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Robert Goddard

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The year is 1931. The new and luxurious transatlantic liner Empress of Britain is on her eastward passage. Among the first-class passengers on board are two English confidence tricksters, making a discreet exit from a little awkwardness they have left behind them in the United States. A chance meeting on deck brings them a tempting new target in the shape of Miss Charnwood and her niece, the beautiful Diana, only child of the immensely wealthy Fabian Charnwood.

It's a trick they've pulled before, with some success. Charm the daughter into an engagement to marry, then get the father to buy you off. So confident are they of success, in fact, that they make a pact: whichever of them wins Diana Charnwood's love will share his fortune with the other. Who would imagine that these smooth operators would let their hearts rule their heads? Or that violent death would find its way into their neat little scheme? Or that they would stumble into something much darker and deeper than either had suspected?

Closed Circle Details

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From Reader Review Closed Circle for online ebook

Debbie Woodruffe says

Very good.

Carol says

Targeting the beautiful daughter of a wealthy munitions dealer in the hopes of receiving a payoff from her father, scam artists Guy Horton and Max Wingate find their plan upset when Max really falls in love.

I've started to notice a reoccurring theme in Robert Goddard's books. A theme that provides for a fascinating, intriguing story with an array of believable characters with all too human qualities. They aren't always good guys but most have some redeeming qualities. The crimes committed in the past always come back to haunt the protagonists in the present. **The Closed Circle** was no exception...but what a story! Goddard is a master story teller and writes in such beautiful prose. The story sees our hero...Guy... stumble through twists and turns while uncovering truths that may turn out to be lies in the end. This is one of Goddard's very best. It's like watching a Hitchcock movie.

Jill says

The cover of this book led me to believe that it was set on a transatlantic liner , but that part of it was very small. Regardless of this I found the book to be a very good read, as I expected from this author. The main characters were not at all likable, and the plot was a stretch of the believable, but it was excellent. So many emotions were caught up in the story, and the politics of the war looked at from a different angle. Such a lot went on in this book, it is hard to pinpoint any one of the different parts without giving anything away.

Bryan Higgs says

This is the continuation of my quest to read all of Robert Goddard's books in chronological order.

Flawed protagonist: check

Multi-twisted plot: check

Many layers of unraveling the solution: check

Maintain interest on the part of reader: check

Keep reader guessing: check, although sometimes things were clearly going to happen, but how, we didn't know.

Interesting historical background: check -- this time, 1931, with the Great Depression unraveling the UK government. I now want to learn more about the details of this particular part of history, not least because I see many parallels in today's recession/depression. Also, the beginnings of WW1.

As usual, Goddard sucked me in, despite his use of what feels like out of date language (perhaps intentional,

given the period), and characters that seem to alternate between the astute and the gullible. What seems to matter is not the characters, but the details of the plot twists.

On to the next one...

Joe Stamber says

I read my first Robert Goddard novel last year after taking a chance on *Sight Unseen* as part of a 3 for £5 offer (not that it's much of a gamble at that bargain price). What a great decision that turned out to be! *Closed Circle* is my 8th and fortunately I've quite a few left to go at.

Goddard writes a particular type of book that blends several genres including historical fiction (which may or may not be in the form of flashbacks), mystery, romance, crime and thriller to name a few. He has an excellent command of the English language and an incredible imagination.

Closed Circle is set in 1931 and as always Goddard makes the reader believe that he was there. The tale is told by Guy, who along with his partner-in-crime Max has lived a life of deceit in order to con people out of their money. Whilst escaping a scandal in America, they meet heiress Diana and her mother on the cruise ship carrying them home to England. Guy and Max sense money to be made but of course things don't quite turn out as they expected.

In keeping with all the other Goddard novels I've read, *Closed Circle* is a pleasure to read and difficult to put down. The experienced Goddard reader knows that whatever can go wrong will go wrong and that every character is capable of treachery. I know what to expect, but as it's the unexpected I've not tired of it yet.

LG says

I skipped way too far ahead in the Goddard chronology with *Long Time Coming*, so I'm glad to be back on track with this one. Not that it matters what order you read his books in, since they don't trace the brilliant career of only one main detective/special agent/little old lady with knife-sharp intuition. Goddard gives us someone new every time, and this time it's a "bad guy with a good heart" I took a liking to: Guy Horton.

As a dirty rotten scoundrel, he's besties with partner in crime Max Wingate, but as our narrator, Guy confides more freely in us than in anyone else. In fact, for a professional liar, he's probably the most honest of Goddard's narrators. The book's action lives up to its synopsis: boys meet girl (Diana Charnwood, eligible heiress), one boy loses heart to girl, other boy has to fight for life and limb in one escapade after another. Fun for all. In case you're thinking, "Yeah, yeah, I know where it goes from there," I should tell you it doesn't ... necessarily. As our anti-hero disentangles himself from each web of lies, the story arc may well bend in a way you won't expect.

The turn started gently – what happened to Charnwood, what Guy overheard, what Diana did – but when the journalist told Guy what he knew, my surprise was complete and bordered on incredulity. Nothing in the book's blurb had prepared me for it. (This is with good reason – if we knew from the outset what Goddard divulges on his website about the idea behind the book, it would really spoil our fun.) It took the completion of that turn of events for me to trust that the author knew where he was going (sacrilege, I know), and that

only lasted until the question, “Where is H. L.?” came up.

So, on it will go, Goddard spinning improbable circles around you. Around page 400 you may feel like you’re going around in circles, but you won’t say you’re not enjoying the ride. By the end of it, you might even marvel at the neat way he’s tied up every loose end.

Sally McRogerson says

Some of Robert Goddard's books are among my all time favourites, others are real turkeys and it's impossible to tell the difference without investing a deal of time in the thing. This is one of the turkeys, imho. In his defence, they are all different. He's not a "theme" author.

Wiara says

Not my jam

Thomas Strömquist says

DNF at 30 %. Shockingly unengaging from an author that I kept as a "go-to" when in need of a good read. Maybe it's just me, but the story of two con men in the early 30's that sets out to charm a wealthy young girl, only for one of them to fall head over heels in love with her to her father's strong objections did not make me want to find out anymore at all, really. I let it rest for a while, picked it up and realized that I probably forgot some of the characters and almost certainly a detail or two that will prove important later, so I'm just letting this one go. Will definitely read more Goddard, though.

Sandi says

While I would not rank this book among the author's best, it was a fairly entertaining work of historical suspense set during the Great Depression.

Cameron says

Intriguing as ever

Nd says

Sailing back to Britain in order to avoid entanglement in a bit of U.S. scandal, suave British confidence men

and longtime friends Guy Horton and Max Wingate encounter sister, Vita, and daughter, Diana, of millionaire British armaments dealer Fabian Charnwood. They embark on an ploy to have Diana fall in love with one of them, expecting that her father then will buy him off because he doesn't want his daughter married to a gentleman who is slightly less than upper crust. It so happens that there is a deeper side to Charnwood's wealth acquisition as well as to the two women, and his approach to dealing with Guy and Max is both informed and underhanded. There are multiple unexpected developments: murder and suspected betrayal, deceitfulness, duplicity, double-dealing, disloyalty, espionage on a global level, trickery, pretense. Each time the plot unexpectedly makes a twist, Guy struggles with taking the appropriate path versus the convenient way out. Robert Goddard books never disappoint and somehow the protagonist is always left as being both moral and roguish.

Harriet says

No one to like.

Biogeek says

There are few things as good as Goddard novel to sink your teeth into during a holiday, especially after an unsatisfactory reading holiday such as the one I just had. When you are looking for dependably enthralling, Goddard is your best bet. Because even when he adds one twist too far, or less than satisfactory explanations, the pace of his writing remains perfect. This one has all the great characters and historical twists to qualify as one of his stronger novels. Read this one after *Past Caring* and *In Pale Battalions* and you will be well on your way to be a Goddard fan.
