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Young Maryann Nelson is devastated at the loss of her beloved father. But worse is to come when her mother, Flo, sees an opportunity to better herself and her family in a marriage to the local undertaker, Norman Griffin. Though on the surface a caring family man, Norman is not at all what he seems, as Maryann and her sister Sal soon discover.

Unable to turn to their unsympathetic mother for support, the girls are left alone with their harrowing secret. But for Sal it is too much to bear . . .

The chance of a new life opens up for Maryann when she befriends Joel Bartholomew. Aboard his narrowboat, the Esther Jane, she finds herself falling in love with life on the canal as she is swept away from Birmingham and all her worries. Until Joel's feelings for Maryann begin to change, awakening all the old nightmares that she had thought were long buried, and in panic and confusion she takes flight . . .

The Narrowboat Girl Details

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Author : Annie Murray

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From Reader Review The Narrowboat Girl for online ebook

Soukaina says

To be honest, when I first read it I found nothing interesting about it; I thought "another boring book", I spent a month reading the first five pages I couldn't go for more than three lines or half a page if I was in a good mood, I found myself pushing me to carry on, but when the events started to take place I was fascinated by it, I simply fell in love with it, luckily I got a version of the book that has 2 books in 1 (the second was "water gypsies"), so what took me month to complete almost 5 pages turned to a week to complete the two books, I finished it yesterday.

It's been a long time since a book made me live in it and stay for hours reading it! I loved the characters, specially Joel (he was my favourite). And for the end; it was fair I liked it.

Annie Murray, a name I will be looking for it in the library next time.

Sally Jenkins says

It took me a little bit of time to get into this book but once it got going I really enjoyed it.

It felt historically accurate and I was rooting for Maryann all the way through.

I will be reading the sequel.

Suzanne says

Loved every page of this book. It had it all. Fantastic reading.

Bionic Jean says

Well-written saga about canalboat people of the previous century and their difficulties. The main character is (of course) a young girl who has not had a fair deal in life. The Black Country's waterways are well depicted, as are the minutiae of the working folk's lifestyle, but this is really not my cup of tea.

Debbie says

I love Annie Murray's books, so much detail and the characters are always interesting. The Narrowboat Girl follows the life of Maryann, devastated by the death of her father at a young age, her mother's remarriage forces her run away to her only real friend, canal boatman Joel, but the legacy of her step-father and unsympathetic mother mar her potential happiness forcing her to move on.

The description of life on the waterways is fascinating. The sequel Water Gypsies is on my "To Read" shelf. I look forward to it.

Les Hendrickson says

Had I any idea of the story-line I would have avoided this book. Because of the sensitive and distressing topics, it's difficult and uncomfortable to read at times. Many enjoy stories with real-life grit, but I'm not one of them. I read for pleasure and escapism, and very much enjoy a fairy tale in essence.

However, this is an excellent title in my opinion, where the author appears to have done a good amount of research producing a book with much drama and emotion. There is good, and consistent, characterisations here of people living very difficult, violet and unsettled lives, which left me begging for satisfying resolutions and a happy ending throughout.

Having finished this, my first Annie Murray title, I found it to be the grittiest most disturbing of "olden days" sagas I have read so far. I consider Murray to be an excellent author, in this instance, and so intend to read both the sequel, Water Gypsies, and her hit title, Chocolate Girl, but with the severe hope they are somewhat less sinister. A very memorable book!

Karen Ashbrook says

I thought this book was a really good read.

Tracy Bethell says

excellent book, will read more of hers

Julie says

This novel was sold as a story of adventure and true love. For 2/3 of the book this really wasn't the case. It wasn't what I was expecting, but I was engaged from the first few chapters.

From the beginning this is a story about abuse and self preservation, and the love story just doesn't make a lot of sense. It's a hard subject, but I found it to be sensitively written for the most part - aside from the slightly odd romance.

Trigger warnings: sexual abuse, emotional abuse, physical abuse.

Donna Chadwick says

Author: Annie Murray

Title: The Narrowboat Girl

Genre: Contemporary Fiction, Historical Fiction, Fiction, Historical, Romance,

I was given this book.

This book has 457 pages and 48 chapters in it.

I would tell people that you should step outside your comfort zone with books because it is good to add more authors and genres to your reading portfolio. Even if you do not read books like this.

I normally read books of this genre but I also stepped outside my comfort zone with authors and genres I am so glad I did because I have read so many great books and come across some great authors.

I highly recommend this book.

Synopsis: Young Maryann nelson is devastated at the loss of her beloved father. But worse is to come when her mother Flo, sees an opportunity to better herself and her family in a marriage to the local undertaker Norman griffin. Through on the surface a caring family man, Norman is not at all what he seems. As Maryann and her sister Sally soon discovers. Unable to turn to their unsympathetic mother for support, the girls are left alone with their harrowing secret. But for Sally it is too much too bear... The chance of a new life opens up for Maryann when she befriends Joel Bartholomew. Aboard his narrowboat, the Esther Jane, she finds herself falling in love with life on the canal as she is swept away from Birmingham and all her worries. Until Joel's feelings for Maryann begin to change, awakening all the old nightmares that she thought long buried, and in panic and confusion she takes flight... Maryann runs away and works in a house for a bit until one day she chooses to go down to the boats to see if the Esther Jane is there and she does not see Joel, his Father or Ada she seen Joel's brother Darius and she asked about his father who was also named Darius and Ada but their sister Ada had drowned four years ago and Maryann started to cry she had to wipe tears away and she says she was a good one your sister and Darius said Joel was in hospital because he was very ill with his lungs and Maryann offered to go see Joel in hospital and seeing Joel made Maryann realize she really did love Joel and Maryann's sister Sally had took her own life after what Norman did to her and she could not take any more. Maryann burnt down Norman's business and Norman left her mother after that. Maryann's mother did not like that her daughter had to say about Norman she called Maryann a dirty liar. Maryann asked her brother Tony to found out where Norman is so she can face him and her brother finds him and he is living with another mother and her two daughters and one reminds Maryann of the way Sally looked and she confronts the woman and told her everything that he did to Maryann and Sally and the woman did not believe Maryann and her daughters said you are not going to be here to stop it.

Review: I found this book really easy to get in to and hard to put down once I started reading it and I have the follow on to this book it is called the water gypsies and I would say to have both so you can carry on the story. I really liked reading about MaryAnn and siblings being with their father and getting a kitten and how they use to go meet their father from work until he got hit by a car and sadly passed away. Their mother married Norman Griffin and I found it hard to read what he did to Sally and MaryAnn and to them other innocent girl it was horrible and it was upsetting to read that Sally and Maryann's mother did not believe them. I was sad to read that Norman waited until Flo's niece was dying to rape MaryAnn. It was sad to read that Maryann's baby cousin passed away and so did her beloved Nan and Norman killed all the animals that her Nan had by breaking their necks and he killed Maryann's precious kitten tiger that her father got her before he passed away. I was sad to read that Sally took her own life after the what Norman did to her and I was glad MaryAnn burnt his business down. I was sad that Norman moved on to another woman with her two daughters. I was sad that Joel's mother Esther had died and Ada drowned. I was glad MaryAnn was

helping Margaret and Amy tell their mother who did not believe them at first and then Margaret set him on fire after he raped her in front of Amy it is a very sad book but there is some good parts. I was glad Margaret and Amy's mother believed them and Amy Made her way to Nancy's house where Maryann was staying. I can not believe Maryann's mother did not believe what he was doing to them. Maryann's mother hates MaryAnn because Norman left her because she had no daughters at home. I was happy to read that Maryann married Joel and Joel did not die. I was glad to read that Nancy got out of her abuses marriage and gets with Darius wish she could of married Darius though. She goes to live with him on a boat and I was sad to read that Joel and Darius's father had to stay on dry land with his sister because he was getting to poorly to be on the boat. Maryann had a son with Joel and names him after his father and she finds out she is pregnant again. Maryann said if the baby was a girl they would name her Sally or Ada because they had both sadly passed away. Maryann was angry that when Sally died her mother buried her as a griffin not nelson that was their father's surname. Maryann's mother sounds like she did not care about her children she only cares about the money and trying to better herself no matter the cost. Maryann's mother hates Nancy's mother.

About The Author: Annie Murray was born in 1960 in Berkshire, and studied English at oxford university. Her first job took her to Birmingham where she met her husband, John. They have four children. In 1992 she began writing her first Birmingham novel, Birmingham rose, which made the times bestseller list when it was published in 1995. She has written six subsequent novels including, most recently, the highly successful chocolate girls.

About The Book: I love this cover and this book has two different covers and I love the front.

Stars Rating: Five Out Of Five Stars.

Sheena Valenzuela says

This book is beautiful!!!

Marilyn says

One of those great books about England "In the good old days" when the streets were covered w/mud and you used an outhouse w/all the other dirt poor tenants in the "cul-de-sac!" Some nasty stuff in this one, but critical to realize how far we've come in exposing and cleaning up some of the horrible domestic issues that were once totally buried. A young girl with true grit...fights for her rights and her own happiness. Often confused by what is going on inside of her and around her, but determined to find the truth and live safely and as happily as possible. She finds her joy on the riverboat.

Jenna says

This book was recommended to me by a friend and I can see why. I couldn't put it down I was intrigued to know what Maryann would do next. The characterisation is wonderful and you find yourself really hating her stepfather and rooting for her happy ending. I won't spoil the plot but I will say stick with it through the darker parts of the narrative, which at times can be quite tough. I loved the historical viewpoint of England

and life on the 'cut'. Definitely recommend xxx

Sarah Goodwin says

Sigh. Unfortunately I am going to have to give this book a good review. I bought it in the works as some trashy pre-serious book reading, but it gripped me by the eyeballs and wouldn't let me go, no matter how many little niggles I had with it along the way.

To start with the positives. It's a very complete book, all the ends and threads are neatly squared away by the end. It's rich with detail and the characters, though fairly one note, feel real enough to keep you interested. There's melodrama, slightly unbelievable at times but will keep you flipping pages to find out what happens. There's a HEA ending (-ish, there is a sequel).

There's also narrowboats. Big plus for me - I love a story about narrowboats, or people living wild on the open fells, or any other catherine cookson-ish abode you could imagine.

Negatives, aside from the ones briefly touched on above, the main one for me is that the love interest character is 29 at the start of the book, and our heroine is 13. The first time he makes a move on her she hasn't even had her first period (and is still being molested by her step-father) I just couldn't warm to the romance. Had they been the same age, or had he been slightly older I could have bought it but...it was just a no for me. The way he spoke as well, about wanting her and loving her, 1. seemed really manipulative and the kind of thing a child molester would say and 2. made him seem really subnormal - he's 29, he's been in a war, he lives on a boat, travelling all over and the only person he wants to kiss/marry is a 13 year old kid? No, sorry, can't get with that.

Aside from that fairly major issue I had with it, the only other real complaint I had was that the book tries to do phonetic dialect, which I was always taught not to do. It works alright, but they were forever writing 'Mom' instead of Mum, presumably to try and get the northern 'Moom' effect. It just made everyone sound like Californian teenagers to me.

All in all a decent historical romance, even if the romance part did make me uncomfortable. Not as good as the good old catherine cooksons but it'll fill a hole for a few days. You could do worse.

For romances on narrowboats in modern times I suggest m/m novel 'Barging In'.

Shirley Revill says

Loved this book. Easy to read but hard to put down. Recommended.
