



Exhuming Mary McCarthy

Jessica Lamirand

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With her white patent leather platform shoes and love of the Pixies, no one would guess that dreamy Jessica's manual for life is Anne of Green Gables. In this memoir of extraordinary honesty, Jessica journeys through college and the deep bonds of friendship that propel her out of her shell and into a new world. As a shy, sheltered teen, Jessica realizes, as soon as she enters Colorado College, that her fantasy world has not prepared her for the realities of life at this freewheeling academic oasis. Lost, she bonds with six girls in her dorm who dub themselves “The Group” after Mary McCarthy's bestselling 1963 novel. Jessica's Group vows to remain friends forever, avoiding the fate of their namesakes. But even as Jessica fights to save their friendship, time, addictions, and mental illness form cracks in the Group's foundation. And then Jessica, still stuck in her happily-ever-after fantasies, falls for the one guy the Group despises—handsome slacker Malcolm.

Set against a mid-1990s pop culture background, the friends experiment with the joys of uninhibited choices and deal with the accompanying pitfalls of sexual pressures, self-image issues, and substance abuse. Exhuming Mary McCarthy is a telling, insightful saga of college life beyond the classroom that will mesmerize readers with bittersweet humor as they journey with Jessica on the path towards adulthood.

Exhuming Mary McCarthy Details

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Author : Jessica Lamirand

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From Reader Review Exhuming Mary McCarthy for online ebook

Hayley says

Originally posted here: <http://thereadingwonderland.blogspot...>

It felt like I was reading this book forever and getting nowhere. That doesn't mean I didn't like the book, I just felt like it was ridiculously dragged out, and that maybe that should be something people are aware of before reading. Aside from that I liked the writing, it was honest, at times it was gritty and sometimes it felt like you really got to know these people which I need for a memoir to keep me going.

One thing I'd have changed about the writing is that at times Jessica would say she did something, but then not explain to her readers why she was in the wrong for doing this. Example, she essentially emotionally manipulated her college boyfriend whenever she got the change by having a tantrum to get her own way. Like a full blown hysterical crying tantrum. She never actually shows any sign of remorse at doing this, instead recounting it in a way that makes her seem like the victim. During one particularly hysterical reaction her boyfriend slaps her (probably his way of calming her down, like in films) and she then acts like a beaten wife. She admits it didn't even hurt but then carries on about how she was going to stay with him even though he'd essentially beaten her. Sure, I'll give her that it was the wrong way to go about dealing with someone who is (faking) a panic attack, but it wasn't abuse.

Another thing that dragged the book on for me was the infantile nature of Jessica and her friends in their quest for sex/true love. Following boys around campus, writing a "stalkers" notebook. At the age they were, I believe to around 18-21, I found it a bit weird that they were acting like schoolgirls. Maybe that's just me.

Overall I had mixed feelings about the book, while I liked some aspects of it some of it just made me feel secondhand embarrassment and also rather annoyed.

I rated this book 2 stars on Goodreads.

I was given this book in exchange for an honest review. All opinions are my own and are in no way affected by the author or publisher.

Anne Martin says

It's a weird book, maybe because it does not contain anything weird... the story of four years of college and the friendships formed by a girl in the 90's. Okay, so what? Is there anything special or interesting in their stories? no. Anyone could write their college memoirs and do just as good. The friendships she describes are amazingly shallow, like teenage stuff. Their crushes are worse, childish and stupid. The description of their days, going to classes, watching tv, going for lunch or dinner and getting drunk and stoned in the evening, with the list of the insane classes the author takes are enough to decide any parents to cut off college for their kids.

I hope university gives more to most people. Otherwise it's nothing, but a huge waste of time and money. Three stars because the writing is decent, but for a book about nothing...

Tina Price says

I received a free copy of this novel in return for an honest review. Many thanks to Ambient Light Publications and Net Galley.

This is the story of Jessica, a naïve young woman starting out at college in the USA. It tells of the relationships and friendships that she makes, forming a group of friends which they come to compare with the characters in the novel, 'The Group' by Mary McCarthy. Hence the title of the novel.

The novel follows this group of young women through their three years of study and living, with a focus on their social lives, during the middle of the 1990s.

At the beginning I really enjoyed the novel but as it progress the curiously emotionless tone began to make the whole reading experience unpleasant. I have not read 'The Group' and so I cannot say if this is in emulation of this work, but the overall effect is to feel as if one is reading the literary equivalent of 'Made in Chelsea' or some similar lifestyle series on the TV.

The writer tells us what is said and done, describes actions and responses, all with the most curiously detached and emotionless tone. Although this often includes naming feelings, there is never a sense that one can feel with the characters, who become increasingly unsympathetic as the novel progresses.

Reflecting on this I wonder if this is that, as a reader in their fifties, I am simply not the correct audience for this work. I would not like to dismiss it out of hand, as it cleverly explores drug use, sexuality, relationships and responsibility in this critical age for young people. However I was sad not to hear more about what the group studied, apart from fleeting references to topics, novels and films. Generally I found this an unsatisfying experience.

Marjorie says

Given To Me For An Honest Review

Exhuming Mary McCarthy by Jessica Lamirand is a must read for those beginning college, parents and grandparents. Once you open this book, it will grab you tightly and hold you down and then you'll just watch those pages turn and turn and turn some more until you get to the last one. This is one book that you will find it hard to put down. This is the memoir of the author. This is her coming of age story. She shares about classes, teachers, eating in the cafeteria, living in the dorm, boyfriends, hopes and dreams. The experience that we've all been through is shared and to our surprise - - we've all survived. This is told with a bit of humor, grace and insight. I recommend this book to everyone. I look for more from Jessica Lamirand.

Jessica says

Given the premise and the setting (physical and temporal), this should have been a graceful swan dive into nostalgia for me – but it wasn't. The intertextual references were few and far between and forced when they raised their head. The characters were dull and interchangeable with little to distinguish relationships when

this was required to make sense of the plot – what little there was. In the end, I finished the book disappointed. There was too little insight, too clumsily threaded together to make a good memoir, with too few events of interest to build an interesting novel.

Lorrie McCullers says

I had really high hopes for Exhuming Mary McCarthy. I was a college student in the 90's just like the author so I was looking forward to reliving that experience by reading this book. However, the pleasure of reading about experiences that were so similar to mine were overshadowed by the sheer volume of this memoir. 500 pages? Seriously? After a short while, the retelling of her story became tedious. Every party, every outfit, every random boy that the Group had a crush on -- all of these were told in excruciating detail. I feel like all of the minutia got in the way of what could have been a really good book.

I could relate to a lot of the college experiences that Jessica writes about. The unrequited crushes, the group of friends that you feel like will last forever, the unsure feeling you have about your classes, and all of this against the grunge soundtrack of the 90's-- I felt like this book could have been my story. But again, it was just too much. Even if the book was cut by a third, she could have told the story (which boils down to "The Group" of friends and how they change over the four years of college) in a more concise and more engaging memoir. As it is, this book just felt like a long slog through a whole lot of nothing.
