

Making Marion: Where's Robin Hood When You Need Him?

Beth Moran

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In this humorous slice of life, a potpourri of domestic discontent, Cinderella complex, and cold hearted reality leaves unforgettable memories. Beth Moran takes liberties in her portrayal of a shy, insecure heroine in *Making Marion*, creating a character so believably human that she barely qualifies for fictional status.

Marion Miller is searching for the Sherwood Forest visitor center while grieving for the father she lost in childhood, and in the process, she finds employment at the Peace and Pigs campground in Nottinghamshire, England. She meets a dysfunctional family, falls for one guy, fights off another, and reluctantly reunites with her mother, a downtrodden woman she does not respect. All the trappings of a situation comedy, but this cynical story approaches life and death with a matter-of-fact stance and a sardonic smile. Some books cannot be forced into a predetermined niche, and this unexpected novel is one.

Moran, a native of England, has focused on Marion's personality outside of her relations with men. This special heroine comes across with idiosyncrasies, faults, and virtues. A three-dimensional view, along with Moran's ability to refrain from cardboard development in "making" Marion, will place this debut novel outside any category.

Told in the first person, its candid delivery enhances a fly-on-the-wall perspective. "The problem with living for eight years with a boyfriend who treats you like a pigeon he rescued from the side of the road ... is that you are prone to fall for the first man who comes along and tells you something different."

Marion's rocky relationship with Jake, a manipulative charmer, and her affection for Reuben, a sophisticated lover, brings to light the challenges contemporary women face in making reasonable choices under pressure. Moran's work is a mix of lighthearted romance and solemn drama.

JULIA ANN CHARPENTIER (Fall 2014)

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