



## Watching Willow Watts

*Talli Roland*

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For twenty-five-year-old Willow Watts, life has settled into a predictably dull routine: whilst the elderly residents of Britain's Ugliest Village bed down for yet another early night. But everything changes when Willow's epically embarrassing Marilyn Monroe impersonation is uploaded to YouTube.

## Watching Willow Watts Details

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Author : Talli Roland

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## From Reader Review Watching Willow Watts for online ebook

### Georgina says

<http://chicklitaholic.blogspot.com/20...>

“No one could make you fulfilled and happy except yourself”, is the premise and message behind Talli Roland’s latest novel Watching Willow Watts. In today’s society so many people are desperate to become famous in anyway they can, especially with the introduction of You Tube. Fame, is not all that it is hyped up to be and it is great to see a novel that shows some of the pitfalls and what really happens once the fame takes hold. As soon as I read the synopsis of this novel I knew that I would be hooked and once I received this novel I was excited to get started.

Willow Watts, is a normal girl living in a predictably dull routine. She spends her days working in her dad’s antique shop and her nights staying in watching TV. Willow lives in a boring village filled with old aged pensioners with the title of Britain’s Ugliest Village. Willow’s life is suddenly turned upside down when a You Tube video of Willow impersonating Marilyn Monroe becomes an overnight sensation after the viewers spot Marilyn’s ghostly image in the video. Willow’s life and the small town she lives in are thrown into chaos with fans flocking from all over the world to see ‘the new Marilyn. Willow embraces her new identity, gaining weight to achieve Marilyn’s curves and changing her entire look. When Willow’s former love Alex returns to the village she must decide if she wants to focus on fame or revert back to her old self in order to find happiness

Talli Roland has come up with a individual, unique storyline, which I have not seen done before. I really enjoyed the way she took this quirky idea of someone becoming a You tube sensation and what happens afterwards. I felt that with this storyline Talli was also able to create characters that were relatable and fell into pace with the story. I loved the characters of Dickie, Willow’s father and Bett’s, the Marilyn Monroe fan from America. I especially enjoyed when these two characters were interacting together. I found them extremely likeable and also very funny at times. I hated the character of Jay, he is absolutely vile, doing everything for his own gain and not caring in any way about anyone else. You are expected to hate Jay from the beginning, right through and you will be hoping along the way that someone manages to put him in his place. Willow is also an interesting character who you will feel for throughout the novel. Willow is also very family oriented, which I loved.

My only issue with the novel was that I felt at times as though Willow was a little too naïve. All of us make mistakes in life and make decisions without having all the facts, however I felt as though Willow went into a lot of situations with her eyes closed. I would have liked to see Willow as a little bit of a stronger character. For example Willow falls out with her best friend over Jay and decides to believe what Jay has to say over her best friend, Paula. Willow and Jay have only known each other for a few days, therefore I don’t believe it is realistic for a woman to believe a guy she has just met over her best friend.

Watching Willow Watts is a funny, heart-warming, unique story, that will have leave you unable to put the novel down. I finished Watching Willow Watts in one weekend and did not want it to end. I will now be running to the store to purchase The Hating Game, Talli Roland’s previous novel, in order to read more of her delectable writing. I would recommend this novel to anyone looking for a fun unique take on chick lit.

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### **Karen says**

From the first chapter I was hooked. Willow is a dear person, having left her dream life back in London to care for her widowed father and his dusty antique shop. The characters in this forgotten village are well-drawn, and I chuckled throughout at their odd and endearing ways. The Marilyn scenes are hilarious. Skinny Willow trying to maneuver about with her stuffed booty had me laughing out loud.

You've got romance, humor, friendship and a villain you love to hate: Talli Roland has a real winner in Watching Willow Watts. And we all better be watching Talli Roland, because she sure knows how to write Chick Lit!

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### **Jessica Bell says**

I received an advanced review copy of this at the perfect time. Right when I needed a good laugh and pick-me-up. Ultimately, this is a 'feel good' book. But woven into the intelligent narrative, dry humour, and moments worthy of good old a belly laugh, is a subtle melancholy. Of course, this melancholy is not prominent, and is often completely overridden by Roland's remarkable skill at bringing the funniest elements of a scene to the surface, but it's there--lingering in the background. And cleverly done so too.

There are moments in the book where you feel like you're at a big party, and all attention is on you, then someone says something insulting to you, that everyone else seems to think is funny. Of course, you try to save face by laughing along and pretending that the comment didn't hurt. But it did. Deep down. But you wouldn't dare let it show, would you? Because your reputation comes first, and if people knew how you felt inside, no one would like you anymore.

This book is ultimately about following dreams. But not dreams of success. Dreams of just being accepted for your plain old self. It really makes you realize that fame isn't all it's cracked up to be. And that happiness comes from being true to oneself.

Watching Willow Watts is a must-read. Because sometimes you can get a lot more than just entertainment out of chick-lit than one would typically think. Talli Roland is a talent to say the least. And I can't wait to see what she comes up with next.

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### **Nikki Bywater says**

Willow Watts lives in the small and very quiet village of Belcherton in the UK, having moved back there from living a good happy life in London, where she had graduated from a prestigious flower school in Knightsbridge after doing really well and landing a great job in Liberty's. She had made the decision to return to Belcherton to be there for her father who since her mother's death seems not to be coping too well and Willow finds out his business is in debt. She is living a quiet life in the village where nothing much happens.

When Simpson Dyer the head and only member of Belcherton's tourist board is making a film to promote

Belcherton and attract more visitors he films Willow dressed up as the icon Marilyn Monroe and he puts the film on You tube with a grey image of the real Marilyn's face floating in the background. Willow finds herself an instant internet sensation when the post gets thousands of hits and starts trending due to a comment a fan of Marilyn posts claiming it to be the ghost of Marilyn! Thousands of fans follow suite and after the clip is shown in the media fans of Marilyn start descending to the usually quiet Belcherton, even going as far as to setting up a campsite. Even after seeing Willow in the flesh they all go on believing that she is the essence of Marilyn.

Jay Bellamy introduces himself as a hot shot London agent who wants to sign Willow to work and earn good money being Marilyn and Willow sees this as the answer to helping clear her father's debts.

Betts Johnson is a massive Marilyn fan who is unhappy with her life she flies over to Belcherton from America to come in search of finding her idol.

Will Willow lose her own identity and become Marilyn?

Is Jay all he claims to be?

Will this not only change Willow's life but the people who are closest to her?

A fantastic funny read that is entertaining from beginning to end. A brilliant storyline. Watching Willow Watts is one to watch out for!

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### **Teresa says**

Like Talli's other book, this was a refreshing, original read. I'll try to review this without giving away spoilers.

It's a story about Willow regaining her dreams, and taking her life back. The plot maybe a little far fetched - would thousands of people really believe Marilyn had chosen Willow? - but it works in fiction and make believe if you allow yourself to be carried away into Willow's world.

Compared to some romance that I've read, the hero is not featured heavily in the book (but this is what maybe makes it chicklit/women's fiction?). Personally, I do like more presence from the hero because for me romance is about the conflict, and the two of them working it out together. We see the hero more through flashbacks in Willow's thoughts. However, the concept of this story was just fun, making me want to carry on reading and find out what happens.

How will Willow get out of her contract with Jay?

Talli has a wonderful way of telling a story. It's sharp, witty, and different with a fast pace and style that makes you want to keep on reading. Oh and there is no sex (on the page), only behind closed doors - just so you know.

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## **Shaz Goodwin says**

The story starts at the village fete where we are introduced to the characters. Willow's best friend Paula is running a stall where fete visitors dress up as a celebrity and have their photo taken. Paula talks Willow into dressing as Marilyn Monroe, Simpson (who is the village tourism rep) makes a video which gets uploaded onto YouTube ... and this one incident sends Willow's life into a whirlwind of activity and emotions.

Belcherton explodes with visitors wanting to see Willow and along with this influx of people arrives agent Jay. Jay, who on the surface is very supportive of Willow but underneath is controlling and hungry for revenge (and money!). Amongst the visitors to the village we meet Betts who has stepped out of her comfort zone and come to the UK from Georgia. She stays with Willow and her father and becomes an integral part of their lives.

Another character central to the story is Cissy. A retired former actress living on the outskirts of the village, she has met Jay in the past. She is not happy with how things are working out for Jay.

The characters in *Watching Willow Watts* are so believable. You become involved in either rooting for everything to turn out well or wishing for their downfall.

Behind Willow's decisions all the time are considerations of others - money her father owes or in supporting the village to become more than Britain's Ugliest Village. She puts her own feelings aside. When Jay enters the village she is in a vulnerable position emotionally so it is entirely believable that she only sees what is on the surface. If you've read my reviews you know that I love watching a female heroine make the journey from being down-trodden and insecure to becoming her own person ... and we certainly see this for Willow.

*Watching Willow Watts* is a wonderful emotional ride. We have all the elements of love, friendship, family, community and revenge to keep us absorbed. You won't be disappointed in accompanying Willow on her journey as the iconic Marilyn Monroe!

I would like to thank the author for providing me a review copy.

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## **Rea Cobb says**

I seem to be getting my reading Mojo back and have flown through my latest book! It did help that it was a really enjoyable read. I have just finished *Watching Willow Watts* by Talli Roland, this book is available on kindle with the official launch on the 14th September, but not to worry for all of you paperback lovers this will be available in paperback on 30th November.

### **Plot**

For Willow Watts, life has settled into a predictably dull routine: days behind the counter at her father's antique shop and nights watching TV, as the pension-aged residents of Britain's Ugliest Village bed down for yet another early night. But everything changes when a YouTube video of Willow's epically embarrassing Marilyn Monroe impersonation gets millions of hits after a viewer spots Marilyn's ghostly image in a frame.

Instantly, Willow's town is overrun with fans flocking to see the 'new Marilyn'. Egged on by the villagers --

whose shops and businesses are cashing in -- Willow embraces her new identity, dying her hair platinum and ramming herself full of cakes to achieve Marilyn's legendary curves.

But when a former flame returns seeking the old Willow, Willow must decide: can she risk her stardom and her village's newfound fortune on love, or is being Marilyn her ticket to happiness?

### My Opinion

The heroine in this book who is Willow Watts is such a natural character. From the moment we first meet her we instantly form a bond with her and I think it is because she is so genuine and selfless that we warm to her so much. Throughout the whole book you always see her putting everyone else's welfare before her own wants and needs. There are a real mix of characters in Watching Willow Watts all who seem very friendly and relaxed this is all bar one character, Jay who turns up to become Willow's agent and from the moment we meet him there is an instant dislike and we know what he is aiming to do but poor Willow is unaware of his actions.

The storyline to this book is very light-hearted and flows at a perfect pace, I was hoping to see a little more of the relationship between Willow and her ex-boyfriend but this is just me being greedy and a hopeless romantic!

I love the way Talli Roland creates a traditional little country town where everything is very ordinary and the community all come together, and then decides to throw in the whole Marilyn Monroe thing in which you would never expect in such an ordinary town. I think when something big and pink arrives in the town this is when it all felt a little bizarre!

I would defiantly recommend this book and after reading this one I would now like to read her previous novel The Hating Game. Both of her books have very bright eye catching covers so you can not miss them!

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### **LindyLouMac says**

Well the date has arrived; tomorrow September 14th is the official launch day of Talli Roland's much awaited second novel. Talli is one of the new generation of writers that understands the importance of an online presence for an author. She certainly went to town with the launch of her debut novel The Hating Game clicking on the title will take you directly to the review I wrote last year. I said it in my last review but will say it again, Talli Roland is a very enterprising young woman that totally understands the importance of publicity. She made a successful job of promoting her last novel and I think that she will do so again this time. Readers who enjoyed her debut are in for a treat as within its genre she has written another sparkly lively modern novel that will appeal to many. For fans of light humoured and easily readable modern women's fiction, love stories with a happy ending than Talli Roland is a name to watch out for.

Once again this young author has come up with an original story line, this time about a Marilyn Monroe look a like, who discovers by playing Marilyn that one of the most important things we learn in this life, is to be true to ourselves.

Our heroine gives her name to the novel and it starts as Willow leaves behind her successful London career as a florist to return to Belcherton, England's ugliest village, to care for her recently-widowed father. Her life

has become rather mundane helping her father in his struggling antiques business. At the local village fete her best friend gets her to dress up as Marilyn Monroe, just for a bit of fun. Before they know it someone has posted a video on You Tube and everything escalates out of control in double quick time as Marilyn mania takes over village life. Surrounded by a fascinating cast of characters including the ghastly Jay who becomes her agent, Willow totally embraces the character of Marilyn. To find out how this all works out for our heroine you will have to read the book for yourself.

Having lived for many years in an English country village, some of the descriptions of the events and characters had me giggling at how well she has captured the essence. Talli obviously has a tremendous sense of humour which has shown through in both of her novels so far. For her humour alone I recommend her writing to you, but even more so if you are a fan of chick lit style romantic fiction.

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For much more information, including an invite to the party please visit LindyLouMac's Book Reviews  
[http://lindyloumacbookreviews.blogspot...](http://lindyloumacbookreviews.blogspot.com)

### **Glynis Smy says**

She's done it again! Talli Roland has written another red carpet, chick lit read. Watching Willow Watts is entertaining, different and packed with humour.

Romance for Willow Watts -a young florist from a small community-has flown the nest. Her love life is zero. Baking cakes for the ladies group and her hopes of recovering money to cover her father's small shop debts are about as exciting as her life gets. Until a YouTube video puts her hometown on the map, then life gets a little crazy.

Willow finds herself centre of attention and is not enjoying it one bit. The only added bonus is her love life has taken a turn for the better-or has it?

The pull of her boyfriend, his obsession with her rise to fame, the sudden appearance of her ex and her girlfriend's accusation upsets Willow. She makes an error of judgement. One woman can save her and does so with a secret shared from her past.

Watching Willow Watts is a great read-a brilliant read. Kick back, put the kettle on and enjoy Willow's rise to fame-or do I mean Marilyn Monroe?

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### **Leah says**

When I read a very early copy of Talli Roland's debut novel *The Hating Game* last year, I was in love. It was a very original novel with a brilliant plot and insanely wonderful characters. So I was pleased to see Talli would be releasing a second novel and after reading the synopsis for *Watching Willow Watts*, I was hooked and I couldn't wait to read it. When Talli emailed me an early copy for my Kindle I was deliriously happy and very eager to start reading it. I'd just finished a previous novel on my Kindle so I was all set for a new read (evidently, Talli knew that!) and *Watching Willow Watts* was that read.

The plot of *Watching Willow Watts* is something else entirely. It's just as brilliant as *The Hating Game* as

Willow Watts dresses up for Marilyn Monroe for a joke at her village's fete and the subsequent YouTube video ends up going viral as people proclaim Willow is the 'New Marilyn'. Soon, Willow's little town, Belcherton, is over-run with Marilyn fans clamouring for a piece of Willow, including supposed uber-agent Jay and Marilyn obsessive Betts. And as Willow sees her being the 'New Marilyn' as a way to make money for her heart-broken dad, well, what's a girl to do? I thought Talli executed the main plot perfectly. I loved Willow's ascent to fame (and, be warned, you will have to suspend your beliefs when reading the novel!) and I liked that Willow was so selfless that she really only wanted to do it to save her dad's antique business from failing. It's a brilliant plot, and one Talli had thought out perfectly.

The novel's downfall, for me, was Jay. It began and it ended with Jay, the agent who sees Willow and decides she'll be his ticket back to the big time. Him coming into the novel didn't exactly ruin it for me, but it did send the novel onto a track well-rehearsed. There was an exchange mid-way through the novel where Jay hit on Willow's best friend Paula, not knowing they were best friends and whilst he was sleeping with Willow. Paula told Willow, but because Jay had told Willow Paula would probably be jealous, Willow believed Jay and not Paula. It wasn't necessarily all downhill from there, but it was like a familiar record had come on and I knew exactly how it was all going to pan out. It saddened me. I'm sorry but if there's one thing I HATE in Chick Lit it's when supposedly sane women choose their new man over their best friends of many years. It drives me nuts. Plot device or not, I truly hate it. Because in real life that just wouldn't happen. I couldn't perceive any time in my life that I would ever believe a boyfriend over a best friend and it keeps happening in Chick Lit and I keep rolling my eyes.

I liked the majority of the characters. Willow, it has to be said, was absolutely nothing like Mattie, Roland's heroine from *The Hating Game*. Mattie would eat Willow for breakfast, frankly. I must admit, I was expecting another Mattie-type character because there's a big, big lack of female characters like Mattie, most are Willow prototypes all meek and mild and although it's good and it works... It does get a bit boring after a while and I thought Roland had tapped into a wonderful character in Mattie and wished she had done the same to Willow. I mean, Willow wasn't horrible, she was rather lovely, but her gullibility and her naivete bit. I liked her but I also wanted to give her a clout. I loved Paula, Willow's best friend, she was very forthright and I was inexplicably sad when Willow shut her down. I also really liked Willow's dad, along with Betts, the American Marilyn-obsessive. I couldn't stand Jay, the agent, I wanted to make him disappear. I hated him and it's rare I say that.

Watching Willow Watts was infinitely different to *The Hating Game* and for me it just wasn't as good. The whole idea was there and most of it was executed perfectly, but the colour-by-numbers with Jay/Willow/Paula was just horrible for me. When I'm reading a book it's never a good sign when I'm thinking of how I would do it differently and after the whole incident with Willow and Paula I was consistently wondering how I'd have done it, personally. I was also surprised at the lack of romance. The synopsis mentions Willow's ex coming back, but he's featured in about 10 pages total, most of them coming near to the end with just one solitary appearance somewhere in the middle. I know why that was – it was part of the plot, but the synopsis was rather misleading there as I was expecting more. I did enjoy the novel, don't get me wrong but it wasn't as good as *The Hating Game*. It didn't have the same oomph. I wanted it to blow me away like *The Hating Game* did, but sadly it didn't. The first half of the novel was excellent and then it all just descended into a type of Chick Lit novel I've seen time and time again, which made me sad. Talli is a brilliant novelist and has some wonderful book ideas and I will be on the lookout for her next novel but Watching Willow Watts wasn't as good as her debut novel.

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## **Margo says**

I am thrilled to be writing a review of Talli Roland's enchanting new book, having adored *The Hating Game*. I was drawn in straight away and couldn't put the book down!

Willow Watts, a gifted florist beginning to make a success of her business in London, has returned to the weary village she hails from to care for her widowed father and his ailing antique shop. Life for her and the village takes a bizarre turn when the ghostly image of Marilyn Monroe is seen in an otherwise embarrassing YouTube video of Willow, performing at the local fete. Events move quickly to transform Willow into the new Marilyn, make her a star and save the shop.

Talli Roland has written a wonderful cast of characters, from a devoted best friend, a ruthless charmer, a warm and loving Texan, to an eccentric band of elderly locals and we see Willow fighting to find herself in the midst of both adoration and exploitation. The parallels with Marilyn herself are worked in beautifully.

An aspect of Talli Roland's writing that I love is that, amongst the pace and frivolity, is pure pathos and heart. Characters overcome past hurts and discover inner strengths and talents they didn't know they had.

I highly recommend this book and can't wait to read more Talli Roland.

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## **Janice Horton says**

Ever since reading and really enjoying *The Hating Game* back at the start of the year, I've been really looking forward to Talli Roland's next book. Watching Willow Watts is a fantastic up-to-the minute story involving a UTube video, instant fame, and how Willow Watts handles it all while impersonating Marilyn Monroe. The characters in the story are all so well portrayed, especially Willow, who is a kind and generous soul who goes along with all the craziness for all the right reasons. The pacy events of the plot tumble forward, carrying the characters and the reader along in what is a fun and emotionally compelling storyline. The ending is beautifully wrapped up and it is with great satisfaction that he who took advantage of Willow's trusting nature got his deserved comeuppance in the end! Well done Talli Roland on yet another fantastically entertaining read.

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## **Mick Arnold says**

What to say about Willow Watts?

Firstly, and I make no apologies for this, she resides in the most wonderfully named location in any book (or film I've seen for that matter) I've ever read. Belcherton! The name says it all and it's backed up by being noted as Britain's Ugliest Village. So, huge kudos to Ms Roland for going against the grain of 'picture-perfect-postcard-settings'.

Willow Watts is your everyday lady, so even more kudos there, with a determination to save her widowed father's Antiques shop from financial ruin, so she gives up the passion of her life, working in a big department store's flower department to move back to the aforementioned Belcherton. Illustrating the power

(and gullibility) of humans to believe what they see is something entirely different, she finds herself being a Marilyn Monroe impersonator, locked into a long-term contract by one of the sleaziest characters you'll ever come across.

Step aside 'Childcatcher' and give your best 'boo' and 'hiss' to Jay Bellamy, for whom the word 'Sleazebag' was born. Enough about him, read this story and you'll know exactly what I mean! It's only with the aid of her friends and family that.....all ends up as it should in the end. Ha! If you were waiting for me to give spoilers, or anymore of the story away, then bad luck, though if anyone who's read my other reviews knows, I don't like giving away more than I can, preferring to leave it up to those about to read to find out what happens for themselves.

I've read a few of Ms Roland's novels and I can't believe I'd missed this one. Am I pleased I've corrected this? Of course, it goes without saying. Talli has a knack of painting imagery with words that has the ability to relax the mind and transport you into the locations and situations she's writing about. Simply put, this story was a delight. Put the kettle on, grab a little of what you fancy and settle back to be entranced.

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### **Amy says**

This was my first Talli Roland book and it definitely is not my last. Watching Willow Watts is a story about how many times we feel fame and fortune will get us everything, but rarely is this the case. When a person gets caught up in being in the spotlight, they lose a sense of who they are, as Willow Watts does in this story.

I love how Talli weaves a string of characters into one story, from a money hungry lousy talent agent, a loving best friend, a woman who wants to see justice done, a warm southern woman from Georgia, and a girl (Willow) who only wants to take care of her father and his business, but move ahead in the world too.

I'm definitely looking forward to reading more of Talli Roland's books.

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### **Ann says**

I was thrilled to receive an advanced review copy of Talli Roland's newest novel, "Watching Willow Watts." Willow has left her life in London to look after her father and help with his declining antique business. I fell in love with Willow Watts as she forced herself to swallow her neighbour's kumquat marmalade at the village fair. Her best friend, running the celebrity dress up booth insists she put on the "musty smelling white satin dress" and platinum wig. Willow ends up in a video that goes viral on U-Tube. And so begins Willow's foray into the world of show business as a Marilyn Monroe impersonator.

Talli Roland does an excellent job creating this cast of characters and pulling them altogether. Each one is touched by the ghost of Marilyn in some way. Willow realises she likes herself as she impersonates Marilyn. An American divorcee discovers she is more than a doormat to her children. An aging reclusive actress gets her revenge. Willow's father, a widower finds a new zest for life. An agent gets his comeuppance and a town gets a new lease on life.

This is one fantastic good read. Well done Talli. I love, love, love Willow Watts.

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