayal of a young woman facing what seem to be insurmountable roadblocks make this a fascinating and compelling read.

Mary says

Things aren't always what they seem.

Tall, dark, and handsome describe the two men in Marie Marchetti's young life. Besides being from different ethnic groups, they are worlds apart in character, moral, and ethical strength.

Marie lost her mother when she was a young girl and never knew her father. The only information her mother shared was that her father was tall, dark, and handsome. Marie had no idea until she was in her late twenties that 'dark' meant Negro. Realizing she was a Mulatto in the 1940's left Marie with mixed feelings of confusion and fear.

Richard was her tall, dark, and handsome husband. In her gut she felt there was a secretive side to him, but she married him anyway, doubts and all. They were in love and enjoyed each other's company, but things aren't always what they seem. It didn't take long for Marie to decide to leave Richard.

Not taking this well, Richard stalks Marie. She desperately tries to find a place to live where he will never find her. But Richard's secret life involved corruption and it was easy for him to keep tabs on her every move.

Marie ends up in Atchison, Kansas renting a coach house apartment. It's located behind a beautiful Victorian home where her landlord's family lives.

Marie is an interior designer and left a good job in Chicago when she left Richard. When she ended up in Kansas, after working a menial job for a year, she was able to thrive once again as an interior designer. She made friends easily and Karen, her new best friend, helped Marie endure her life on the run from Richard in Kansas.

The settings in *The Coach House* are described beautifully by Florence Osmund. Chicago and its music venues, New York City, and San Francisco, we get to travel and enjoy these cities with Marie.

The character development is Osmund's strength in *The Coach House*. Each character becomes alive in chapter after chapter. It's hard to put down the book because we get so absorbed with each character - whether it's Marie, Richard, and Karen, or Richard's cohort doing his dirty work.

The Coach House is a superbly written book, in my opinion. It will leave the reader thinking about relationships, adversity, independence and growth, and prejudices. It's always nice to finish a good book with something to think about.

Charline Ratcliff says

Having just finished reading “The Coach House” I can tell you it was a captivating story. “The Coach House” is set in Chicago circa 1945. That’s a different world from what we know today, and I always enjoy being able to “go back in time” and experience pieces of the past; hence my desire to read it.

We first glimpse Marie Andrea Costa, one of the main characters in “The Coach House,” as she is decorating a window display for the Marshall Field’s department store where she works. We view her through the eyes of Richard Marchetti as he gazes at her in dumbstruck wonder. Richard is suave, witty and charming and he finally convinces Maria to step out of the display and...out to dinner with him.

Theirs is a whirlwind courtship and almost before she realizes it Marie is juggling her full time work schedule with a full blown romance. Richard seems to be the perfect man and he showers Marie with devoted attention, lavish gifts and impromptu getaways. How can she not fall madly in love with him? She does, they marry and together they start down the road of “happily ever after.”

Unfortunately, things are not always what they seem and Marie begins to notice an abundance of odd happenings. Phone calls late at night, strange receipts, a gun hidden in Richard’s desk drawer and discomfiting men showing up at her home. Whenever she asks Richard for an explanation he always becomes evasive and then angry with her if she doesn’t immediately drop it. She eventually stops questioning him but she can’t return to her previous days of innocent naiveté so she finally realizes she must put together a plan to move out and divorce him.

As we all know, life rarely happens according to plan and Marie’s life is no different. I don’t want to give away any more of the story but I will say “The Coach House” was a captivating read. Author Florence Osmund writes with impeccable style and I appreciated the little touches of the era that she consistently added to her novel. The characters seemed like real people and the storyline is definitely true to life.

In closing, “The Coach House” is a great book for anyone who likes reading triumph over adversity type stories.

(Reviewed in association with Rebecca's Reads).

Paula says

Marie lives with her single mother until her death and then lives with some beloved neighbors. When she decides to go to college, her education is paid for. Her mother never discussed who her father was, just that he loved them very much but could not be with them. Marie meets a dashing man after college who sweeps her off her feet. They marry but she catches him in lies and is beginning to wonder about him.

I couldn't get enough reading time for this book until about 3/4 of the way through, then it took a turn that I wasn't expecting. It was still good but went into a couple of thought provoking subjects and then ended abruptly leaving a lot of questions. It was off putting for me and I don't think I'll look for the next book. A shame really because the author really has a gift for putting you into the story and characters.

Marie (UK) says

I have had this on my TBr for so long it is gaining dust on my kindle. I don't know why or how i got it but never felt enamoured enough to start it. It was however a decent read. Ok it is not high literature but the the author keeps your interest throughout there are plenty of twists and turns - it can be a bit predictable but i was invested in how it would turn out

Susan Weintrob says

Coach House and its sequel, Daughters are a novel and its sequel that deals with identity grounded in so many areas—family, race, ethnicity, religion. What happens when you don't know who your father is or what his race is? Those around main character Marie Costa seem to be confronted with the same issues—missing parents, spouses that leave, unidentified children. Add organized crime and corrupt police officers and you will find yourself enjoying two well-written novels that explore all of these. Osburne handles honestly and without rancor a variety of characters' views of race, religion and gender in the US in post WWII era and the problems in forming relationships because of these concerns.

Laura says

This is the first novel from Florence Osmund and those who grew up in Chicago and its surrounding suburbs will especially enjoy walking through familiar streets with Marie, the main character. To me, this book seemed to be split into two parts: The first introduced Marie and her new marriage to charming yet shady Richard. The second part of the story follows Marie as she flees from Richard, suspecting he is mixed up with the mob. Her first stop on her journey finds her hopping a train bound for good, old Mundelein, Illinois. But she doesn't quite make it there and ends up in 1940s Libertyville for a few days. She explores the town and it is fun to picture this fictional character in the familiar downtown area. Marie moves on from Libertyville and eventually creates her own roots in a small Kansas town. The second part of the story introduces many new, controversial topics for the time period, including biracial relationships, illegitimate children, racism, and even a brief touch on homosexuality. I enjoyed the many cultural references as Marie enjoyed popular music and movies of the time, and found ways to connect the themes to what was happening in her own life. Overall, I enjoyed following Marie on her journey and will read the sequel to find out what she uncovers in the next chapter of her life.

Bethany says

Osmund engaged me, from the showcase window of Marshal Fields, flagship store in Chicago through the touch of the untouchables in Chicago's underworld of the 1940's. More than that it was a pleasure to watch a young woman with so many strikes against her change and grow into a woman who could stand on her own two feet in a man's world and say, I will survive and thrive against all odds. It was a pleasure to travel with the protagonist to New York and San Francisco, keeping in step with the era by references to music and musicals. I found myself wanting to get to know Marie Costa personally. It is one of the measures that I hold

up to a good book, could I be friends with this person and do I wish I could set down and talk, one-on-one. The story made me question how important roots are and value the ability to go it alone and start from scratch. The Coach House digs in to social issues that Americans are still dealing with today and personal moral struggles that most humans deal with on a day-to-day basis. Beyond that it was an entertaining romp through the 1940's, as well as a chance to view the gentle development of a bond between two women, helping each other find their way. Great read, so yes, I would suggest this book to my best friend.

D.R. says

I insert an aspiring author's novel into my reading list each month. Being an undiscovered writer myself, I think everyone should do this. Having grown up in Illinois and intrigued by the book's description on Amazon, I selected Florence Osmund's novel *The Coach House* this month.

Set in the 40s, it's the story of Marie Marchetti, a young woman from Chicago. Never meeting her father, she loses her mother at a young age and is taken in by her neighbors while still in high school. Knowing little of her family history, she goes to college on trust fund from anonymous source.

Marie meets Richard following graduation, concurrent with her taking a job in the fashion retail industry. He wins her affection and they marry. Richard's business and those he associates with are held close to his vest, constantly worrying Marie. A bulk of the storyline is fixated on the mystery behind Richard's job and his apparent cover up of how and with whom he spends his time, trying to keep Marie in the dark while holding her affection.

It is obvious early to the reader Richard has ties to the mob. The author does insert twists and turns along the way to keep the pace moving, but I found myself screaming at Marie halfway through the book, "Drop him! He's in the mob! Get on with it, already."

The storyline is intriguing, the characters believable. You feel for Marie as she learns more about Richard and about herself. The author does a good job of mixing up the storyline by inserting flashback and sideline plots.

One minor criticism - I found the frequent use of music lyrics from the period, seemingly inserted to bring romantic relevance to most any situation, a little overused, detracting from the story.

I grade on a curve for new authors, as everyone should, but this is a good first novel by Florence Osmund. Check it out.

Kaitlin says

Finish time – 3 days. It was a quick, page-turning read. I enjoyed the book overall for the story, but there were a few things that really bothered me. First, the title – *The Coach House*. I guess I had in my head that the Coach House would be some historical house (like my favorite book *The Swan House*) and would be the center of the story where all the events took place. Instead you don't even find out until 2/3rds of the way through what the Coach House even is, and even then it is insignificant. I don't judge a book by the title or

cover, but for the record, this one is misleading. I'm terrible with titles but maybe a better one would be something like "You Can't Hide" or "Running from Richard". Those are terrible, but if you read the book – you'd understand.

The book takes place in Chicago in the 1940's. Marie, the main character, is a designer with Marshall Fields and a recent newlywed to Richard. Again looking to learn more about a different city in a different time period, other than costs of things and some racial comments, I didn't feel transported back. Not that I have any reference other than movies and television shows, I just didn't get the true feel of being in the 1940's. One example is Marie holding down a full-time job away from the house and Richard being the "cook" in the house. I'm all for progressive females and marriages, and maybe I'm just being too stereotypical, but it just didn't feel right.

That all being said, I really did enjoy the book. I felt part of Marie's journey to discover more about her past, who she is presently, and where she is headed. The author does a great job at making the reader feel the emotions Marie is feeling and really setting the scene so you can picture it. All the characters were easily pictured in my head, and I especially enjoyed Marie's relationship with Karen and can't wait to see where her relationship with Jonathan goes. The book concluded leaving me not completely satisfied and some story lines still open. But luckily for me (and I guess the author), a sequel has just been released (3/7/13), so I dove right in to Daughters, and that will be my next review.

I just looked back at the book description to see if I missed anything and I couldn't help but laugh – the entire description is ""The Coach House" is about how a young woman in the 1940s deals with complicated relationships, adversity, ethnicity, and fears." I would have to agree. If you are looking for a good historical fiction (as I most times are), this is disappointing on that front, but if you are looking for a good story to keep you interested, I would recommend this book. Stay tuned for my review of the sequel! (Which I was very excited to be my free Prime March download!)
