


Catherwood

Marly Youmans

[Download now](#)

[Read Online](#) 

Catherwood

Marly Youmans

Catherwood Marly Youmans

It is early May 1678 when Catherwood and her one-year-old daughter, Elisabeth, get lost in the woods of the New World. Catherwood has recently immigrated from England with her husband, and they have settled near Albany, New York. Now a moment's inattention on a spring day has turned a short visit to the closest neighbors into a long sojourn in the wilderness. As summer comes, Catherwood travels through a landscape which is as harsh and unforgiving as it is majestic and lush. With the winter months quickly closing in, she searches frantically through the sparsely populated terrain for signs of human habitation as she and her child struggle to stay alive.

Catherwood Details

Date : Published May 1st 1997 by Harper Perennial (first published 1996)

ISBN : 9780380729883

Author : Marly Youmans

Format : Paperback 165 pages

Genre : Historical, Historical Fiction, Fiction, North American Hi..., American History, Novels, Literary Fiction

 [Download Catherwood ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online Catherwood ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online Catherwood Marly Youmans

From Reader Review Catherwood for online ebook

Kerfe says

A little gem of a book.

A semi-feral girl is adopted, educated, civilized. Her beloved widowed mother dies, and she marries and sails with her new husband to the New World. It is 1676.

Although intending to go to Virginia, a storm forces a stop in (New) York, and there they decide to settle, in undeveloped lands north of the rough city.

While returning from a visit to neighbors with her young daughter, Catherwood becomes lost. The two wander in the wilderness for months. Because she has an intimate knowledge of the natural world and the skills and tools for survival in a harsh environment, she endures, returning to the sparseness of her beginnings, necessity guiding each action she takes.

Most of us today, under similar circumstances, would fare quite differently.

The story is simple, but the rhythm of the days and the emotional bindings that tie Catherwood to the world and sustain her are deep and complex. We are all similarly searching, all in need of both community and home.

Katie says

This book devastated me. It was so good, I moped around the house for two days afterwards.

Elizabeth j dunn says

Perhaps my favorite book ever. Some books you'll read & years later you won't remember what they were about or if you ever read them. This book is Unforgettable.

A haunting story about the bond between a husband & wife and a mother & daughter.

Catherwood's desperation to keep her child & her faith in her husband is beautiful & heartbreaking. It's a historic tale set in UK & US about the impoverished, land-owners & pioneers. A story that shows how love binds family together.

Some books you keep. Some you share. Some you read over & over. This book is on the shelf next to my original copy of *Island of the Blue Dolphins*.

Sienna says

A plainspoken, sharp-eyed fever dream of a book, *Catherwood* takes its name from the protagonist whose love and faith transform this slight work into one of significance. In its pages Cath forages, creates life, kills, cures. She dreams and despairs. As an orphan, she knows what it means to be lost in ways many of us may not be able to fathom fully; as an adopted daughter and sister, as a wife and mother, she sees loss from new

perspectives and knows what it means to be found.

"Dear Christ, this world shows very lovely-fierce," Cath whispered.

Yes, Cath's world is both, and I find myself most taken with this novella when she dissolves into her surroundings, slipping into a wellspring of memory that finds echoes of English plants in their New World cousins. Drink me; eat me; use me to prevent early modern diaper rash. But there's an animistic quality to Cath's relationship with this world, which she respects and fears even as she revels in her resourcefulness. Youmans has filled this novella with connective threads that place story within story, past and present side by side, spooning, one nestling the other like mother and child. Here is *Catherwood's* heart, I think, a line that undid me:

Everything that was sentimental in their bond had been pared away by the wilderness, until both mother and child knew the great longing and need for each other as their strong tie to life.

Fleeting but unforgettable, mist-filled but vivid, ecstatic and contemplative, sweet and sad and full of wist, this is one I'll keep. I can't remember what brought me to Catherwood and her story, but I'm so glad to have found them. Highly recommended.

Peggy says

I really enjoyed this book. It was the story of Catherwood, an English immigrant to the 1676 New World. She and her husband settle in the wilderness of New York and start a family. One day, when Cath and her infant daughter, Elisabeth, go visiting, they get lost in the woods. Cath is very good at living off the land, so they two are able to travel through the wilderness, although they never see another human or signs of one. One day, they find a trapper and think they are saved, but the trapper is dying and all Cath can do is make him comfortable. He never comes to, so she is not able to ascertain where they are in the wilderness. But she hatches the idea to follow the stream, along the way, Elisabeth becomes sick and eventually dies.

Cath can't bear to leave Elisabeth's body. 1st she tries to bury her, then she tries to give her an Indian burial in a tree, but eventually, she cremates Elisabeth's body so she can carry the bones, since she can't bring herself to leave her daughter in the woods. After a long trek down the river, she finds a trail marked and follows it to a village, where the inhabitants take her in and nurse her back to health. They eventually send for her family, and her husband, Gabriel, comes to get her. She has been gone almost 1 year!

I guess what I liked about the book, was the industrious and practical ways that Cath possessed and how she was able to struggle through her adversity and survive off the land. It was a short, but very good read.

Ann Klefstad says

I love this book with an unreasonable passion. I can't explain it; it's a simple narrative, not terribly likely, a single arc. It's just that every word seems true, despite the unlikeliness of the plot. Youmans has never

written anything else like it. It seems to have arrived like a visitation from a parallel reality. News of those is valuable to me.

Laurie says

Perhaps the most haunting novel I've read. I read it about ten years ago, and every now and then it rises in my mind--what was that book? about the woman, in the forest, with her baby... and I think I've forgotten the name, but then I recall it. The last time I decided to read it again, and enter it here so that I won't forget. A beautifully written novel set in the early days of European settlement in the northeast. A very sad story of death and survival. Recommended, perhaps, for those who liked Year of Wonders.

Jo Fletcher says

Many years ago I picked this random book up at the library. It was small and hard covered and something about it spoke to me.

The novel was short and didn't take long to read but there was something about the story that stayed with me, about being a mother, about feeling lost in the world and being out of my depths.

Even seventeen years later those feeling re-emerge bringing flashes of memories, of tall trees and overwhelming loneliness. Beautiful.

Krista the Krazy Kataloguer says

Even though I really enjoyed the book, I'm giving it only 3 stars because the first half of the book is rather difficult to read. The author seems to be trying to recreate the way they spoke back in the 17th century, and it makes for awkwardness. However, the second half of the book, where the main character is trying to survive in the wilderness with her baby, is absolutely gripping. The author currently lives in Cooperstown.

Lois says

Somewhere between a lush fairy tale and a survivalist adventure, this small tome was just my kind of read because it was also colonial fiction. Youmans writing is delicious- put me in mind of "The Trees" by Richter because you are magically immersed in the dialect and word use of another time. For me, the crowning touch was our protagonist, Catherwood's delicious relationship with her precocious one year old. It made me remember. Loved it.

Patty says

I sometimes wish I could make a tree (like a family tree) that links my books from one to another. Much of the time my reading one book has no connection to the book before or the book after. I find a book I like, read it and move on. But every now and then there are books that send me looking for a particular next read.

I found Catherwood because I read *The Quality of a Hazelnut* by Fae Malania. After finishing that book, I wanted to know more about Malania. It turns out she died in 2007. I found a lovely obituary on Marly Youmans' blog. She was good friends with Fae Malania. Youmans herself is a published author and so I looked to see what books by her were owned by my library. It turned out there was only one title, this one. I doubt I would have ever found this book on my own.

Catherwood is set in 1676 through 1678 - two short years. It is the tale of a young woman, Catherwood, who leaves all in England to be a settler in Virginia. Circumstances put her in New York and the reader learns a great deal about conditions in 17th century British colonies. The story moves quickly and I couldn't put it down until I knew exactly what happens to Catherwood in the wilderness. This is an amazing story.

I found Youmans' language beautiful and quirky. She uses words and phrases that helped me see what Catherwood was seeing and feel her feelings. Youmans has also published poetry and that was evident in this novel. I may have to find another book by this author.

I recommend this book to those who are interested in colonial history, those who like short books and to any reader who enjoys seeing words used well.

The delights of serendipity showed up one more time while I was writing this review. I looked on Youmans' blog to see if she said anything about how she came up with this story. Although nothing was on the page about that, it turns out that one of the reviews that Youmans' quotes is from Fred Chappell whose book I just finished. The links in my reading continue...

MountainShelby says

This is a slender, odd little novel. It's so beautifully written and so evocative, it's almost like reading a prose poem. Or a lush fairy tale, furthered by a distant, fairy tale-like ending. Catherwood continues the tradition of the female utopia but it also breaks with the tradition, and not in a satisfying manner. At the end I was left thinking...so what? Especially with the rather disconnected epilogue. Recommended for the lovely writing and sense of historical context.

Susan Finck says

3.5*

I'm glad I stuck with this little book because it was good. I found the language in the first part, especially the letters Catherwood wrote to her brother back home in England, difficult to plough through and almost gave up on it. By the time I got to the second half I found I couldn't put it down. I didn't have a problem with the Epilogue, as some have mentioned. Recommend.

Linda C says

Catherwood and Gabriel leave England to settle in the Virginia colony. But a storm forces them north to Massachusetts and then an extended stop in NY for repairs. Gabriel and his 3 cousins hear of good land near Albany and decide to settle there. The second section of the book is 2 years later when Cath and her year old

daughter, Elisabeth, get lost in the woods in early May on the way back from visiting a cousin. This is the main body of the story, their survival and wandering. This is a harsh look at living off the land in a vast empty space and the lengths a mother will go to to feed and care for her child. Very well written.

Jan says

A slim historical novel of early Colonial America.that was very enjoyable. Don't read the dust jacket! If you like historical fiction, and are looking for a quick read, just pick it up. The synopsis will nearly ruin it.
