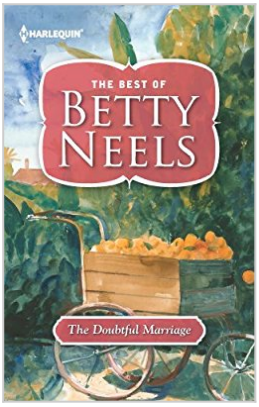

The Doubtful Marriage (Best of Betty Neels)

By Betty Neels

The Doubtful Marriage (Best of Betty Neels) By Betty Neels

"I shall not insult your intelligence by saying that I love you!"

When Rauwerd van Kempler proposed to Tilly, he made it clear that their marriage was to be a union of convenience, nothing more. It would bring him a wife to run his home and partner him on social occasions. And Tilly would get the security of a roof over her head and a man who could be depended upon for all things practical. But suddenly Tilly finds herself wanting more from her new husband—something that wasn't part of their sensible agreement….

The Doubtful Marriage (Best of Betty Neels)

By Betty Neels

The Doubtful Marriage (Best of Betty Neels) By Betty Neels

"I shall not insult your intelligence by saying that I love you!"

When Rauwerd van Kempler proposed to Tilly, he made it clear that their marriage was to be a union of convenience, nothing more. It would bring him a wife to run his home and partner him on social occasions. And Tilly would get the security of a roof over her head and a man who could be depended upon for all things practical. But suddenly Tilly finds herself wanting more from her new husband—something that wasn't part of their sensible agreement….

The Doubtful Marriage (Best of Betty Neels) By Betty Neels Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #198031 in eBooks
- Published on: 2013-05-01
- Released on: 2013-05-01
- Format: Kindle eBook

Editorial Review

About the Author
Romance readers around the world were sad to note the passing of Betty Neels in June 2001.Her career spanned thirty years, and she continued to write into her ninetieth year.To her millions of fans, Betty epitomized the romance writer.Betty’s first book, Sister Peters in Amsterdam,was published in 1969, and she eventually completed 134 books.Her novels offer a reassuring warmth that was very much a part of her own personality.Her spirit and genuine talent live on in all her stories.

The waiting-room was full and smelled of wet raincoats and old Mr Stokes's eucalyptus cough lozenges; he had chronic bronchitis and treated himself with a variety of cures from the chemist until he finally gave in and went to the doctor. He sat glowering at the people around him, his eyes on the green light over the surgery door; he was next in.

But when the light changed it flickered on and off, a signal for the girl sitting behind the desk in the corner to go into the surgery. She got up without haste to obey the summons, aware that Uncle Thomas wanted her to see to Mrs Spinks's varicose ulcer. She smiled at him as she went in; smiled, too, at his patient and urged that lady to the curtained-off cubicle behind his desk. Mrs Spinks eased her stout person on to the chair and extended her leg on to the stool provided for her.

'Busy this morning,' she commented. 'We keep you on the go, don't we, love?'

The girl was bending over her leg, dealing with it with kind, gentle hands. She was a very pretty young woman, with chestnut hair piled on top of her head, large brown eyes, a straight nose and a generous mouth. She was wearing a white overall with a blue belt buckled in silver and when she stood up it was apparent that she was tall and splendidly shaped.

She said in a pleasant voice, 'Oh, I think the doctor and I wouldn't know what to do with ourselves. When are you to come back, Mrs Spinks?'

She helped her to her feet and ushered her out through the door behind them, tidied the cubicle and went back into the surgery where her uncle was dealing with Mr Stokes. There was nothing for her there; Mr Stokes was barely half-way through his testy list of grievances while her uncle listened patiently, as he always did.

In the waiting-room a dozen pair of eyes watched her as she crossed to the desk again. The doctor's niece had been living in the village since she was a little girl; they all knew her well. A nice young lady she had grown into, they considered, and one of them as it were, despite her years at the London hospital where she had gone for her training. High time she was married; she and the squire's only son had been courting for the last year or two, and even though he was away from home a good deal that was time enough for them to get to know each other. At least, that was what the ladies of the village said. They held old-fashioned views about such matters—a year or so to get acquainted, another year's engagement and then a proper wedding in church with the banns called and bridesmaids. Anything less wasn't seemly.

Matilda smiled impartially upon them all, sifted through the patients' cards and counted heads. If Mr Stokes didn't finish his grumbling pretty smartly, morning surgery was going to be very behindhand, and that meant

that her uncle's morning round would be even later, which would lead inevitably to gobbled sandwiches and a cup of coffee before afternoon surgery. That did him no good at all; he worked too hard and long hours, and just lately she had begun to worry about him. He wasn't a young man and was all she had in the world; he had been father and mother to her since the day she had gone to live with him after her parents had been killed in a car accident.

Mr Stokes came out, still muttering, and she ushered the next patient in.

Finally the waiting-room was empty and she poked her head round the surgery door. 'Coffee in the sitting-room, Uncle. I'll clear up while you're on your round.'

He was sitting at his desk not doing anything, a tired, elderly man, short and stout and almost bald, with a cheerful, chubby face and bright blue eyes.

'A busy morning, Tilly.' He got up slowly. 'Another couple of months and it will be spring and we'll have nothing to do.'

'That'll be the day! But it will ease off soon—January and February are always busy, aren't they?' She urged him gently to the door. 'Let's have that coffee before it gets cold. Would you like me to drive? I can clear up in ten minutes.'

'Certainly not—almost all the visits are in the village anyway. You've got the list? There may be a call from Mrs Jenkins—the baby is due.'

They sat down on either side of the log fire and Tilly poured the coffee. The room was comfortable, albeit shabby, but the silver on the old-fashioned sideboard shone and the furniture was well polished. As she put down the coffee-pot, an elderly grey-haired woman came in.

'I'm off to the butchers,' she observed. 'A couple of lamb chops, Miss Matilda, and a nice steak and kidney pudding for tomorrow?'

'Sounds splendid, Emma. I'll give you a hand as soon as I've tidied the surgery.' As Emma trotted off, she added, 'I don't know how we'd manage without Emma, Uncle. I can't imagine life without her.' Which wasn't surprising, for Emma had been housekeeping for her uncle when she had gone to live with him.

She filled his coffee cup again and sat back, her feet tucked under her, planning what she would do in the garden once the weather had warmed up a little.

'How would it be…' she began, to be interrupted by her uncle.

'I forgot to tell you, I've had a letter from someone who was at St Judd's when I was there—oh, it must be ten years ago. He was my houseman for a time—a splendid fellow and very clever. We've kept up a casual friendship since then but we haven't met—he's a Dutchman and has a practice in Holland, I believe, though he comes over to England fairly frequently. He's in London now and wanted to know if he might call and see me. I phoned him last night and asked him for the weekend.'

It was her uncle's free weekend and Matilda had cherished one or two ideas as to what they would do with it. Now they were to be burdened by some elderly foreigner who would expect a continental breakfast and want coffee instead of tea. Matilda, who in all her twenty-six years had never set foot outside Great Britain, tended

to think of Europeans as all being cast in the same mould.

She said hastily, 'That'll be nice for you, Uncle. I'll get a room ready. When do you expect him?'

'Tomorrow, after lunch. Friday's clinic shouldn't be too full—there's not much booked so far, is there?—and I'll be free after that. You can entertain him if I get tied up.' He added a shade anxiously, 'He's a nice chap.'

'I'll make some scones,' said Matilda. The steak and kidney pudding would never do; on the other hand she could slip down to the butchers and get more steak… Calabrese and carrots, mused Matilda silently, and creamed potatoes; there was enough rhubarb forced under the old bucket at the end of the garden to make a pie. They could have beef on Saturday instead of Sunday; perhaps he would go on Sunday morning. 'Does he know this part of the country, Uncle?'

'I don't believe so. It'll make a nice change from London.'

She was left on her own presently to get one of the bedrooms in the roomy old house ready for the guest and go to the kitchen and tell Emma.

'Dutch?' questioned Emma, and sniffed. 'A foreign gentleman; probably have faddy ways with him.'

'Well, he oughtn't to be too bad,' mused Tilly, 'if he comes over to London fairly often, and Uncle said he does. I'll go and pull some leeks, shall I?' She pulled on an old jacket hanging behind the kitchen door. 'I'll get a few apples in at the same time—we might have an apple crumble…'

When she got back she saw to the waiting-room and the surgery, made sure that the room was ready for her uncle's guest and went down to the kitchen to help with lunch.

It was after morning surgery on the following day that the phone rang. It was Mr Jenkins, sounding agitated.

'It's the missus, started the baby and getting a bit worked up.'

It was Mrs Jenkins's fourth; Uncle Thomas wouldn't be back for half an hour at least and the Jenkins's farm was outside the village. Moreover, it seemed to Tilly that Mr Jenkins sounded as worked up as his wife.

'The doctor's out,' she said soothingly. 'I'll jump on my bike and come and have a look, shall I? I'll leave a message for Uncle; he shouldn't be long.' She heard Mr Jenkins's heavy sigh of relief as she hung up.

She warned Emma to let her uncle know as soon as he came in, fetched her midwifery bag, put on the elderly coat once more and cycled through the village to the farm.

A far cry from the clinically clean delivery rooms of the hospital, she thought, going into the cluttered warm kitchen. Mr Jenkins was hovering over a boiling kettle on the stove, under the impression that, since this was the common practice on the films in similar circumstances, it was the correct thing to do.

'Hello,' said Tilly cheerfully. 'Upstairs in bed, is she?'

He nodded. 'Carrying on, too. Good thing the kids have gone over to Granny's.'

'I'll go up, shall I?' Tilly went up the wooden staircase at the end of the passage and knocked on the half-open

door at the top. Mrs Jenkins was sitting on the bed, looking apprehensive.

She looked more cheerful when she saw Tilly, who put her bag down and sat down beside her, put a comforting arm round her and asked pertinent questions in a calm voice.

Presently she said, 'Well, I don't suppose it'll be long—shall I have a look? And how about getting into bed?'

The bouncing baby boy bawling his head off with satisfying vigour arrived with commendable speed. The doctor, arriving some ten minutes later, pronounced him to be in splendid health, declared his satisfaction as to Mrs Jenkins's well-being, observed that he might leave Tilly to make her patient comfortable, and left again to see the last of his patients.

It was almost one o'clock by the time Tilly had seen to Mrs Jenkins, bathed the baby, shared a pot of tea with the proud parents and got back on her bike. Mrs Jenkins's sister would be arriving very shortly and she would be in good hands.

'See you this evening,' called Tilly, and shot off down the lane.

She was a bit dishevelled by the time she reached home; there was a fierce wind blowing, and a fine, cold rain falling, and she had had to cycle into it. She propped the bike against the wall outside the kitchen door and hurried into the house, kicking off her shoes as she went and unbuttoning her coat. There was no one in the kitchen; she went through to the hall and opened her uncle's study door, still struggling with the coat. Her uncle was standing by his desk, and sitting in the big leather chair by the fire was a man. He got to his feet as she went in, an extremely tall man, broadshouldered and heavily built. Somewhere in the thirties, she guessed fleetingly, and handsome, with lint fair hair and heavy-lidded blue eyes. Surely not their visitor? But he was.

'Ah, Matilda, there you are.' Her uncle beamed at her, oblivious of her untidy person. 'Here is our guest, as you see, Rauwerd van Kempler.'

She said, 'How do you do,' in her quiet voice and had her hand engulfed in his large firm grasp. He greeted her pleasantly and she thought peevishly that he might have come at a more convenient time.

The peevishness sparked into temper at his bland, 'I'm afraid I have arrived at an awkward time.' His glance took in her shoeless feet and her damp face and her hair all over the place.

'Not at all,' said Tilly coolly. 'I got tied up with the Jenkins's baby.' She looked at her uncle. 'I hope you haven't been waiting for me to have lunch?'

'Well, dear, we had a good deal to talk about, you know, over a drink.' Her uncle studied her carefully. 'I expect you'd like to tidy yourself—I'll pour you a glass of sherry while you're doing it.'

Tilly, aware that the Dutchman was studying her as carefully as Uncle Thomas, took herself out of the room.

Very deliberately she did her hair and her face and changed into a skirt and sweater. On the way to the study she went to the kitchen to see if Emma needed any help. She didn't, so Tilly joined the two men, accepted the sherry and made polite conversation about the weather. Her uncle looked at her once or twice, puzzled by her aloofness; she was puzzled by it herself.

Dr van Kempler had an easy way which made conversation simple, and he had good manners; it was obvious that he and her uncle had a lot in common and plenty to talk about, but he was careful to keep the talk general and when Uncle Thomas began to reminisce, headed him off with unobtrusive ease.

The two of them went off to the study when they had had their coffee, leaving her to clear the table and help Emma with the washing up. She agreed that their visitor seemed a nice enough man. Nice wasn't the right word, she mused silently; a milk-and-water word which had no bearing upon his good looks and vast proportions. She would like to get to know him better, a wish instantly suppressed as disloyal to Leslie, who would be home for the weekend and expect her up at the Manor, ready for one of their lengthy walks in which he delighted whenever he was home. He was a rising young barrister, working hard in London, and they didn't see much of each other. They had known each other for years now and she couldn't remember when the idea of marrying him first entered her head. She supposed it was his mother who had planted it there—a rather intimidating matron who saw in Tilly a girl who could be moulded into the kind of wife she wanted to have for her son. Not quite the same background, she pointed out to her husband, but Dr Groves had a good solid country practice and a delightful house, set in grounds of an acre or two, most conveniently running alongside one of the boundaries of the Manor grounds. Nothing could be more suitable. She was proud of Leslie's work as a barrister; at the same time she was terrified that he would meet some quite unsuitable girl in London and marry her out of hand. Tilly, known to her since childhood, was eminently preferable.

Tilly had more or less accepted the situation. She liked Leslie, was fond of him without loving him; if she regretted giving up her hospital career in order to help her uncle she had never said so. She owed him a lot and he hadn't been well for some time; she was able to take some of his work on to her own shoulders and, although she didn't think about it very often, she supposed that she would continue to do so until he retired and she married Leslie. She was a fortunate girl, she knew that, but at the same time there was the disturbing thought, buried deep, that something was missing from her life: romance; and being a normal pretty girl, she wanted that. It was something she wouldn't get from Leslie; he would be a good husband and once they had settled down she would forget the romantic world she dreamed of. She was old enough to know better, she chided herself briskly, and, indeed, she wasn't quite sure what she wished for.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Linda Pillar:

Reading a e-book can be one of a lot of exercise that everyone in the world really likes. Do you like reading book thus. There are a lot of reasons why people love it. First reading a publication will give you a lot of new facts. When you read a publication you will get new information mainly because book is one of several ways to share the information as well as their idea. Second, reading through a book will make a person more imaginative. When you looking at a book especially fictional works book the author will bring you to imagine the story how the figures do it anything. Third, you could share your knowledge to other people. When you read this The Doubtful Marriage (Best of Betty Neels), it is possible to tells your family, friends in addition to soon about yours guide. Your knowledge can inspire average, make them reading a reserve.

Diane Dockins:

Playing with family in a very park, coming to see the sea world or hanging out with buddies is thing that

usually you may have done when you have spare time, in that case why you don't try issue that really opposite from that. Just one activity that make you not feeling tired but still relaxing, trilling like on roller coaster you already been ride on and with addition of knowledge. Even you love The Doubtful Marriage (Best of Betty Neels), you could enjoy both. It is fine combination right, you still need to miss it? What kind of hang-out type is it? Oh seriously its mind hangout fellas. What? Still don't get it, oh come on its identified as reading friends.

Brenda Anderson:

You can spend your free time to study this book this publication. This The Doubtful Marriage (Best of Betty Neels) is simple to deliver you can read it in the park, in the beach, train as well as soon. If you did not have much space to bring typically the printed book, you can buy often the e-book. It is make you quicker to read it. You can save the book in your smart phone. And so there are a lot of benefits that you will get when one buys this book.

Lauren Miner:

In this era which is the greater individual or who has ability in doing something more are more valuable than other. Do you want to become one among it? It is just simple strategy to have that. What you should do is just spending your time very little but quite enough to get a look at some books. One of several books in the top record in your reading list is actually The Doubtful Marriage (Best of Betty Neels). This book and that is qualified as The Hungry Hillsides can get you closer in growing to be precious person. By looking right up and review this publication you can get many advantages.

Read The Doubtful Marriage (Best of Betty Neels) By Betty Neels for online ebook

The Doubtful Marriage (Best of Betty Neels) By Betty Neels Free PDF d0wnl0ad, audio books, books to read, good books to read, cheap books, good books, online books, books online, book reviews epub, read books online, books to read online, online library, greatbooks to read, PDF best books to read, top books to read The Doubtful Marriage (Best of Betty Neels) By Betty Neels books to read online.

Online The Doubtful Marriage (Best of Betty Neels) By Betty Neels ebook PDF download

The Doubtful Marriage (Best of Betty Neels) By Betty Neels Doc

The Doubtful Marriage (Best of Betty Neels) By Betty Neels Mobipocket

The Doubtful Marriage (Best of Betty Neels) By Betty Neels EPub

KX79WMC0UYO: The Doubtful Marriage (Best of Betty Neels) By Betty Neels