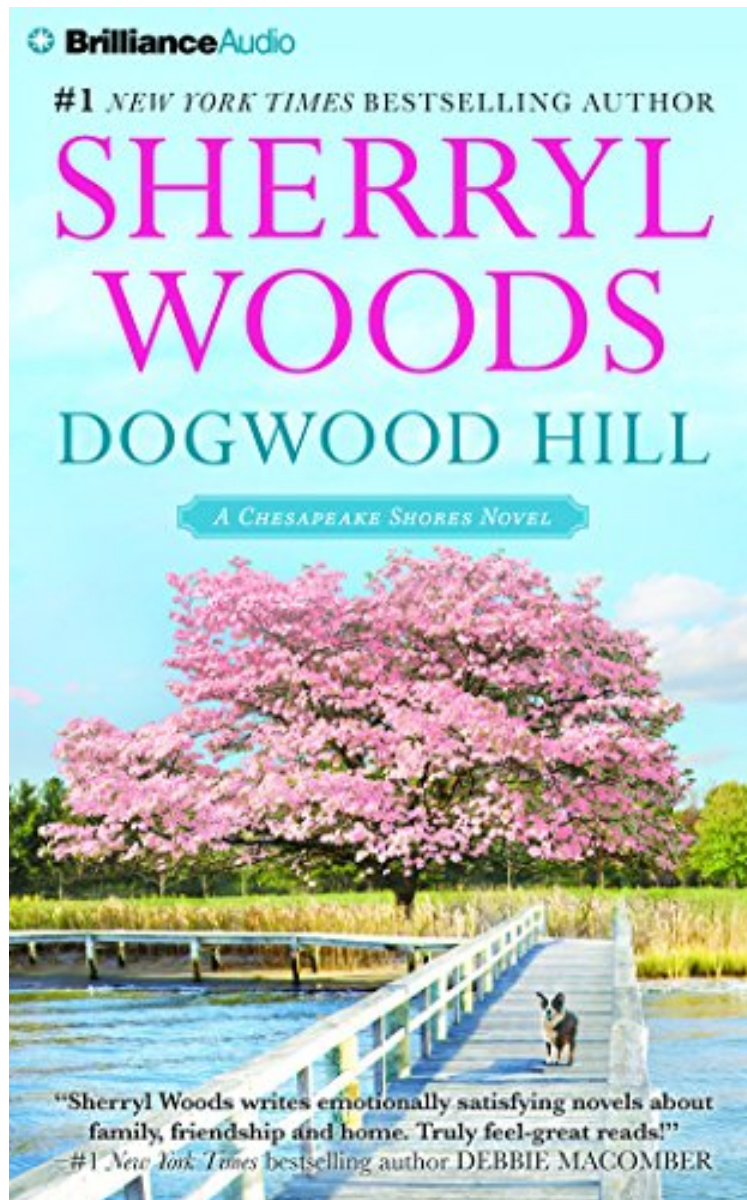


[Read ebook] Dogwood Hill (Chesapeake Shores Series)

Dogwood Hill (Chesapeake Shores Series)

Sherryl Woods

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Sherryl Woods : Dogwood Hill (Chesapeake Shores Series) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Dogwood Hill (Chesapeake Shores Series):

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. New Chesapeake Shores residents fall into the O'Brien matchmaking web By Margaret Thomas I love the Chesapeake Shores novels! This one, the story of Aidan, the new high school football coach, and Liz, pet rescuer and local pet shop owner, is no exception. Each of them has been keeping a

serious, life changing secret, and also, or maybe because of, they each have serious trust issues. The O'Briens, the large, loving, meddling, founding family of Chesapeake Shores surrounds both of them with love, friendship and support as they work through their problems to embrace the love they have found for each other. I highly recommend! In fact, I think I'm going to reread the series!

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Secrets kept may keep them apart

By Alexia Janie Evans "Dogwood Hill (A Chesapeake Shores Novel - Book 12) by Sherryl Woods is the latest book of her Chesapeake Shores series. It is a book that can be read alone or as part of the the series. I personally recommend the series but if you were to pick this book up it is very easy to follow along with the story. It is a continuation of the O'Brien family saga in the small town of Chesapeake Shores. We meet Liz March who is a widow. She runs the local pet supply store. Liz is a good person with a big heart, especially when it comes to her fur babies. She is however hiding behind a secret and that is holding her back from having another long term relationship with any man. Aiden Mitchell is retired from pro football after an injury leaves him unable to play the game. He comes to Chesapeake Shores to take over the coaching duties of the local high school football team. The team has never won a game, and Aiden is looking to change that. He also comes to town in search of some answers. Is Thomas O'Brien really is father? If so then why did he leave Aiden's Mother to raise him alone? It doesn't help that Thomas is on his third marriage and he has a younger son with his current wife. The secrets between these two cause a riff. Can they overcome those secrets? Will they be able to trust each other enough to open themselves to love? You'll need to read the story for yourself and find out those answers. I loved this book, and look forward to the continuing saga of the O'Brien clan.

4 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Good read

By MysteryKat This is the latest in this series about the O'Brien family of Chesapeake Shores. I've read them all and have enjoyed each book, the characters, and best of all the setting. Living in Maryland this series has had a special place in my heart. The author does an excellent job of injecting stories of family members without making it sound like a script. What disappointed me was the main characters taking the dog, who was an important part of the story, deciding to go out for a meal, breakfast I think. The dog is placed in his crate and left in the car while they ate. This is a newly published story so I was taken by surprise this would be even considered. It had been established an event occurred on Memorial Day so it was early June. June in Maryland can be pretty hot but even so it is NEVER acceptable to leave an animal locked in a car!! This part of the story doesn't affect the outcome but it was a red flag for me and the lack of thought to the perils of leaving an animal in a locked car. Don't let this be a deterrent for reading the latest book in the series. I was just caught off guard by such an egregious act in a newly written book.

#1 New York Times bestselling author Sherryl Woods tests the strength of the beloved O'Briens and proves that love and family can always triumph! When former pro football quarterback Aidan Mitchell comes to Chesapeake Shores to take a high school coaching job, he's embraced by the town especially the O'Briens. But Aidan has a secret that could alter all their lives. For wounded Liz March, who's trying for a fresh start after a devastating betrayal, taking a chance on Aidan may be more than she can handle. Her heart, however, refuses to listen to her head. But just when forever seems within reach, Aidan's secret threatens to change everything. Does this tempting stranger who's made her feel alive have the power to convince her to look beyond the past and reach for the future?

"Sherryl Woods writes emotionally satisfying novels about family, friendship and home. Truly feel-great reads!" -#1 New York Times bestselling author Debbie Macomber "Woods' readers will eagerly anticipate her trademark small-town setting, loyal friendships, and honorable mentors as they meet new characters and reconnect with familiar ones in this heartwarming tale." -Booklist on Home in Carolina "Woods is a master heartstring puller." -Publishers Weekly on Seaview Inn "In this sweet, sometimes funny and often touching story, the characters are beautifully depicted, and readers...will...want to wish themselves away to Seaview Key." -RT Books on Seaview Inn "Woods...is noted for appealing character-driven stories that are often infused with the flavor and fragrance of the South." -Library Journal "A reunion story punctuated by family drama, Woods's first novel in her new Ocean Breeze series is touching, tense and tantalizing." -RT Books on Sand Castle Bay "A whimsical, sweet scenario...the digressions have their own charm, and Woods never fails to come back to the romantic point." -Publishers Weekly on Sweet Tea at Sunrise "Skillfully introducing readers to The Devaneys, Sherryl Woods scores another winner." -RT Books on Sean's Reckoning

About the Author With her roots firmly planted in the South, Sherryl Woods has written many of her more than 100 books in that distinctive setting, whether in her home state of Virginia, her adopted state, Florida, or her much-adored South Carolina. Sherryl is best known for her ability to creating endearing small town communities and families. She is the New York Times and USA Today bestselling author of over 75 romances for Silhouette Desire and Special Edition. Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. Standing outside Chesapeake Shores High School on his first visit to this quaint small town on the Chesapeake Bay, Aidan concluded he'd never seen a more beautiful sight in his life. Not the hillside covered with a forest of flowering pink and white dogwood trees, though that was spectacular and unexpected in the middle of town. Not the nearby bay, which was sparkling in the spring sun, though it made him yearn to go fishing despite the fact it was something he'd done only once before in his life. Not even the state-of-the-art football stadium with its pro-level electronic scoreboard, its lush grass and impressive permanent bleachers, all of

which should have knocked his socks off as the school's prospective coach. Nope, what caught his eye was the slender woman with her blond hair tousled, her laugh carrying on the breeze as she chased a puppy that was trying valiantly to herd a flock of unhappy Canada geese. Just then the dog, some sort of black, white and brown Aussie shepherd mix from the looks of him, spotted Aidan, bounded over and tried to corral him into joining the geese in the nice tight group he was apparently envisioning in his instinctive puppy brain. With a black patch of fur around one eye, he bore a striking resemblance to a pirate, causing Aidan's smile to spread. "Stop it! Archie, that's enough," the woman commanded, fighting hard, but unsuccessfully, to swallow another laugh. "Sit. Be nice." Archie obediently sat, tongue lolling, and gave Aidan a hopeful look. "I'm so sorry," she said. "He got away from me." "No problem," Aidan replied. "Actually it is a problem. The town has very strict leash laws," she explained as she snapped Archie's leash to his collar, "except for the dog park on the other side of the hill. It's fenced in, so the dogs are allowed to run free, but Archie here spotted the geese, instinct kicked in and the second someone opened the gate, he took off on a mission to round them up. He thinks it's his job." "He's very good at it. Where do I fit in? Not being a goose, that is." When she smiled, amusement setting off sparks in her deep blue eyes, it quite simply took his breath away. "Oh, he thinks anything that moves is fair game," she confided. "He's very diligent." Aidan, who'd never owned a pet, regarded the dog warily. "What happens now? If I move, does he try to snag me by the hand to drag me back?" "I think you're safe for the moment, though if you happen to have a dog treat in your pocket, you'll make a friend for life." "Sorry. No treats." As if he understood, Archie stared at him dolefully, then inched closer, finally butting Aidan's hand. "He'll take a good head rub, instead," she told him. "Don't worry. He really is harmless. I've only had him for a couple of weeks, but he's been a real gentleman. His owner had to give him up because he was too energetic for her, so he's looking for a new person and a new purpose." "Thus the geese," Aidan guessed. "Exactly." "Are you his new person?" "Oh, no," she said at once. "I already have two dogs and a cat, none of which I intended to have, but people know I take in strays and try to find new homes for them. When something like this comes up, they bring their pets to me. Cordelia's grandchildren meant well when they gave her a pet for her birthday, but they didn't really think about her being close to eighty. It happens a lot. People think the elderly need companionship, but they really have no idea which animal might be best suited for the job." "And you do?" "I'd like to think so. Cordelia now has a beautiful cat whose owner died. Fluffy sits in her lap and purrs. They're both content with their new arrangement." "What about the three animals still with you?" he asked, sensing that she was a woman for whom compassion probably overruled good sense on many occasions. "I'm afraid I got attached," she admitted with a rueful expression. "I'm Elizabeth March, by the way. Most people call me Liz. I own Pet Style on Main Street a few doors up the street from Sally's Caf. I opened just before Christmas last year." Aidan couldn't stop the grin that threatened. "Pet Style?" he repeated. "I had no idea pets were fashion conscious." He glanced pointedly at Archie as he spoke. The dog was happily sniffing a buttercup. His leather collar looked as if it had been given a good chew on more than one occasion. The serviceable, but unremarkable, leash was equally worn. "They're not, but their owners sure are," Liz said. "You'd be amazed. Just last week I sold a fancy rhinestone-studded designer dog collar for \$150. I'd expected to be stuck with it, but thought I should give a couple of highend items a try. Sure enough, a tourist grabbed it up an hour after I put it on display." Aidan shook his head in astonishment. On a beginning coach's salary, he'd be lucky to buy dog food and pay vet bills. Thankfully, he'd spent frugally and invested wisely during his couple of years as a pro football player. When he glanced back at Liz, she was regarding him speculatively. "You wouldn't, by any chance, be looking for a dog?" she inquired, turning those bright blue eyes on him in a way that would probably get most men to agree to do just about anything she requested. "He's up to date on all his shots and he's housebroken. Best of all, Archie already likes you." Archie was, indeed, happily sprawled across his feet, apparently having concluded that he was no longer going to be allowed to run free, so Aidan shouldn't be allowed to budge, either. He promptly perked up at the mention of his name. For half an instant, Aidan was actually tempted to say yes, if only to make this woman happy. Fortunately, given his circumstances, common sense kicked in. "You're very good at finding new homes for your strays, aren't you?" he said. "So it seems," she said, beaming. "Sorry. Not this time. I don't have room in my apartment for a dog this size, and if those paws are the indicators they're supposed to be, Archie here is bound to get bigger. I may be moving soon, anyway." "To Chesapeake Shores, not away," she said, as if it was a fact he'd already revealed. "You're going to be the new football coach." Aidan just stared at her. "Are you psychic, too?" "Nope, but the town loves its team, and the word on the street is that an ex-pro player is going to be coaching next season. Everyone has high hopes we'll stop being the laughingstock of the region. Since you look like a jock and you were standing out here admiring the stadium, I just put two and two together." He gave her an amused look. "How does a jock look?" Color tinted her cheeks. "You know, fit, well toned." He laughed. "I see. Well, I am Aidan Mitchell," he confirmed. "And I'm interviewing for the job, but I don't have it yet." "Oh, you'll get it," she said confidently. "Everyone's very excited. You'll be the second pro player in town. Of course, Mack Franklin grew up here, and he only played professionally for a season before becoming a sports columnist, but the town loves him. He started a local weekly newspaper a couple of years back. It's a very tough business, if you know anything about newspapers these days, but he's beaten the odds because it's the best way to find out what's going on in town." She paused for breath, then amended, "Aside from sitting in Sally's and listening to the gossip, anyway. At least Mack tries to bring some journalistic credibility into play." After growing up

in New York, Aidan was astonished by this insight into small-town ways. Or perhaps it was just Liz March, who chattered like a magpie. "Does Mack know that his competition is a local caf?" "Of course he does. Sally's his best source. But mostly he'd be the first to find out what's going on, anyway. He's married to an O'Brien, which makes him practically royalty in Chesapeake Shores." Aidan instinctively stiffened at the comment, though he hoped she hadn't noticed. "Why is that?" "You don't know the town's history?" she asked, looking startled. "Is it a criteria for living here?" he asked, mostly in jest. "Do they give a test at the Realtor's office?" "Not really," she said, apparently taking him seriously. "It's just a local legend, so people tend to know it. As I understand it, the land originally belonged to an O'Brien who came here straight from Ireland. His family farmed it for years. A couple of decades ago, three of his descendants Mick, Jeff and Thomas O'Brien built Chesapeake Shores from scratch on that land." She paused for breath, then added, "Mick's the famous architect who designed the town. He might not be an elected official, but his word still carries a lot of weight around here. Jeff manages properties and sells real estate." Eyes twinkling, she gave Aidan a pointed look. "So it wouldn't really surprise me if he does spread the story himself, though I imagine he'd consider testing potential residents to be ill-mannered." Aidan chuckled. "Touch." "There's another brother, too. Thomas is a well-respected environmentalist who runs a foundation that fights to protect the bay." Aidan's brain seemed to shut down at the casual mention of Thomas O'Brien. Maybe coming to Chesapeake Shores had been a huge mistake, after all, if just hearing that name made him flinch. He'd gotten a tip about the coaching job and been drawn here as if fate were stepping in, but now all he felt was the familiar bitterness and anger crawling up the back of his throat. That it might be unwarranted was a concept he struggled with from time to time. He suddenly realized that Liz was studying him with a worried expression. "Are you okay? Did I say something that upset you?" "No, not a thing, I'm fine," Aidan assured her. "Thanks for the background information." He deliberately took a quick glance at his watch, then added, "I need to get going." He turned and quickly walked off in the direction of his car. "Aidan!" Liz's concerned voice carried on the breeze. "The school office is the other way." He gave her a wave of acknowledgment and kept right on going, thankful there was no set time for his interview. He'd intentionally scheduled it that way, promising to call once he arrived in town and got settled into the room the school had reserved for him at The Inn at Eagle Point. Maybe after a shower and some food and a little more time to think about what he was doing, he'd be ready to make that call. Or maybe not. It was a big decision, deciding whether to stay and take a risk, or go. If his friends could see him now, they'd be stunned by his indecisiveness. On the field, he'd been a quick-thinking quarterback, reading a defense and making split-second adjustments that determined whether a play succeeded or failed. He hadn't struggled for even a minute with his decision to retire when he'd realized that an injury had slowed him down, ruining his effectiveness on the field. He'd always wanted to coach at the high school level. He'd gotten his teaching credentials in college in anticipation that this day would eventually come. At the end of his season last November following a second knee injury that had taken him out for the year, he'd made the call. Sure, it had come a lot sooner than he'd anticipated, but fate was funny that way. He wouldn't be one of those players who hung on past his expiration date. But this decision? This was different. This was a twenty-eight-year-old man trying to decide not only whether a job and town might be a good fit but if the time was right to meet his biological father Thomas O'Brien for the very first time. Liz held a cup of coffee in her hands to warm them as she sat in a booth at Sally's with Bree O'Brien Collins, who owned Flowers on Main, the store next door to hers. Bree was also a playwright who ran a local theater, but she still loved spending the occasional day making flower arrangements, especially for special occasions. Today she'd been so busy with the decorations for a baby shower that they'd postponed their morning coffee break until afternoon when Liz's high school helper could cover for her. "I'm telling you, it was very strange," she told Bree. "We were just talking. I should say I was chattering away, filling him in on this and that." She regarded Bree with a rueful expression. "I really do have to stop doing that, going on and on, I mean." Bree's grin suggested she was doing it again. "Okay. Sorry. I'll get to the point. I promise. I'd tried to convince him to take Archie, but he wasn't interested. Then I admitted that I'd guessed who he was. We talked about the job for a couple of minutes, or maybe I did all the talking. Anyway, he took off, and not toward the school, as if he'd realized he was late for a meeting or something. He headed in the opposite direction." "Well, that is weird," Bree said. "Maybe he doesn't like dogs. Archie is a sweetheart, but not everybody notices that when he's trying to herd them." Liz chuckled. "Yes, I'm familiar with the reaction. The poor thing can't help himself, though. But the Archie issue was resolved. Aidan wasn't interested, and that was that for me. Pets belong with people who'll love and appreciate them. Actually I was filling him in on local history, how O'Briens built the town, when he got this kind of glazed look on his face, then took off." "So you think his reaction had something to do with the O'Briens?" Bree asked, frowning. "It felt that way, but how could that be it? Everybody loves your family." Bree made a face. "That's a slight exaggeration. Dad's made his share of enemies over the years. Heck, for a long time, he didn't even get along all that well with his own brothers. He, Jeff and Thomas clashed over every detail when they were building the town. It's only recently, thanks to my grandmother's determination, that peace and family harmony have been mostly restored. If you force people to sit around the same table on Sunday long enough, sooner or later they have to start talking civilly. I doubt Nell envisioned just how long that process would take, though." Liz nodded distractedly. She was still perplexed by Aidan's behavior. "Then I must have misread his reaction," she said eventually. "I guess we'll see when word spreads about whether he's taken the job at the high school." "Well, whatever

Aidan feels about the O'Briens, it's one-sided," Bree said. "Dad is determined to get him hired as the coach. He practically handpicked him from the list of candidates, so there's no bad blood there, at least on his side. And you know Mick O'Brien. When he wants something, he usually gets it." Bree sat back and studied Liz with a speculative expression. "So, what was he like? Aidan, I mean." Liz blushed under the friendly scrutiny. "I suppose he was good-looking in that well-built, jock way." She wished she hadn't noticed just how toned and fit he seemed to be, or the way his eyes had sparked with wit, or the dimple that occasionally appeared in his cheek when he was teasing her. "In other words, you wouldn't kick him out of bed," Bree concluded. Liz frowned at the lighthearted remark. "I wouldn't let him in my bed," she corrected, though she hoped he wouldn't make a liar of her. She had a feeling he could. To bolster her resolve she reminded both of them, "It's way too soon for me to be even thinking like that."