



Turning The Tide

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All's fair in love and war? Depends on who's making the rules.

Harry Watling has spent the past five years keeping her father's boat yard afloat, despite its dying clientele. Now all she wants to do is enjoy the peace and quiet of her sleepy backwater.

So when property developer Matthew Corrigan wants to turn the boat yard into an upmarket housing complex for his exotic new restaurant, it's like declaring war.

And the odds seem to be stacked in Matthew's favour. He's got the colourful locals on board, his hard-to-please girlfriend is warming to the idea and he has the means to force Harry's hand. Meanwhile, Harry has to fight not just his plans but also her feelings for the man himself.

Then a family secret from the past creates heartbreak for Harry, and neither of them is prepared for what happens next ...

Turning The Tide Details

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From Reader Review Turning The Tide for online ebook

Robert Jason says

Good atmosphere with likable characters. Good pacing with the romance.

ALPHAreader says

Harriet Watling has been fighting an uphill battle ever since her father died. With his passing Harriet ‘Harry’ became the owner and proprietor of his failing boatyard, in the miniscule seaside town of Little Spitmarsh.

Harriet is struggling to keep her father’s business afloat when Little Spitmarsh comes to the attention of real-estate entrepreneur, Matthew Corrigan. Matthew has grand plans to put Spitmarsh on the map by building a first-class restaurant.

All the locals are on board with Matthew’s plan. Floral-shop owners and life partners, Frankie and Trevor, are keen to expand their business. Local flirt and barmaid, Lola, is keen on Matthew sticking around. And even Harry’s right-hand-man, Gerooge, is eager to see her get her life back on track with a helping-hand from Corrigan.

The only person who is opposed to the development is Harry . . . she doesn’t want to lose her one remaining tie to her father. And she doesn’t want to be sweet-talked out of her land by smarmy Matthew Corrigan, no matter how devastatingly charming he may seem.

‘Turning the Tide’ is a contemporary romance novel from debut author, Christina Stovell.

The book does have a slow start, but the meandering plot leaks into the Little Spitmarsh atmosphere. Stovell takes the time to tease out characters and write methodical back story for a cachet of quirky local residents. I particularly liked the side-story about Frankie and Trevor, a homosexual couple who are concerned about the potential media furore Matthew Corrigan could bring to Spitmarsh, and which could inadvertently ‘out’ them. The unhurried pace also helps to create a small-town ambience for Spitmarsh; so that you really do get the feeling that this town is suffocated by its own solitude.

By contrast, Matthew Corrigan is a breath of fresh air. He is swift with a grin and keen to chat with the locals, Harry in particular. Matthew quickly gets over his surprise that Harry Watling isn’t a burly sailor, but rather a prickly pixie. Matthew and Harry come to clash on numerous occasions – and their war of wills quickly becomes the sole spark and juicy gossip in Little Spitmarsh. Harry and Matthew imbue their scenes with deliciously hot tension – as an undercurrent of lust runs between them.

“So you want to turn it into a marine metropolis where your urban escapees can carry on shopping just like they do at home. Well, good luck! Whilst you’re busily polishing up the town, mind you don’t polish it off, won’t you?”

“Thanks for the advice,” he said, getting to his feet. “But there’s no danger of that, I can assure you. I’m beginning to realise that there are some things you can’t bring a sparkle to, no matter how hard you try.”

The novel takes a surprising turn when a closely-guarded family secret is revealed. I’d hate to spoil anything;

save to say this careening twist provides a brilliant bit of full-circular closure.

Christine Stovell's debut novel is a gorgeously quaint contemporary romance. It's a little bit 'Vicar of Dibley', with a splash of Lisa Kleypas and plenty of steamy unrequited love.

Erica Olsen says

I ended up listening to the second book before the this one, but that didn't really ruin anything for me. It was kind of fun to get some backstory for the characters who started a little in the second book.

This book was filled with a lot of things. I really liked the story, which I feel was more about family and change, than the typical romance - even though there of course was romance in this - I liked this very much.

I was really intrigued the whole way through!

Blodeuedd Finland says

his one was another lovely story, and it had this slow pace that fitted it. It was like you were there in this run-down town where people struggled to go on and there was no hope for the town.

The story is about Harriet, aka Harry who took over her father's boatyard when he died. it's not easy, and the bills are piling up. In waltzes Matthew Corrigan with big plans. He has bought a place nearby and is turning it into a fancy restaurant and now he wants her land to build luxury houses. She is not happy since this is all she has left and Matthew seems to be turning the whole town around to his way of thinking. But she is standing her ground, even when all falls apart around her.

Harry was one tough woman, she works day and night trying to keep the place alive, her only help is George, an old buddy of her dads. This place is everything to her, and later she does seem that Matthew is bringing life to town, but her land, she wants to keep it, and have it to be a seafront for everyone, not just a chosen few. She is stubborn, and underneath it all she is really vulnerable, but I come to understand her.

Matthew is all money and ideas. At times he charms me, at times I growl at him. But he really thinks this is best for all. He has a good heart in the end. And he is also fighting this odd attraction for the angry girl at the shipyard. They have such a hate love thing going on. Hating each other, but at the same time the attraction is there.

There is also the family secret in the book, and without saying anything more. It made sense, and there was finally peace.

There is a varied cast of characters in this book. The young woman who wants something more from life, the guy couple who owns the florists, and of course George, who wants the best for Harry.

It was a warm community and it was lovely to see it start to blossom again. As for romance, oh that was not an easy part, and Stovell really made them work for it, I mean really. But that was great cos like they were, all cat and dog, it had to be hard for them to see each other in a more romantic light.

The place is a character in itself, and in the end I am happy to see it survive, and wish it the best.

Blodeuedd's Cover Corner: Lovely and true to the book

Final thoughts: A lovely book about a seaside town, a woman fighting to keep what is hers, and a man slowly losing his heart.

Sian says

A really good first novel for this author.

It was a feel good light-hearted read. I really enjoyed reading about the small town of Little Spitmarsh and the people who live there.

It isn't just a love story between the main characters of Harry and Matthew, it is also about the people who live in the small town and the hope they have of improving things in their town and putting it on the tourist map.

I found Harriet "Harry" a little annoying at times, very stubborn, and always jumping to conclusions, making it hard for people to apologise because of the way she acted. Matthew genuinely seemed to be a nice bloke, but even reading you could see they were well matched.

The love story is actually quite slow compared to other books in this genre, but the pace of the whole book felt really nice, and didn't actually feel slow.

My only real criticism is the "twists" were obvious I felt, and so was a little disappointed by that, cos I was expected to have something I didn't expect, but there wasn't anything.

I would def read more from this author in the future.

Sue says

Turning the Tide is set in the sleepy backwater town of Little Spitmarsh where five years ago Harriet Watling, or Harry as she prefers to be called, inherited her father's boatyard and hired help, George. Not wanting to move forward she remains set in her ways and is desperately trying to live up to her own idea of what her father would have expected of her. With only the help of old George she attempts to keep her father's boatyard business going in the traditional way it has always been run.

The arrival of property developer Matthew Corrigan with his plans to regenerate the area and the seemingly support of the local townspeople only serve to take Harry's sense of her against the world to a new level.

Harry takes an instant dislike to Matthew for what he represents but can't help feeling attracted to him. Matthew appears to be having the same problem. Harry is a pain in the backside but there's something about her that causes his mind to wander back to her time and again in a way that is definitely not conducive to the success of his business plans.

The story allows time for the characters to develop and for the reader to get to know and understand them. Matthew is sexy without being flash, business like but with compassion and you can't help but admire his patience and persistence. Harry with her tomboy ways, strops and bloody-mindedness, forever trying to live up to the memory of her father, can leave you feeling empathy and frustration all at the same time.

The plot moves the story along continually and brings into play other delightful and funny characters, each with their own little journey to make.

I loved the cover of Turning the Tide, it reflects the gentleness of the way the story unfolds. Rather than racing off into a stormy sea of ups and downs at a breakneck speed, the plot glides and bobs along to a clement breeze with a mixture of intrigue, humour, mystery and romance, enticing you to read on and on.

Maria says

I've greatly enjoyed this. It's very good. Romantic fiction with a few more dimensions. Published by Choc Lit, a company dedicated to publishing quality romantic fiction. First and foremost, it's a novel set in the world of sea and sailing. It's set in a small English seaside town. It's very educational in a lot of ways. It has a lot to say on the subject of development too. Development should have a heart, should have people at the centre of it. There's more to life than just making money - or romance. The love story is cute, though! I mean you couldn't get a romantic heroine with a more 'blokey' name than Harry Watling. She's a type of tomboy, but I see her as more elfin and practical minded in a fey sort of way. The hero is a man of the world and he's been there and done that as far as women are concerned. It's not surprising he finds her different.

A great read and highly recommended.

Leah says

For five years Harry Watling has been looking after her father's legacy, his boat-yard Watlings and is happy trundling along in life in Little Spitmarsh. Until property developer Matthew Corrigan comes calling, wanting to buy Harry's land so he can build a housing complex to go alongside his new restaurant. Harry is determined to fight Matthew tooth and nail in her bid to keep Little Spitmarsh as it is until she learns Matthew

has the means to quite literally force her out. As she tries to save her ailing business and stop Matthew Corrigan, she also has to fight her building feelings for the man who is making her life a misery. Christine Stovell's debut is a hugely enjoyable read set in the fictional village of Little Spitmarsh. It is beautifully described by Christine and she manages to bring all of her characters to life. Harry, in particular, is a fantastic lead character and the way she sparks off Matthew Corrigan makes for fascinating reading. Throw in some family secrets, and a bit of romance and it's a fantastic book well worth reading.

****Full review to come at some point****

Milka says

Harriet (Harry Watling has done everything to keep her dear father's boat yard running. The clients are turning away and Harry has to struggle with money. But with help of George, a man who was Harry's father's best friend, she has been able to keep the yard running. Everything changes when Matthew Corrigan, a property developer comes into the picture.

Matthew has bought an old clubhouse next to Harry's boat yard. He is confident that he will be able to persuade Harry Watling to sell him part of the boat yard which he wants to turn into a housing complex for his new restaurant. But Harry Watling turns out to be something really different he expected; firstly, a woman. Secondly, a woman with her own opinions and determination.

Harry cannot stand Matthew. She cannot understand why someone like him arrives to a place like Little Spitmarsh and tries to ruin everything. Even though she feels hatred towards Matthew, at the same time she has to fight with feelings she feels around him. But what she does not know, is that Matthew has weird thoughts about Harry as well, thoughts he never expected to have about a woman like Harry.

When Matthew discovers a secret about the boat yard, he knows that he will be able to destroy the yard and Harry along with it. Harry is ready to fight for her father's inheritance, but can she fight against Matthew? And does Harry know everything about his dear father's past.

Secrets are revealed, confessions are made, and surprises are discovered.

I thoroughly enjoyed 'Turning the Tide' by Christine Stovell. I must admit that at first, it was really hard for me to get into this book. The plot moves really slowly, and at first, I did not like Harry at all as a character. I just keep thinking why she has to be so stubborn, why she does not take the money and be happy about that? But as the plot revolves, I got to know why Harry acts like she does. She loved her father dearly, and after the death of him, her mother left and she was left alone to cherish her father's memory. When Matthew arrives, she feels that the last reminder of her father is going to be taken away.

Matthew, as a character, is also really interesting. He is rich, handsome and used to life in luxury. But despite all that, he eventually realizes that he is a bit unhappy. His relationship isn't working, and he does not know is the anything he can do to make it work. When he meet Harry, he feels that he is drawn into her; to a woman he would never expected to have feelings for.

'Turning the Tide' by Christine Stovell is a story about secrets from the past, forgiveness, and love. It has interesting characters, beautiful setting and a plot, which paces slowly, but interestingly.

I want to thank Choc Lit publishing for sending me a review copy of this novel.

Lucie Wheeler says

I absolutely loved this book!

Admittedly, at the beginning, I found this book a tad confusing as quite a few characters are introduced around the main one's, so I took a few pages to get properly 'into' the story. However, once I was in - that was me!

Christine's heroine Harriet 'Harry' Watling is a strong, hardworking woman who is striving to keep her fathers boat yard afloat during hard times. She is instantly lovable but not without her human flaws, such as being hardfaced and sometimes a little stropic, which makes the character all the more real.

Then in strolls hero Matthew Corrigan to make Harry's life hell - or so she thinks. A budding property developer, Matthew wants to turn the boat yard around to reflect the current times, but Harry doesn't welcome the change and puts up a fight.

Just when all is finally looking to be sorted out, a family secret unearths itself and throws the story into mayhem again....

A fantastic, well written story with plenty of unexpected plot twists and colourful characters to ensure a good read.

Definitely a recommendation from me.

Rhoda Baxter says

This is a very atmospheric book. It describes the sea and the bleak, beautiful watery landscape near Little Spitmarsh with so much affection that you can't help falling a little in love with the setting yourself.

Harry Watling runs an ailing boat yard and loves Little Spitmarsh exactly the way it is. Matthew Corrigan is a property developer who has started renovating the old boat house next door and has big ideas on how to turn the town around.

The best thing about Harry and Matthew's relationship is that the thing that keeps them apart – aside from the row over the fate of the boatyard – is their personalities. Harry is stubborn and prickly (I loved Harry!). Matthew is smooth and confident. They each handle the problem in their own way and end up pushing each other away.

The book gives you the points of view of a number of quirky characters from the village. They are a little annoying to start with, but they soon grow on you. The main reason I didn't give this book five stars is because, well, did we really need to know what the dog was thinking?

Overall, a great book. It takes a while to get into it, but once you get your head round all the characters and points of view, it trips along at a good pace. Harry is a fantastic heroine – hard working, strong willed and very easy to like.

Moon Love says

This book is amazing! I just could not get enough of it! I love Harry Watling! She's such a strong character. She's fighting against the world to hang onto her late father's dock and boat business. All she has is the memories of her father and George, the crusty sailor who is as much of a liability as he is help. Her biggest nemesis is Matthew a hot shot property developer who has roared into Little Spitmarsh and is determined to bring it back to life.

I loved the chemistry between Harry and Matthew! It was HOT! I also loved reading about Little Spitmarsh and its inhabitants. They kept the book light and entertaining while also adding some much needed gravitas in certain situations. Jimmi Tan was a surprise, but it wasn't hard to see what was going to happen with him.

I recall reading/hearing somewhere that Christine Stovell's 2nd book was to be released this year. I have been unable to find any news on it, but I will eagerly be waiting its release!

Kathryn says

I loved this book. I don't know about Turning the Tide but it certainly kept me Turning the Page. I had only meant to read a couple of chapters before bed but, each time I tried to put it down, I thought I'd just read the next chapter and then couldn't put it down until I finished reading it at 2am!

This is a captivating story of one young woman's determination and struggle to hang onto the boatyard that she sees as her only link to the past and her dead father. It leads to her clashing with a devilishly appealing property developer, Matthew Corrigan, who wants her boatyard and its land in his future development. As this will breathe new life into the surrounding area, forcing it also to modernise, it's not just Harry Watling, the gutsy tomboy heroine, but others in the nearby town, who have to adjust to the changes Matthew and his development are introducing.

I warmed to Harry immediately (it is so refreshing to have a tomboy heroine), felt the same attraction and repulsion that she feels for Matthew, while also falling for most of the townsfolk, especially the irascible George who is Harry's right hand man and surrogate father-figure and the local florists, who are like brothers to Harry and as brilliant creations as their floral art.

This is the second ChocLit title I've read in as many weeks and, if this and Trade Winds are anything to go by, I can see myself going through their entire selection box.

Liz Willoughby says

Oh I adore Little Spitmarsh with all its quirky characters - I wish I lived there! A beautiful debut novel from Christine Stovell, I felt I was part of village life from start to finish. I can't wait to read her novel Move Over Darling.

Clare Chase says

I thoroughly enjoyed this book. The characters are really well drawn - the sort you miss when you've turned the last page. The setting is a faded and struggling seaside town in Norfolk, and I found myself wanting a good outcome for it, almost as much as for its residents. I loved the central story of Harry (Harriet) Watling's struggles to save her boatyard, and her relationship with Matthew Corrigan, but also enjoyed the drama of life in the broader community. The protagonists all felt real, and provided a touching and entertaining sideshow that complemented the central plot. I ended up feeling fond of several of them, especially Harry's old retainer and lovable mixed blessing, George.
