



The Sweetest Thing

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Anne "Perri" Singleton's world is defined by the security of family, the camaraderie of friends at an exclusive Atlanta girls' school, and an enviable social life. She isn't looking for new friends when Mary Dobbs Dillard arrives from Chicago. Besides, "Dobbs," the passionate and fiercely individualistic daughter of an itinerant minister, is her opposite in every way.

But just as the Great Depression collides disastrously with Perri's well-ordered life, friendship blossoms--a friendship that will be tested by jealousy, betrayal, and family secrets....

With her endearing characters and poignant storytelling, Atlanta native Elizabeth Musser vividly re-creates the charm of her beloved city amid the poverty and plenty that shaped the 1930s.

The Sweetest Thing Details

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Author : Elizabeth Musser

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From Reader Review The Sweetest Thing for online ebook

Elizabeth says

Hello! I'm the author and I just wanted to make one correction. Evidently someone has written that 'The Sweetest Thing' is part of 'The Swan House' series. It is not. It is a stand alone novel that takes place in the 1930s Atlanta, but you do not have to have read 'The Swan House' or 'The Dwelling Place' to understand the story in 'The Sweetest Thing'.

Thanks to all of you for your comments. Blessings and happy reading!

Elizabeth

Brandy says

The Sweetest Thing by Elizabeth Musser is lovely novel with all the poise of a Southern lady, simply sophisticated and always tempering the right words with grace and charm.

Musser provides an outstanding cast of characters to surround the two principals, Anne Perrin Singleton and Mary Dobbs Dillard, who drive the story with their alternating POV. The unlikely friends, opposites in most every way, gradually influence each other over the course of the novel which causes various conflicts with those closest to them. Against the backdrop of 1930's Atlanta in a society segment not yet fully impacted by the Depression, Musser layers a rich story of friendship, faith, and God's providence.

I was moved to laughter and tears repeatedly, and when I reached the final fifty pages, I was torn between wanting to know how it all tied together and not wanting it to end. I believe this book has earned a place on my short list of favorites. Highly recommended.

Laura says

I let out a sigh of satisfaction and contentment as I finished reading the last page of this book, realizing that YA historical fiction is fast becoming one of my favourite genres. I simply loved this beautiful book, enjoying it to the point that I did not want it to end.

It takes place in Atlanta, Georgia in 1933 during the Depression. Seventeen year-old Mary Dobbs, daughter of an itinerant preacher from Chicago, arrives poor but full of life and religious zeal to live with her wealthy, generous aunt so she can attend a prestigious school. Anne Perri, whose family suffers a tragedy and great financial loss is befriended by Dobbs. Their friendship and their consequent transformation as individuals is the crux of this story, but there is so much more!

There are memorable characters in this book, well-drawn out and believable. My favourite were Dobbs, Coolie, and Parthenia, the eight-year-old black servant girl. These girls had spunk and were not afraid to speak their minds. From the first page, the author easily kept my interest with a good set of characters, a great plot and a setting she easily brought to life so that I could see and feel the desperation of both the dirt-poor and the wealthy as they dealt with the life-changing events of the Depression years. Both Dobbs and Perri had to come to terms with what was important in life versus what was desirable.

This book deals with various worthy themes: faith in God, dealing with financial loss, grieving over the loss of a close family member, sickness, friendships, forgiveness, social status, and racial segregation. As I was reading I couldn't help thinking this story would make a good movie series for PBS's Masterpiece. The setting was so interesting and I learned a few things about the Depression years in Midwest and Southern US, such as the Alms Houses, the Dust Bowl, and the traditions of high school kids in the 1930s, like pop-calling (when boys popped in to see the girls at their homes) and the splendour of their sorority dances.

Even though I didn't agree with the frenetic preaching of the evangelists of the "Sawdust Trail" at revival tent meetings, I did appreciate the wholesome goodness of Dobbs' family and their zeal to help the poor and those in need of faith-strengthening. The author managed to write a good story where the characters had to find a balance in their lives because extremes (whether poor or wealthy) did not lead to happiness, but rather faith in God led to true happiness.

This book is a clean read, and I recommend it to teens and adults interested in a good book with teens in the 1930s. Many of the issues teens faced back then are still relevant today. This is a truly enjoyable book that I will pass on to my daughter as she gets older.

Cookielover says

"The Sweetest Thing" pushed me into the different lives of Perri and Dobbs and still hasn't let go. In a mysterious story of friendship, God's love, as well as a healthy dose of young love, this book was absolutely perfect. It made me laugh, cry, stare at the book in shock, and feel warm inside. There is nothing about this book I didn't like and the characters are real and honest and I love them all (except the bad guys, of course).

Bonnie says

Review Originally Posted at: <http://www.handsandhome.ca/2011/09/th...>

The Sweetest Thing was my first introduction to Elizabeth Musser's writing and I can tell you without a doubt, that I have been missing out! This novel is filled with rich and vivid descriptions that didn't just set the stage for a novel but really brought 1930s Atlanta Society to life. Reading this book, the oppressive heat of the Atlanta summer and the suffocating weight of simply surviving during the depression – or trying to retain one's previous lifestyle became very real for me. This book was so beautifully written that I literally could not put it down.

When I started reading The Sweetest Thing I didn't realize that it was a continuation to the book The Swan House and I am really looking forward to reading about the Singletons before they fell on hard times. I can only imagine what the family dynamic would have been like as well as what kind of girl Perri would have been. Even though this book was not the first in the series, it had absolutely no impact on my reading experience. I had no idea that this was not a stand alone book until I read the goodreads.com description.

The story itself was fantastic; I loved the concept and found the relationships between these families and their friends to be incredibly engaging. I was struck by the lengths that some would go to maintain their positions in society. This is a story of the conflict of following one's heart and doing what is perceived to be best for one's family or future position in society. The decisions that these girls had to make were impossible and trying to survive in the sorts of situations that they were placed in is incomprehensible to me. The

juxtaposition of wealthy society and destitute families was incredibly well written and the interactions between these groups of people were surprising and heart warming. Musser's characters were exquisitely crafted. Their venerability, strength, determination, doubts and faith were portrayed so realistically that it was impossible not to feel an emotional connection with them and find yourself hopelessly absorbed in the story.

I would classify *The Sweetest Thing* as Christian Historical Fiction but it is so much more than that. It is a story of family ties, loyalty, adolescence and the difficult things in life that change us and make us stronger. It is also about Faith – both finding it and loosing it – and Musser manages to write about all of this in a way that is not preachy, over the top or alienating. I can see how someone who is not a fan of Christian Fiction could be turned off by the sheer amount of biblical references and religious connotations, however the Christian presence in *The Sweetest Thing* was incorporated very naturally into the story.

The Sweetest Thing is a must read for any fans of depression-era, or Southern, Historical Fiction, Christian Fiction or those who love a story of growing up and finding love, acceptance and happiness in unlikely places.

I received a free copy of *The Sweetest Thing* from the Publisher in exchange for an honest review. All opinions are my own.

Katie says

Elizabeth Musser has woven a tale that will enchant readers from the first word all the way to the last. A story so real and touching, it's hard not to shed a tear or let a laugh slip out. Not only is the story gripping and entertaining, but it contains incredible lessons that everyone can learn something from.

The characters are deep and real. It's hard to come across a book such as this that allows you to feel this deeply connected to the characters. Mrs. Musser has created persons that are much like you and I with pain and struggles we can relate to.

The story is one of great depth as well. There is not only real history woven in, but every day struggles, adventures, and even a bit of mystery included in this enchanting tale. A person can't help but fall in love with the style and flow of this book. You'll be turning the pages eagerly long into the early morning hours.

What I admire most in a book is the strength of the writing. Was there passion poured into it? I can definitely say that Mrs. Musser's style is impeccable. She is an incredible storyteller filled with a true writer's spirit.

The Sweetest Thing has quickly made its way to being one of my top favorite books of all time. I can't begin to describe how enthralling it truly is. In fact, I was so impressed with Mrs. Musser's talent, skill and passion for writing that I am going to look up her other books immediately.

I highly recommend this book for people interested in touching tales of faith and perseverance aged 15 and up.

Hannah says

Not much to say, except that this book is the most amazing thing ever and I love it to bits! The characters are so real, and the story so intriguing, and the setting so vivid! I felt like I was there! Oh, I do love when I feel like I'm actually there when reading a book! It's such a perfect summer-y read, and completely different from what I thought'd be, but much better!

Perri, my favorite character! She and I are quite a like. I love her so much more than Dobbs. I mean, I love Dobbs, but she made me so mad when she stopped believing. But Perri didn't stop, because she never had believed, and then one day she believes and BOOM! my new favorite character!

Parthenia, you are a little cutie. You make me smile!

Oh, and Hank is mine, ok? He is my new fictional boyfriend, and I fell in love with him from the start!

Also, I adore Philip and Luke, they are the best! They're so much like me, and I just...I...I can't deal with their cute-ness, alright!

Of course, you gotta love Spalding! Who doesn't love Spalding?!

I was kidding about that last paragraph. I loathe Spalding.

Altogether this book gave me all the feels and I love it, adore it more than I can say!

Annette says

Very, very enjoyable read. Characters came alive.

Quotes:

"Unsolicited advice is always interpreted as criticism" (p. 216)

"'That's because people love themselves,' she stated. 'We love to think about ourselves, look at ourselves, pick ourselves out of a photo, comment on how we look. Down deep, we're a lot more interested in the trivial details of our lives than anything beautiful or inspiring or profound'...

'But occasionally something moves us deeply - a book we read or a play we see or a gorgeous painting or a passage of Scripture or a true-life story or a photograph, and we reach beyond our pettiness and become truly alive.'" (p. 227-228)

Tanx says

Novel started off slow with the budding of relationship between Dobbs & Perri.

About half way through, things got interesting and it was hard to put down the book. The second half was so good that it more than made up for the slow start, I'm giving this 5 stars with no hesitancy!

POV is done in diary format of the 2 female leads. Although their dreams, passions, heartaches, pining for boys, thinking maturity are fitting to their 16 year olds self, but I'm happy to report none of it are fluff stuff.

Highly recommended to christian historical fiction fans who want deep & well-written books!
Setting is Atlanta during the Great Depression.

Barbara says

I enjoy a book that teaches and reminds me how to try to understand (or not) the ways of the Father and the circumstances life on earth throws at you.

And the bonus was a mystery that remained, just that, until the very end!

I loved the characters and the way this story unfolded!

R.J. Rodda says

I just really, really liked this. A dirt-poor daughter of a revivalist elevated to a fancy school and a young socialite become friends during the Great Depression. Perri and (Mary) Dobbs are both likeable characters who struggle with all the changes life throws their way.

They wrestle with some big questions - can we really trust God to provide? Why do people suffer? Why is life so hard? Why do people we love die? And, is it wrong to dance and go to movies? The idea of real love verses calculated love is also explored here.

Despite all this, this is overall an easy, entertaining read with a touch of both romance and mystery. I'm glad I read this.

Casey says

I slipped into "The Sweetest Thing" like a favorite pair of shoes. A perfect fit, with just a little pinch to remind you that these shoes were made for walkin'.

I love first-person dramas (word of warning to action readers, this book won't be for you). The book is very character driven with a story that reached down deep and tugged at my heart strings. While the story revolves around two young women, both searching for their way, the plot never dragged. Perri and Dobbs are thrust in and out of their faith, making decisions that often affect their daily lives in difficult ways and a mystery plot thread that actually leads to a pretty surprising conclusion.

I didn't want to put this book down. It has the perfect balance of action propelling the characters forward and the development of said characters. Their emotional and faith arc were a fantastic progression through the story. The writing is beautifully woven and there were several times I stopped just to enjoy the beauty of the words.

Fans of Lynn Austin are going to love this author, I know I do and I plan to read many more. This is definitely a treasure waiting to be discovered.

This review is my honest opinion. Thanks to the publishers through CFBA for my copy to review.

Shantelle says

I think this one deserves five stars. ^_^ Unique, dramatic, and full of unexpected twists and turns, *The Sweetest Thing* took me on quite a journey. The historical information was fantastic; I had a grand time learning about the dresses, hairstyles, parties, and traditions of that day. Also, the faith in this story was bittersweet, powerful, and heartfelt. Lovely.

The Sweetest Thing is different from the novels I generally read. It wasn't quite a romance, but rather centered on the lives of two teen girls who become best friends (and their sweet boyfriends ...) It didn't really have the whole creepy suspense thing going on; but had a touch of mystery, and the tragedy and realness of what many people probably resorted to doing during the trying days of the Depression. It wasn't normal ... it was amazing! *grins* A more true-to-life story of two different girls who are thrown together in friendship during a hard time. They each discover the true meaning of faith in God, and each deal with matters of the heart, and get caught up in a bit of suspenseful mystery.

Great story ... I think you should read it! *smiles*

Cafelilybookreviews says

Combining two of my favorites subjects to read about (the south and the great Depression), Elizabeth Musser takes her readers back to a turbulent time of fear and uncertainty during the 1930's. *The Sweetest Thing* is told through the eyes of two main characters, Anne "Perri" Singleton who lives a life of plenty, and Mary Dobbs Dillard who lives a life of want.

Circumstances created by the Depression cause the lives of these two very different young women to collide and from that meeting a wonderful story of faith, friendship and coming of age is born. This was the first book I've read by this author and I can't believe I haven't discovered her books sooner. Her writing, which she refers to as "entertainment with a soul", is vivid and emotional and I thought about these characters long after I finished this book.

Surprisingly, there was quite a bit of mystery and suspense in this story which I wasn't expecting. Add that to the contrast of Anne and Mary's lives and how they have been shaped by their different backgrounds and you've got a captivating story.

The author makes the characters and their struggles very real and vulnerable; this isn't a sticky sweet Christian fiction novel where everything stays neat and tidy and everyone lives happily ever after. The characters face hardships, trials and heartaches that are very easy to relate to. I appreciate that Elizabeth intertwined faith all throughout this book and she created characters who felt and expressed things that all of us at some point have probably wondered.

I love the idea that Elizabeth took inspiration for this book from her grandmother's diaries and explored what happened during this time period. The Alms Houses written about in this book are still in use, although the names have been changed. Based on how much I enjoyed this book, I definitely plan to read more titles by this author in the future.

Highly recommend this story!

Ginnie says

What a sweet book. I really enjoyed the theme to this book being about a friendship between two school girls rather than your run of the mill romance.

I will have to read more by this author.
