



The Gillyvors

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A century or so ago there lived at Heap Hollow Cottage, situated near Fellburn in County Durham, a man and a woman and their six children. By all appearances they were a close and loving family. Yet across the happy facade lay a shadow that had lengthened and darkened with the passing years. For the father and mother were not husband and wife, which meant that, to the narrow and bigoted minds of the Victorian rural community, the offspring of Nathaniel Martell and Maria Dagshaw were base-born gillyvors - in country parlance, bastards.

Anna, the elder daughter, was entering womanhood resolved to face the legacy of her birth and the challenges it must continue to bring her. Her journey through life would not be an easy one and only her inborn courage and zest for life would sustain her quest for fulfilment and happiness.

The Gillyvors Details

Date : Published July 2nd 1991 by Corgi (first published 1990)

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Author : Catherine Cookson

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From Reader Review The Gillyvors for online ebook

Teryl says

I enjoyed this one, mainly because the story covered how much our lives are influenced by our background and prejudice.

Sandra Shannon says

Haven't read Catherine Cookson for years. Have always enjoyed historical novels and this one was no exception.

Barbra says

A really good book - one of her best.

Back Cover Blurb:

Set in County Durham 100 years ago, this is the story of Nathaniel Martell, Maria Dagshaw and their six children - bastard offspring or gillyvors. The book is about the children's quest to resolve the legacy of their birth. This book has everything - family trauma, love, loss, hatred and shame.

Alison Chastain says

Another wonderful book by Cookson

I loved the humanity of the book

Catherine Cookson has a way of drawing you in, you can't wait to find out the end, but don't want it to end. I would recommend this to anyone who enjoys stories of triumph over adversity.

Helen says

Nineteenth century England with all of it's people, their love, hate and sheer bigotry of those who "don't fit the mold"! A wonderful read.

Shirley Revill says

I read this book a while ago and really enjoyed it. Always enjoyed the stories that where written by Catherine Cookson and this one didn't disappoint. Recommended.

LittleBookDruid says

It really followed the rule, starting small, slowly and gradually making to upwards, then an insane climax and everyone happy at the end. I really loved the end. Because somehow I got the feeling that Anna won't be able to marry Timothy. Somehow she will end up in a bottomless pit of depression in the end. Nothing good will happen to her. But at the end, it awed me how everything turned out in Anna's favour. So no matter how harsh the story was, as the saying goes: All's well that end's well.

Timothy and Simon were the characters I liked the most in the story. Even though Simon acted like a jerk in some parts. And even though I liked Nathaniel in the whole narrative, at the end his will disgusted me. How can parents become so selfish. Its hard for me to even believe those things. But yet, there truly are parents like him out there. And Maria was no different either, wanting her daughter to vow to ruin her life to look after her father. Those two were nuisance. :)

Miriam says

This was an interesting book to reread. Cookson was illegitimate herself, so it is interesting to see how she portrays the family of "gillyvors" in the book. On the one hand, you have the intolerant and sometimes criminal villagers and neighbors who refuse to accept the family, but on the other, you have the heroine's parents, who have defied all for true love, but are actually pretty self-centered and clueless. It's more nuanced than the portrayal that I've seen in some other books.

So why only two stars? Because in the end the heroine, who has said time and time again that she will never do what her parents did, offers to become the hero's mistress. He rescues her with an honorable engagement, of course, but the fact she offers undermines everything else she has done in the book.

Curlyhair says

Loved anything by Catherine Cookson, way back. All good stories.

Joan Hill says

if you like Catherine Cookson books you won't be disappointed with this one.

Emily Stone says

This was a long book and to begin with I felt for the whole family but as it progressed my empathy went out

to their children, especially Anne who had the brunt of everyone including her fathers selfishness. But she came out better than them all.

A good read

Brooke DEMING HARRIS says

it was a mean as book bro. but it was kinda sad because some people are very naughty. naughty naughty.

1. i was bored and had nothing to read
2. a book written before 1980. it is very old
3. i couldnt find anything on this book *SIGH*
4. people used to be very mean if you were born a bastard
5. SImon was my faourite characeter because even though anna was born a bastard and her parents were a disgrace he still loved her and treated her as an equal.

i liiikkeeeee paaancccaakkkeeessssss <3

Angel Born says

best book ever... i can read it a thousand times

OOOOHHHH mr timothy is the best gentleman of all time.

and catherine cooksone is the best authour before me.

Louise Green says

It started of well and intriguing, but somewhere close to the end it escalated into a lot of events that I couldn't relate to or for that matter appreciate reading. I know the book wouldn't have been the same without them so I don't think they should be left out, lets just say the book wasn't really my cup of tea.. However I couldn't stop reading and it kept me constantly on my tiptoes and I wasn't able to put the book down. I'm well impressed by all the emotions conveyed in the book that effected me so strongly and didn't leave me untouched. But I'd love to read something else by Catherine Cookson and hopefully acknowledge the great writer she is said to be.

Nicole Silver says

I enjoyed this, it was right up my street. Another rags to riches story, which I love. The father was rather mean to Anna, and she felt hurt when he decided to do something about his will. I was surprised at her

refusal of one gentleman, but the one she chose was a better talker. More in tune with her. She describes the way of life of a large family very well.
