



The Glassblower's Daughter

Frances Clarke

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Greta's life is carefree until the abrupt disappearance of her elder sister, and all her courage can't save her from the sinister shadows that engulf her. Even when she finds a way out betrayal and treachery threaten her.

The Glassblower's Daughter Details

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From Reader Review The Glassblower's Daughter for online ebook

Emily says

The way the author brought so many issues to light in this book was very clever. I really felt for the main character. I also love how she eventually pulled her life together! Well written, and even though the story was very sad and almost disturbing at times, I would recommend!

Jay says

Very good..kept me wanting to find out more about the main character.

Macpudel says

The best Kindle freebie I have read to date. Portrays the redemption of a sexual abuse survivor with a believable and happy ending.

Sue says

This is a poignant book about a dysfunctional family. That said, there are some less than savory words and scenes. Nothing is graphic but the implications are there. I loved this book. It will resonate with me for years to come. The main character is a fragile, insecure young woman who finds herself at the very end of the book. A great read!

Stefan Iddon-meyers says

I LOVED this book. It covers a vast time period and so yes, the book jumps years in places but you just kind of go with it - we see how events in the main character's childhood affect her as she grows up.

I found myself rooting for the main character, Greta - I loved her ingenuity, her resourcefulness, her strength in the face of some really quite harrowing events in her life. And YES the book deals with some quite disturbing themes, but it is never gratuitous and doesn't dwell on the nasty events - the book focuses on Greta and her journey through life. The characters she meets along the way are brought to life really vividly - I especially loved the attention to detail, the sumptuous descriptions of the scenery, the characters' appearances and the 60s and 70s fashion. I thought the writing was fresh and familiar-sounding - again, yes, coarse in places, but then; people talk like that!

It might not be for everyone - if you prefer trashy novels and easy reads, then you may well not like this. BUT, if you want to read an exciting, gritty, funny, intelligent, ambitious and ultimately highly rewarding novel, then I cannot recommend The Glassblower's Daughter more highly. Would love to read more from this author!

Rivkah says

I'm not sure how to categorize this- historical fiction? suspense? Mystery? all of the above.

This book reads like a single sentence, in that it is so seamlessly, exquisitely woven, it flows like a completely natural and unstoppable expression of a life from the moment the reader begins it. It is like picking up a life- between its covers, the events of this life are occurring, and when one picks up the book one simply hops on the train and is completely involved. It left me breathless; I stayed up until almost 3 am finishing it, feeling like I hadn't blinked from the moment I picked it up.

It unfurls before the reader in sumptuous language, in exquisite detail, in breathtakingly, impeccably, REAL imagery.

There are moments of poetic, Virginia Woolf-esque language which capture the essence of the main character's experience so completely, one can feel, see, hear along with her. There are moments of down-to-earth, commonsense rationality which serve as a beautiful counterpoint, thus ensuring that the novel never falls into maudlin dramatics (which, given the subject matter, it very well could have.)

The author handles the subject matter with genius. It would have been easy to distance from it by focusing on the emotions evoked, thus creating a more predictable piece of work...this never happens.

Oh, the emotions are there, and they are real, but that's just it- they are real. They are shown, not told. We, the reader, get to figure things out...

If I had been told what this book was about, I would never have picked it up. I would have wanted to spare myself the pain. I am SO GLAD to be, in this case, utterly proven wrong in my assumption that authors can't deal with tricky subject matter in a way that leaves a reader intrigued, warmed, fascinated, and healed, rather than stressed or drained.

This book is utterly beautiful. It's not a light, easy, vacation read, in that it is an absolute work of art; but it is not stressful- it is simply true and honest, witty, warm, and the reader becomes an active participant and will grow right along with the protagonist.

I highly, highly, most highly recommend this book....It is one I will read again, no hesitation.

The characters are beautifully developed, faceted, none of them perfect and all of them utterly human and interesting. The setting is meticulously researched, with not a jarring note to be found.

The writing is exquisite. I am extremely picky on that score and I found not one thing (a couple of typos here and there, but nothing to quibble at) to distract me from this book.

Who will enjoy this: fans of John Irving, Virginia Woolf, Ruth Rendell, D.L. Smith, Barbara Vine... yes, this is an eclectic group of authors, because this author's voice is entirely their own. I very much look forward to reading more of the author's work.

I am not sure why there are no reviews on this novel yet. I am not sure why it is free.

Amanda says

A very difficult book to rate for me, so I'm still pondering the stars. I admit that there is more foul language than I usually tolerate and the subject matter is sometimes so intense and the descriptions vivid enough that it's not a book I'd quickly recommend (or probably re-read). However, it's a very impressive work. Frances Clarke's writing can be, by turns, beautifully poetic and bleakly sparse. She's incredibly talented and obviously put a LOT into the work as a whole. There are many themes (or possibly many facets to a handful of themes) to ponder throughout the book and honestly that may be part of what inclines me to give it fewer stars; because although it's incredibly moving and poignant and fascinating and thought-provoking, it's also covering *so much* that it's difficult to take all of it in. While that may make it more resonant with an actual life that also makes it a tough read to fully enjoy. And, I didn't feel like all of the themes and perspectives in the book were very well resolved at the end. (Again. Lifelike? Sure. But it makes for an ending that isn't as rich or full as much of the rest of the book.) And, at least one of the "resolutions" felt a bit forced to me. It's a book I'm eager to discuss with others who've read it, though!

Anne says

Hard to get into at first due to the strong Scottish brogue of the father and use of British terminology (loo, boot, etc.). I really enjoyed the book once I got into the first few chapters.

Tanya says

2 stars isn't the best rating, but I can't say I liked the book, but I didn't hate it either. It covers a very intense topic and tries to do it as tastefully as possible. Warning here, the language is coarse in spots, and has some rather intense scenes, it may not be for many readers who have suffered from any kind of sexual abuse.

What brought the rating down for me was the general time flow. The book didn't flow for me, I often felt confused at the age and passage of time. between this and the language it dropped the book from a possible 3 stars, to a 2 star.

Beth says

Hard to get into at the beginning. But once I was into it, I enjoyed it.

Breeda says

It took me a while to get into this but I'm really glad I stuck with it.

Kendra Tabor says

It was well written, just not quite what I was in the mental mood to read.

Rachel says

Wow. I am impressed by this book. I think the character development could've been a bit stronger, but her seeming detachment may have been symptomatic of her experiences.

Nancy says

If this book were a movie, it would be a bad "B" movie.

PS: The ending redeems the story.

Wordsmith says

The Glassblowers Daughter

By Frances Clarke

276 Pages

5 ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

I'm going to begin my review by quoting a fellow reviewer of this book. "Raven" conveys what I feel, with such eloquence, it bears repeating.

"This book reads like a single sentence, in that it is so seamlessly, exquisitely woven, it flows like a completely natural and unstoppable expression of a life from the moment the reader begins it. It is like picking up a life- between its covers, the events of this life are occurring, and when one picks up the book one simply hops on the train and is completely involved. It left me breathless."

On the other side of the coin, there were extremely negative reviews, by readers opposing the content, (which was not explicit, merely implied) or even put off by the old man's "A'wite gel, git ain hame wit ye knae." (I'm sure I just embarrassed myself to death, the closest I've been to Scotland is Jamie's "dinna ya kin" in The Outlander Series.) But, as the reviews were so diametrically opposed, I had to see for myself.

Not a word out of place, not one word to many. Just sheer perfection. Ms. Clarke handles this most taboo, yet let's be clear, all too real for far too many, subject, with the most compelling grace and dignity, I hesitate to even make it my lead. Make no mistake, this book is about life. And sometimes "life" swallows you whole, chews you up, spits you back out and says live with THAT. It is, however, so much more than that. After reading the book for myself then comparing what I had read with some of the more critical reviews, I felt obliged to write my own, maybe my third, out of the several hundred books I have read off Amazon Kindle. Frances Clarke's writing is high-brow intelligent, seamless and pitch perfect. We follow young Greta, daughter of the glassblower, who is employed by the University to blow the chemistry beakers, and a tortured soul with an accent thicker than highland heather and her unhappy Mother, who has secrets of her own. Young Greta's greatest joy in life is her older sister Deborah, who reads her the fairy tales of Hans Christian Anderson that take her away into a land of make believe. We follow the twists and turns (and stagnation) of Greta's life beginning in the mid-fifties, with stops in the early and late sixties, up and into the mid seventies, as she struggles to come to terms with what "can't be spoken of."

My deal had been sealed, way back in the very beginning, but just to give you an idea....in Part 4, the scene

of Greta standing at window, with Gerry Rafferty's hit song Baker Street being played on the radio. That was as evocative an image had I been there myself saying, "Do you mind turning that up a bit?" This is a haunting story, beautifully written, by a major talent.
