



# City Girl, Country Vet

*Cathy Woodman*

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London veterinarian Maz Harwood has learned the hard way that love and work don't mix. So when Emma, her best friend from vet school, asks her to look after her practice in the English countryside for six months, Maz decides that is just the change of scenery she needs. But country life is trickier than she could have imagined. It is one thing to trade her smart heels for wellies; it's another to deal with unwelcoming locals, an intense rivalry with the town's other vet practice, and worse yet, the realization that her friend's practice is in as bad a shape as Maz's own broken heart. Things get even more complicated when she meets her rival's dashing son, who is totally unsuitable as a prospect . . . or is he? Can Maz win over the locals, save the lives of her patients, keep Emma's practice from going under . . . and find love again? Cathy Woodman, a fresh new voice in women's fiction, has written a warm, breezy romantic comedy with just enough mishap and plenty of adorable four-legged creatures. **Previously published in the UK as *Trust Me, I'm A Vet*.**

## City Girl, Country Vet Details

Date : Published September 4th 2012 by Hachette Books (first published 2010)

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Author : Cathy Woodman

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# From Reader Review City Girl, Country Vet for online ebook

## Lesley says

I was looking forward to reading this novel because what could be better than a book combining the English countryside with animals and a story line about a country veterinary practice? Unfortunately, I was to be disappointed by this one. The main character was not very likeable and didn't seem to be a very good veterinarian at all! The love story was so one dimensional and undeveloped it was pathetic. In fact, not one of the characters were developed to any degree of depth. I found myself with more questions than answers and the book was over! I would not recommend this book to anyone.

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## Cindy says

Easy read, predictable and entertaining. Would recommend for a lazy Sunday.m

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## Gigi Ann says

This book reminded me of the James Herriott true stories from his books in the 1970s. However, this is a novel, not true stories, but it is a charming and original tale of adventure, mishap, and romance centered around a vet's practice in the English countryside.

London veterinarian Maz Harwood has learned the hard way that love and work don't mix. So when Emma, her best friend from vet school, asks her to look after her practice in the English countryside for six months, Maz decides that is just the change of scenery she needs. But country life is trickier than she thought it would be.

It was one thing to trade her smart heels for wellies; it's another to deal with unwelcoming locals, an intense rivalry with another local vet practice, and worse yet, the realization that her friend's practice needs as much healing as Maz's own broken heart. Things get even more complicated when she meets her rival's dashing son, who is totally unsuitable as a prospect....or is he? Can Maz win over the locals, save the lives of her patients, keep Emma's practice from going under....and find love again? Cathy Woodman, a fresh new voice in women's fiction, has written a warm, breezy romantic comedy that makes for the perfect relaxing cozy read.

### My Thoughts...

Being an animal lover I truly enjoyed this book. I'm sure it may not be a book for all readers, but for me it was a nice 'treat.' It was fast paced, so when I started to read it I just didn't want to put it down.

This week with the "Polar Vortex" moving through this area with temps -30, it was a good week to curl up with a nice cozy book under the blankets and read away. The "Polar Vortex" didn't bother me a bit. I traveled to England in my easy chair, where the weather was warmer, being the story took place in Spring and Summer.

This book is a part of my personal library...I guess you figured out by now that I loved this book and I awarded it 5 liver favored star treats.

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## **Lelia Taylor says**

Comfort fiction. Sometimes, I have to escape from what I spend most of my reading time on and comfort fiction is what I want. *City Girl, Country Vet* fills the bill in a lot of ways with just a few very minor quibbles.

I'm inordinately attached to stories about veterinarians in rural areas, usually preferring real vets' tales about their own experiences (thank you, James Herriot!), but fiction is OK, too, and I imagine some of this story might be based on real life since Ms. Woodman started out as a small animal vet. There's something about the rural atmosphere and the animals and the people who, let's face it, are just not the same as urban folk, and visiting with them is always a pleasure. This particular book threw me a curve by featuring a protagonist who, for most of the story, reminds me of Joe Btfsplk, the comic strip character who's followed everywhere by a rain cloud and is a terrible jinx. Poor Maz, she can't seem to do anything right and antagonizes or disappoints practically everyone in the small village during her temporary job as a relief vet. That was actually kind of refreshing and certainly took away the threat of sappiness that some vet-related books fall prey to. On the other hand, this black cloud seemed to go on too long and I sometimes found myself wondering if Maz would ever find at least one or two bright spots to relieve the angst.

Luckily, a hint of impending romance serves to lighten the mood and it's the kind of romance I like—understated, no sex (not that I have anything against sex, mind you, but I prefer it in the background), a good deal of will-he-won't-she, and an ending that's only moderately predictable. I also found the village denizens thoroughly entertaining even if a teeny bit stereotypical.

Then there are the animals. The village of Talyton St. George has two vet practices, one that does small animals only and one that does small and large. The large animals make several appearances but it's the small animals that steal the show and life and death are both present. Being a rational human being, I suspect anyone that reads a book like this is already an animal lover and the author does not disappoint us—a hamster named Harriet/Harry, a dog named Robbie, a cat named Tripod, a dog named Petra, a pony named Skye, a cat named Ginge, and so many others are all utterly charming and bring a smile to the reader's face along with occasional tears.

A shocking tragedy that endangers animals and humans alike brings the story to a turning point and I found the denouement most satisfying. The author could have easily ended things there but, happily, she didn't, and several sequels are already out in the UK with the fifth coming out in December 2012. I hope the US publisher will put these on a fast track because I'm eager to read them all.

Reviewed by Lelia Taylor, November 2012.

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## **Nickitopster says**

Bor-ing...except for the animals!

I wanted to like this book because 1) it was a new author for me and that's always a potentially good thing and 2) a book about a vet and animals -- I love animals! So I thought I'd give it a shot. Unfortunately, it was boring. I finished it only because I usually always finish books that I start but I found myself skimming vs. actually reading the text. None of the characters were really ones you wanted to root for...except for some of the cats and dogs! Sadly, unless you truly have nothing else to read and don't mind just filling in time, skip this book.

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## **Lindsey says**

I really wanted to like this book more than I did. I thought it was a great concept and I couldn't wait to read it when I picked it up on a whim the other day. I'm not a bit fan of books that are all drama and have nothing really good in them. They tend to make me a bit anxious. Nothing seemed to go right in this book, even at the end when things were starting to wind down. It just kind of made me depressed seeing bad thing after bad thing happen to Maz and nothing really good ever happening. Even when she started seeing Alex it wasn't a good thing because she thought he has a girlfriend at the time. I just wish that the author would have thrown in a couple lighter, happier moments and I probably would have loved this book as much as I was hoping to.

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## **Nicole says**

This was far and away from my typical genres but I enjoyed the story quite a bit. It's a bit personal I guess, I am able to relate to a city girl getting stuck in a small town. It's a happy little book despite all the little dramas, and probably any animal lover would be fond enough of it.

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## **Samantha says**

Maz Harwood decides to accept the post of locum at Otter House Small Animal Veterinary Clinic in the Devon market town of Talyton St George to help out college friend Emma Kendall.

First let's make one thing clear despite the blurb on the front cover by Katie Fforde "I absolutely loved this - it made me laugh and cry! Such a treat to read." This is not a funny book unless you find the idea of animals being put down funny nor does it stir emotions so deep that you cry except in frustration and annoyance nor is it a treat. Who needs enemies with friends like Emma Kendall not only did she leave Maz in charge of a knowingly financially crippled vet practice but also she inherited Frances the bitchy disloyal receptionist, non-paying clients and a rival vet practice intent on making her life hell.

It is full of trite dialogue not worthy of Barbara Cartland "If my father had caught you, he'd have had you shot - you and the dog." Maz lacks basic common sense I thought essential in a vet's skill set there she is having rescued numerous cats who are all in cages but she releases them into open fields saying we can come back and pick them up later! On at least two occasions animals are almost put in the freezer who aren't dead! The book is full of exaggerated and over the top moments the usual townie not knowing she needs wellies,

etc. Our hero Alex is okay but just non-descript and non-memorable. A woman who treats her animals appallingly in life suddenly in death everyone gathers at her funeral and alls forgiven.

I think I expect too much from romance books a story that doesn't annoy, characters that aren't so over the top and some funny moments but all of the opposite is the case. I certainly won't be visiting Talyton St George again any time soon.

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### **Teri-K says**

I didn't know this book was written in present tense, which I despise. A good book doesn't need a gimmick like that. Though this wasn't a good book. The MC isn't very bright or competent, the hero's actions make no sense and the best friend is totally irresponsible. With friends like that...

It wasn't worth finishing so I didn't.

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### **Maddie says**

Aside from the fun British humor and the interesting veterinary angle, the characters were flat and the storyline predictable. A good mindless, rainy-day read.

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### **Lori says**

I expected a chick-lit book and I got one with slightly more depth than normal chick-lit. I found the vet details interesting, due to my love of animals. The antagonists were predictable as was the romance. But, that's just what I was looking for and exactly what I expected. Very enjoyable quick read!

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### **Leah says**

I am a huge animal fan – particularly after we adopted our two dogs after moving into their house – so when I was browsing on the Bookseller website one night and I came across an article saying Cathy Woodman was going to be writing a new vets series, I knew I had to keep track of when the book was coming out as it sounded like a fantastic read. I was thrilled when it finally came up on Amazon for release and I was even happier when I was offered it to review.

I've never read any of Cathy's books before so I wasn't sure what to expect so it came as a nice surprise to be able to slip into the book so easily. The book starts just before Maz takes over as the locum at Otter House and sets the scene really well for Maz to come in and take over from Emma. We're then introduced to the residents of Talyton St George including Izzy, Nigel and Frances who also work at Otter House as well as the Fox-Giffords who are rivals of Otter House and have their own veterinary clinic Talyton Manor Vets and any residents who bring in their pets to Otter House. It creates quite the atmosphere within Talyton St George and the village is really brought to life with it's wonderful characters.

As I say, the characters of Talyton St George are all wonderful and all bring their personalities to life whenever they appear. With so many residents I did get a little confused at the beginning of the book, I must admit but as I got to know them all, it became easier to differentiate between who was who. Maz is the main character throughout the book and is also our narrator and I warmed to her immediately. It's clear from the off she had a difficult time before leaving London and I enjoyed seeing her overcome her heartbreak. I also thought the reasoning for why Maz became a vet hugely believable and also really heartwarming. I suppose the other main characters were Izzy, Frances and Nigel who worked alongside Maz at Otter House and I must admit that although I found all three prickly in the beginning, I also soon warmed to them. There was a big deal made of the rivalry between Otter House and Talyton Manor Vets but I found myself really liking Alex Fox-Gifford, the son of Old Fox-Gifford and owner of Talyton Manor Vets. He easily dispelled any myths I may have had about him being the bad guy of the piece and I enjoyed his rapport between himself and Maz.

Cathy Woodman really manages to bring the village of Talyton St George to life, as I've previously mentioned and although the way in which everyone knew everyone else's business, I fell in love with the village alongside Maz. If you're going to write a series then creating a fantastic setting is a must and Woodman has managed that with relative ease. Of course there was also lots of drama – as I said, everyone is in everyone else's pocket – but it was all handled within time and there was never too much at any given point. Since the book is about a vet's practice it's to be expected that not every animal treated will survive and there were a few cases that had me in tears, I must say. Woodman handled those scenes sensitively though and although the scenes did make me sad, I also understood why they had to happen. There's a huge plot twist three quarters of the way through the book that really shook everything up, too, and which I did not see coming – making my shock all the worse! I must mention the ending which really set the scene for the second book in the series which I'm eagerly anticipating!

Overall I really enjoyed reading *Trust Me, I'm A Vet*. It's rare for a chick lit book to feature animals – and definitely not as many as *Trust Me, I'm A Vet* features – which made my enjoyment all the better as I am a huge animal lover. This is a must-read for animal lovers and the cute cover should tell you all you need to know. October – and the second book in the series – cannot come soon enough for me, I really can't wait to read it!

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## **Amanda says**

*Trust Me, I'm a Vet* is most definitely a novel of two parts. I say that because the vet aspects and the animal stories were handled beautifully and practically brought me to tears on some occasions, whereas the "chick lit" part of the novel - the contrived way of bringing Maz to Otter House Veterinary Clinic, the romance, the larger-than-life characters - were clunky and clichéd.

I do think that Cathy Woodman has talent as a novelist, and I have no doubt that the other novels in this series will pick up in terms of quality, but I think that she needs to find some way of sitting the vet story within the chick lit story more naturally.

I did like Maz as a central narrator - she was warm and lovely, with an incredibly realistic voice. Self-deprecating and sad by turn, she gave a great anchor to the novel. Of course, I found Alex Fox-Gifford attractive, in the same manner as Hugo Beauchamp (Fiona Walker) and Rupert Campbell-Black (Jilly Cooper) are two of my favourite male protagonists. I do like a bad boy that you think might be tamed by the right woman!

However, the various personalities from the sleepy village got lost in amongst each other. I kept having to flick back and forth, to tell my Fifi's from my Cheryl's, which I thought was a weakness of the novel. And, frankly, I couldn't stand Emma - the vet who asks Maz to take over while she flits off on a six month trip round the world. Who on earth would leave their best friend to deal with the situation she has managed to put her vet's practice into?

Also, I found Trust Me, I'm a Vet to be both too realistic and not realistic enough! I say this because I like my chick lit to be escapist, and so having financial troubles as one of the central issues was a little too close to read life. And yet I found it ridiculous that Maz was so against living in Talyton, because we weren't given realistic reasons for her not wanting to stay.

So, definitely a mixed bag. However, the animal stories were \*so\* good that I am more than prepared to pick up the second book in the series to see if Woodman can find a way to reconcile both aspects into one awesome story. Therefore recommended tentatively - at the worst, it's a light read that goes well with Pimm's on a summer's afternoon.

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### **Jessica says**

Well, I finished this book quickly. I've been mired down in Game of Thrones as audiobooks (to/from work), which I enjoy, but seriously, what a way to start and end your day. I get home and Husband is like, "How was your day?", and I'm like, "The night is long and full of terrors." And by long, I mean 180 HOURS of audiobook stabbings and faces getting chewed off. This is why "City Girl, Country Vet" was such a delight. The biggest threats to our protagonist (city-girl-turned-country-vet) are the town grumpy-pants, who like to throw animal dung at her vet practice, the crazy cat ladies, who, let's face it, are just crazy, and the hunky vet next door, who's out to STEAL HER HEART. It's a little bit of Gray's Anatomy meets All Creatures Great and Small, produced by Disney. All in all, a refreshing change.

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### **Cheryl says**

Enjoyed the vet story. Not my cup of tea I want more Herriott and less romance.

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