



Point Dume

Katie Arnoldi

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Two years ago Overlook published her sophomore effort, *The Wentworths*, a searing portrait of a wealthy Westside, Los Angeles, family. This too was a fixture on bestseller lists and earned her a wider audience.

With *Point Dume* she has produced her most remarkable novel to date

A fast moving page- turner, with insights that Arnoldi has gleaned from years of on-the-ground research, this is a timely novel that seems timeless.

Point Dume Details

Date : Published May 27th 2010 by The Overlook Press (first published May 1st 2010)

ISBN : 9781590203293

Author : Katie Arnoldi

Format : Hardcover 256 pages

Genre : Fiction

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From Reader Review Point Dume for online ebook

Saadia says

The reason I read this book is because it was the book to read for the book club at the Kaufman public library in Brentwood. I am staying in Brentwood, Los Angeles for an extended visit at my adult son's home, so I thought I would give the book club a try. Actually, I met the author, Katie Arnoldi at the book club meeting and our group had a first hand account of how and why she told this story.

The story involves characters in the Malibu area: dysfunctional locals who grew up in a beachside blue collar community and who are displaced by the new landowners with big mansions and vineyards; these residents who are then in-turn threatened by the environmental destructive activities resulting from the clandestine marijuana gardens grown on the public lands by the Mexican drug cartels. Themes throughout the story: the destruction brought by greed; men who control women and women who are affected; the marijuana growing on public lands which is a huge problem; the exploitation of the poor disaffected Mexican migrant.

I thought it was powerful writing in a fast punchy style. It is very obvious in the short chapters about the white Anglo characters. Katie acknowledged that she spent more time writing about the Mexican farmer migrant, Felix, because she was unfamiliar with the character's background and spent more time developing it on paper.

Katie said her stories grow organically out of her brain, literally characters developing and jumping out and talking in the first person or third person. So the story develops like a mix of viewpoints shared by the mix of characters.

It is a very interesting experience discussing a book from the author's point of view. I enjoyed it.

Christian Sorensen says

She's a hell of a writer.

Judy Mann says

This book was a breath of fresh air. 4 stars.

What a relief to read a book where the author tells it like it is -just exactly like it is.

Kate Arnoldi is an excellent writer. And the reason I can say that is because I believed her. Every word. Malibu is one of those anesthetized settings in California where you get the feeling that EVERYONE is completely coked out of their gourds. And I mean the rich here. These newly wealthy a-holes that just spend their days showing off all their money to the other newly wealthy a-holes. It's a big and vapid mess of money. This book- this story brought it all down to the truth about Malibu. An absolutely straight shooting testament. My hat goes off to Katie Arnoldi. I've always wanted to know the real story and now I got it. Right between the eyes. Well done.JM

Catherine says

Each character speaks in the first person, which gives too much weight to a couple of 1-dimensional characters, and not enough weight to the two pivotal characters who eventually meet up accidentally. Felix is the most haunting and interesting character in this, or almost any book I've ever read. He has a history and tradition of a hard working and fairly successful small farmer in Mexico when he is forced to work for a Mexican drug cartel watching a marijuana farm in the hills near Santa Barbara all by himself for several months. What happens to him, and others like him, is one of the reasons for the book, and its a very good reason. This is why I've rated the book a 3 and not a 2.

If Arnoldi, who apparently has a couple of bestsellers, surprisingly, had concentrated on two pivotal characters, Felix and Pablo, I think this could have been a really wonderful novella or short story. As it is, at 230 pages, its about 75 pages too long--too much time is wasted on meaningless characters.

Daisy says

Most Improved.

I have read Arnoldi's other two books and hated them so it was a surprise to find this wasn't godawful. Her writing has gotten better and her story-telling isn't bad at all in this novel.

So much of whether you like a book or not depends on where you are when you read it. This is a fast, easy read about an area I know well. I even knew Katie A. when we were kids; that is, I knew who she was but I don't think she knew who I was. (She was older anyway.) I know which house was her family's and I know that her maiden name is that of a big chain of local hardware stores. There is a character in this book who could be based on her, and there are many who she researched and created and gave different voices--that's what finally has impressed me: how well she wrote those characters, especially compared to ones in her previous books.

This isn't a masterpiece by any means but it's far better than I expected. So if she keeps writing, I'll keep reading. Good for her.

Danna says

I loved this quick and easy read. Katie Arnoldi introduces to us a group of characters in Point Dume - a small, surfing community with a large pothead population. In recent years, the tiny town has been overtaken by a group of elitist soccer moms and CEO-dads. The interaction between the newcomers and the natives is a large part of the story. Arnoldi also addresses the illegal growing of marijuana in the California mountains. The growing is done mostly by illegal Mexican immigrants and has been dangerous to both the growers and the ecosystem. I was enthralled by the characters and intrigued by the real-life issues of the marijuana growers. I found this book engaging and refreshing, a completely new story with a motley crew of unique characters.

Anne Meehan-Dunham says

The story is about the destruction to the California coastline as drug traffickers plant illegal pot farms on public land. the story is about the rising tension between the home-grown surfers whose parents bought

beach shacks in the 50s and 60s and the wealthy class as they buy up and displace an entire culture.

The narrative is told through multiple points-of-view that switches between first and third person close. The chapters are brief, which makes the story move fast. The time frame is a year - dictated by the growing cycle of an illegal pot farm.

I recommend this. This story casts a light on the devastation these illegal farms bring to our national parks and is none to complimentary to the characters who plant vineyards where they don't belong.

Lisa Hayden Espenschade says

Point Dume is less about marijuana growing on public lands than about the personal conflicts and problems of people living in a changing California ocean community. That's unfortunate because I thought the pot growing aspect of the book was far more interesting than the lives of the US-based characters. I felt like I'd already met them in books and movies past.

The book read quickly and easily, perhaps in part because everything felt so familiar, but it would have felt much more satisfying if Arnoldi hadn't spent so many of her pages on back story. The last quarter or third of the book is the most compelling, when the plot focuses less on soapy and satirical stuff and more on various aspects of survival. Like some other readers, I thought the most interesting character, an illegal Mexican worker who gets lonely tending cartel pot plants, got short shrift.

(Overlook provided me with a copy of the book.)

I wrote about *Point Dume* on my blog, [here](#).

Andrea says

THIS NOVELLA IS MORE LIKE INTERCONNECTED SHORT STORIES. IT TAKES PLACE ON THE HILL COUNTRY ON THE PACIFIC COAST OF CALIFORNIA.

ELLIS AND PABLO ARE SURFERS AND HAVE KNOWN EACH OTHER SINCE GRADE SCHOOL. BOTH LOST THEIR PARENTS AT A YOUNG AGE. ELLIS LIVES ON THE BLUFF OVERLOOKING THE SURF BEACH. SHE SOLD OFF SOME OF HER INHERITED PROPERTY AND MADE A KILLING - ENOUGH TO SUPPORT HERSELF.

PABLO, SELLS DRUGS TO THE RICH WOMEN ON THE BEACH AND HAS MILLIONS STASHED AWAY. HE DOES NOT DEAL WITH SUPPLIERS OR GROW HIS OWN POT, HE STEALS IT FROM PUBLIC LANDS WHERE THE MEXICAN DRUG CARTELS HAVE SET OUT CROPS. SINCE 9/11, IT IS SAFER TO GROW IN THE USA. HE ONLY STEALS FROM THE EDGES OF THE FIELDS, AND NOT ENOUGH TO GET CAUGHT.

FRANK AND JANICE LIVE IN A MANSION - FRANK IS A SELF SERVING RICH GUY WHO HAS PLANTED HIMSELF A WINERY - HE IS HAVING AN AFFAIR WITH ELLIS. JANICE IS BOARD - SHE LEAVES THE KIDS WITH THE NANNY AND GETS HIGH AND IS HAVING AN AFFAIR WITH PABLO.

FELIX LIVED IN A RURAL VILLAGE IN MEXICO - HIS FAMILY HAS STRUGGLED SINCE HIS FATHER DIED. HE IS THE OLDEST CHILD. HIS COUSIN DRAFTS HIM TO TEND THE POT CROPS IN CALIFORNIA.

A FIRE BREAKS OUT AND THE SANTA ANA WINDS TURN IT INTO ONE OF THE WORSE FIRES IN CALIF HISTORY.

Cheryl says

Ellis Gardner is a wild child. She makes her own rules. One thing Ellis loves is catching a wave or two.

Pablo Schwartz is a good friend of Ellis's. He has known her since he was about twelve years old. This is the same time he was first introduced to the world of illegal marijuana growing. It was from here that Pablo realized that there was a lot of money to be made in growing and selling marijuana.

Frank Joseph Bane III is married. Though this has now stopped him from having an affair with Ellis. He is also the owner of a vine yard.

Janice Bane admits that it has been a long time since she has gone a day where she wasn't high.

Come see how these four characters lives intertwine with each other.

Author, Katie Arnoldi brings to light the harsh reality of illegal marijuana growing, all across the United States. Like Mrs. Arnoldi, I was clueless in regards to this subject matter. I knew of what marijuana and how it can make people act but nothing in regards to the process from start to finish on the growing process. I thought that Mrs. Arnoldi did a wonderful job show casing this problem the United States faces. It is a huge problem. One that I did not realize was so massive. The characters were real. They feel the same things we do...love, loss, scared, and pride. While I did enjoy this book and the picture Point Dume painted, I didn't really connect with all the characters. I found Janie to be depressing and like an empty shell. Frank was kind of one note. Ellis showed some glimmer of hope but the stand out character to me was Pablo. He has a story to tell and he brought you into his world. Point Dume smells like a winner!

D. B. says

After disliking *The Wentworths* so intensely, I didn't know what to expect from *Point Dume*. It combines the strengths of *Chemical Pink* (interesting characters, excellent sense of voice) with one of the major weaknesses of *The Wentworths* (a sluggish, barely there plot) into an overall terrific package.

I found myself so invested in the characters that I didn't mind much that, at best, the characters inch forward on their lives' journeys. Arnoldi does an excellent job of creating characters representing archetypes of rural central/southern California, while giving them enough flesh to feel real. Each character, in one way or another, is connected to the marijuana trade, but that's the closest Arnoldi comes to crafting something resembling a "story."

Those who read for tight plotting will not be satisfied, but it works very well as a character-driven slice-of-life.

Valerie says

I read this book on my Kindle Fire. I was attracted to it because of the title; Pt. Dume was one of my very favorite ocean spots when I was a young child. It is located south of Malibu and I guess it is a state recreational area now (at least some parts are) but worse than the invasive plant species (marijuana) being grown in the canyons in the area, I think the Hollywood clique has ruined the area with all the pollution, overbuilding, and general devastation of the beauty of this once gorgeous area. I remember it as it was, and I feel lucky to have those memories; others have not been so fortunate. It is true that the Santa Ana winds blow every year, and often times they cause wildfires. I don't think this was a problem before the area was basically ruined by humans and their lust for the "good" life. Wildfires are a natural phenomenon which occur on a regular basis around the planet. When humans come in and over populate the area, over build and destroy the surrounding environment, is it any wonder that there are mud slides and tragedies every year besides the mudslides from normal rains? Marijuana may be an invasive species here, but I suspect that Homo sapiens is the worst invasive species from the beginning. After all, there would have been no marijuana growing without the people who planted the plants.

Karen says

A short read, light on plot, with an interesting setting that the author does not really take advantage of. Since 9/11 and the crackdown on our borders, the drug cartels have been growing pot on public land in the US - national parks, and in this book, the hills of Malibu.

Patrick O'Neil says

Surfers, stoners, yuppies, yoga moms, disgruntle locals, and Mexican drug cartels – Southern California's costal small towns will never be the same. Katie Arnoldi uses them all as characters in her novel, *Point Dume*, to portray not only the ever changing demographics. But the insidious underbelly of the cross border narcotics trade, and the loss of natural habitat to the nouveau riche. The cartels are growing pot in our foothills. The yuppies are buying up the land and building hideous mansions. And driven by high prices the locals are selling out and leaving. Nothing stays the same and unfortunately it's the land that takes the brunt of the assault and devastation. Arnoldi weaves a beautiful story – her characters take turns telling their tales, each to their own chapters – and their intertwining relationships fuel the fires that lead to an intense finale.

Timothy Urges says

I think I enjoyed this more than other readers. There is a lack of depth and direction, but the interesting and flawed characters kept me reading.
