



# The Cotton Queen

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**The Cotton Queen** Pamela Morsi

**The road away from home always seems to lead back to our mothers.**

I am not, nor will I ever be, the kind of woman who wears pearls with her apron while cooking meat loaf for her husband. But when I was a kid, my mother, Babs, prepared me to be the next June Cleaver -- teaching me lessons that belonged to another era. Another world, practically. My mother's world. I couldn't wait to leave home and get away from her. But now, well . . . let's just say life hasn't turned out quite as I'd planned. And heaven help me, I'm going home.

Laney Hoffman -- *Cotton Queen*, 1975

It's funny -- all I ever wanted was to teach my daughter, Laney, how to be a lady so she could find a good husband and take her rightful place in our community. But Laney has always remained convinced that my life and my ideas are, well, pathetic. She has no idea -- *no idea!* -- what it is to lose a husband, to watch your dreams wither while keeping a smile on your face for the neighbors. Now, *that* is a talent. Laney is probably too smart for her own good, but being smart hasn't kept her out of trouble. Thank heavens I'm here to help pick up the pieces.

Babs Hoffman -- *Cotton Queen First Runner-Up*, 1956

## The Cotton Queen Details

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## From Reader Review The Cotton Queen for online ebook

### Lorraine says

Oh my gosh. What a great story. I loved how this included three generations of women. Actually, it was more about two, mother and daughter. The granddaughter came in a little bit at the beginning and then during the conclusion. The characters were great, the storyline believable, heartbreaking at times and joyful other times. What some people have to deal with, cope with, live with, is so sad and unfair. I really hope that God will make it all right in the end. I've often heard that once everything is said and done, that everyone who ever lived will say, "It was fair and good. And my life was right for me." Having been blessed my entire life with more than I deserve, more food than I can ever eat, shelter always, clothing, family who love me and who I have the blessing of loving, I am awed and grateful for what I have. I grieve and worry about the millions of people who suffer and have so much less. But all I can do, is trust that God knows each of us and loves everyone and is taking care of things. I also contribute to charities and help whenever I have an opportunity to support efforts to feed the hungry, clothe them and whatever I can do, with my small influence.

Anyway, I'll step down from my soapbox now. This is a great story of love and loss and reclaiming the love between mother and daughter, values and family.

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### Jacki says

I picked this book up because I thought it would be a fun little fluff read between huge books, and I was right to a certain extent, but I was really surprised at the bigger issues that this book took on. Death, rape, being a widow, separating from parents, divorce- just a lot more serious issues that I expected to encounter.

I'm a sucker for books that show life from generation to generation and this was no exception. I think that it was neat to see how Laney really wanted to buck the system and get far from her Mom, but when push came to shove they shared a lot of the same ideas and tendencies and were very close. I'm glad that we got to see Laney's daughter following the same pattern in the end as well.

Good, quick little read.

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### Aaron says

Sweet story about the complexities of the mother-daughter relationship. Also about the joys and hardships of being a woman.

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### Cheryl says

A mother-daughter generational tale

This story by author Morsi centers not only on the relationship between mother Babs Hoffman and daughter Laney Hoffman but on the years passing after each is part of the Cotton Days celebration and each is in the Cotton Days beauty pageant . It centers around the town of McKinney, Texas and is told in alternating

chapters by Babs and Laney and is not just a fluff romance.

It covers some pretty deep subjects: death, rape, motherhood, PTSD, women in the workplace and more. It covers a time span from the 1950s to 2004.

I didn't always agree with the characters but I enjoyed reading about them and I think the author did a wonderful job of creating in-depth characters that experience real-life problems and tragedies - along with having some great experiences too.

This is a solid story and well worth reading.

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### **Bungluna says**

This story centers around three generations of women from McKinney Texas and covers a span from post WWII to 2004. Told alternately from Bab's (mother) pov and Laney (daughter), it explores the life progression of both women as they move through pretty tumultuous times and changes in women's rights.

I love this author because she never shies away from difficult subjects yet manages to explore them with a light touch and she did not disappoint. Seeing these two women who are so alike yet living in such different times was illuminating and made me appreciate my own mother more than ever. The way things change yet stay the same was also very telling in this novel. At the end, when the next generation is poised to start her own life journey, I was left with a sense of peace, knowing that the times may be a'changing, but character and perseverance stay the same.

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### **Harlequin Books says**

Category: Relationship Novel

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### **Shannan says**

Goodness that turned out to be a great book. A fun, fiction story set in Texas - I found this book through Goodreads recommended reading from my high rating of the book World of Pies. Just right for my reading taste. Small town. Starts out in mid-century America and progresses through the turn of the century. Cast of characters with each of their own story and plot point. I cried through the first 40 pages and throughout several points in the rest of the book. A slight sprinkling of Ya-Ya sisterhood throughout.

I found myself thinking about each of the characters as I went about my day and couldn't wait to get back to my book to find out what happens. A nice tie-up ending and good message. I did find that the author had a definite opinion on women & marriage, but it lined up pretty close to my own beliefs so it didn't bother me too much. I kind of wish it was a little longer so I could hear more of their stories!! What a gem.

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### **Dina says**

Fast read, good story, although basing the entire plot on the rape of the mother and her lifelong reaction to the trauma seemed a bit much. I did enjoy the three generations of women growing through the same event, however. The characters were believable, and the sham marriage showed how much we tolerate in order to be loved.

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### **Kristi Lewis says**

This book returned me of some of my growing up years. I wasn't an only child, but the times were right on. I remember my mother telling me some the same things as Babs did to Laney. It put me right back in time and how the times treated women and men differently. We were to grow-up , get married and have babies. Times were a changin' back when I was a teenager, with the Vietnam war, protesting of the war, drugs and free love, all of it. This story also brought to light the ugliness of rape. We didn't talk about it out loud and a lot of women were treated badly and made to believe it was their fault it happened to them or were asking for it. I think it is important to remember those times, and how we have evolved from yesterdays. it wasn't always fun times, but it was a turning point of things to come. More women having careers and raising families. This story was well written and I have loved all the books that I have read so far by Pamela Morsi.

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### **Sharon says**

I enjoyed The Cotton Queen, it was a reasonably quick read, fast paced, flipping from Mother's story to Daughters story...the same story, just much different perspectives. Subjects it touched heavily on were women's rights during WWII era, the political and social transitions during the Vietnam era, into modern day women's rights including but not limited to issues of rape, marriage, divorce. Interesting, engaging...I'll probably read it again.

Marked as 4 stars just because I would have liked the story to progress a little further. :)

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### **Andria says**

I grabbed this from the library - a reader's choice, and I couldn't put it down. It is an interesting tale of a mother and daughter - every other chapter switching between their lives, each told in their own perspective. Again, a little explicit, but apparently that keeps my attention! Great insight into the life of women in the '50s and '60s.

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### **Denise says**

The description of this book does not do it justice. I can't remember where I heard about it or why I had it on my to read list for so long. I'm just glad I finally did.

Alternating between perspective of mother and daughter, the reader travels two journeys of learning what it means to be a woman and to love. There are seasons of buildings walls and moments that tear them apart. Some sections are a bit jarring, but only as it lends to the story.

### **Arsala says**

I loved this story! I was reading this at the same time as *Serving Crazy with Curry* which is also about complex mother-daughter relationships and I definitely enjoyed this story more. It was fascinating to see how these characters grew and evolved and I'm not usually a fan of stories that span several decades but I didn't mind it at all in this book. I guess coming from a mental health background, I was really interested in seeing how Babs would resolve her issues. There were times when I wanted to shake both women out of frustration over their behaviors and decisions but the ending gave the reader a good resolution.

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### **Jenee Rager says**

This is another book I discovered using the Goodreads recommendation system. It was definitely right up my alley and a nice summer read. The story is told from the alternating point of view of Laney, and her mother Babs. You watch these two women who are so alike (yet both refuse to admit it) from the time Babs is newly widowed with a four year old, until Laney's teenage daughter is crowned Cotton Queen. Even though it's an easy breezy read there are deeper plotlines to keep you on your toes such as acquaintance rape, infertility, drug abuse, etc. Definitely a good read kind of along the lines of the "Ya-Ya Sisterhood" series.

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### **Sara Texas Girl Reads says**

Full review and more at [www.texasgirlreads.com](http://www.texasgirlreads.com)!

Laney Hoffman, the Cotton Queen of McKinney, Texas, 1975, thinks of herself as an independent, strong woman who is nothing like her mother. Babs Hoffman, the Cotton Queen first runner-up of 1956, doesn't understand why her daughter won't just listen to her. From Laney's perspective, it seems as though her mom had an obsession with presenting a perfect façade—perfect home, perfect child, perfect life. What Laney doesn't know is what Babs went through (she is a WWII widow and a rape survivor), and that her tendency towards beauty and perfection is her way of protecting her daughter. The story is told in alternating chapters between Babs and Laney, and we get to see their stories unfold from each perspective, from the day Laney was born up to present day (2004) with Laney's 17-year-old daughter.

The Cotton Queen is a heartwarming, and at times heartbreaking, story about family and how far a mom is willing to go to provide a good life for her daughter. It is about mothers and daughters and how no matter how hard we may try to not be like our moms, a lot of the time we are exactly like them anyway, for better or worse. Laney deliberately makes choices that she thinks are the exact opposite of what Babs would do, not knowing how strong Babs really is. What happens when we discover that our inner strength may not actually come from ourselves, but from our mother?

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