



The Blackberry Bush

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Who are you, and what are you doing here? Two babies Kati and Josh are born on opposite sides of the world at the very moment the Berlin Wall falls. You'd think such a potent freedom metaphor would become the soundtrack for their lives, but nothing could be further from the truth. Despite his flawless image, Josh, an artistic and gifted California skateboarder, struggles to find his true role in the world, and his growing aggression eventually breaks him. Kati, a German with a penchant for classic Swiss watches and attic treasure-hunting, is crushed with disappointment for never being enough for anyone most especially her mother. Craving liberation, Kati and Josh seem destined to claim their birthright of freedom together. After all, don't the chance encounters transform your life or are they really chance?

The Blackberry Bush Details

Date : Published June 1st 2011 by Summerside Press

ISBN : 9781609361167

Author : David Housholder

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From Reader Review The Blackberry Bush for online ebook

Simay Yildiz says

ARC copy received from David Housholder.

<http://zimlicious.blogspot.com/2011/0...>

This book first got my attention when I saw its cover and its name. And then I was totally sold when I read "Two babies—Kati and Josh—are born on opposite sides of the world at the very moment the Berlin Wall falls." Seriously, how wrong can you go with a story line like that? Not very, but I so did not expect it to be as beautiful as *The Blackberry Bush*.

The story does start with two babies being born just as the Berlin Wall is falling. Right from the beginning, when you look at the family chart at the beginning of the book, you see where Kati and Josh are connected. Finding out how and seeing how they come together in life is an adventure, for lack of a better world, that takes you through different times, different people and different points of view.

I must admit I got quite uneasy when I realized the religious aspect of the book because 1) I'm not religious, 2) Having been raised Muslim, I don't know much about Christianity, and I'm sure I got none of the bible references. The uneasiness faded away though as events started to unfold because it ended up being a spiritual journey for me, rather than religious.

When it comes to the characters, you can relate to most of them, and some of them I'm sure you know already. Kati I could most definitely relate to, being that she's weird-looking when judged by what's considered normal in most societies, and she struggles with it like most of us do. And her relationship with her grandfather Harald, whom she describes as being the only person who "gets" her was very endearing. It's amazing to see all the characters -- both the adults and the children -- learn from their struggles and find out that life actually IS beautiful.

I also really like the metaphor that the name of the book represents. First everything is all tangled up like a blackberry bush, then they all start eating the fruit without the thorns ripping their hands and arms. I think everyone should give this book a shot if only for the joy it makes you feel inside. This was most definitely one of the most beautiful books I've ever read.

Karielle at Books à la Mode says

The Blackberry Bush by David Housholder

Release Date: June 1st, 2011

Publisher: Summerside

Page Count: 172

Source: The B&B Media Group for review

An invitation to a treasure hunt through the landscape of your soul...

Josh grows up an artistic and gifted California Golden Boy, but for all that life has handed to him, he struggles with his identity and role in the world. Surrounded by unrealistic expectations, he feels hedged in.

Kati's German heritage presents its own obstacles to understanding herself and what freedom means. She is crushed by disappointment at never being "enough" -- especially for a mother who cannot be satisfied.

As Josh and Kati's lives unfold, longing for true freedom reverberates in their souls. Come discover with them the life-transforming power of a "chance encounter"... or is it chance after all?

What Stephanie Thinks: If you've lived long enough, you know that nothing in life is a coincidence. Ever witness a miracle? It probably wasn't unintentional, and if you think about it closely, received help from a stranger hand. Though in *The Blackberry Bush*, this type of intervention is implied to be spiritual, I don't think you have to be Christian (or religious, for that matter) to understand the concept.

Angelo, the unseen and almost unreal narrator who ins and outs from the telling of this story -- or these stories, I should say -- tampers with the lives of not only our protagonists, Kati and Josh, but also with those of their ancestors, the ones who have shaped their life stories as they know it. He can be considered an angel. Or maybe even God. But I find that part irrelevant, as I'm not a fanatical Christian. For all we know, Angelo could represent a loving grandparent. Or he may not be a person at all, and could instead symbolize the random acts of kindness strangers maneuver.

To sum up the plot, Josh and Kati live very separate, almost opposite, lives, but are more alike than they could imagine. They come from the same lineage, but don't even know of each other's existence. Josh lives in a world that will never please him. Kati lives in a world that can't be pleased. A life-altering event changes both of their destinies, but for different reasons. While Kati gets her life saved, Josh redeems his true moral value when their paths cross. But of course, at the time, they merely think of it as a coincidence. Which, of course we know, doesn't exist.

Housholder's voice is strong and easy to read. The quality of the literature is not sublime, but the connection he draws about life and community both haunts and graces. His figurative story is told simply but flowingly in *The Blackberry Bush*, and for that reason, makes it one of the most thoughtful and remarkable novels of our day.

Stephanie Loves: "I especially like cartwheels. They say boys can't do them, but they are so wrong. I never go a day without cartwheeling. I can even cartwheel along the top of the old stone wall. Mom would wig if she saw that. For an instant in the middle, you feel weightless. There has to be a way to make that moment last longer."

Radical Rating: 7 hearts- A few flaws here and there, but wouldn't mind rereading.

Keilani Ludlow says

The author has a degree in ministry in the Lutheran faith, but based on the books cover, seems to run more of a non-denomination type church.

Basically, it's a story of two kids leading parallel lives, and how they come to find their place with God. The story isn't really religious, though there is talk of church etc. throughout, and it bounces around a lot telling their story, their grandparent's stories, etc, little bits and pieces here and there. The religious message is towards the end and it ties things nicely without being heavy or schmaltzy.

Based on how it's described "not living up to others expectations, being who you are" and stuff like that, I was a tad worried it would be a big excuse for being gay or for having no actual beliefs but it's okay

because you say you love God, you know, the stuff that's so prevalent in the media and the "social" churches now. However, it isn't, and it's really good, the story and the message.

It is different. It does hop around a lot between characters and between time periods. Tiny spoiler, I was concerned that the two main characters would never meet. They sort of do and sort of don't, but it's done well enough that it doesn't feel "unfinished" at the end.

I liked it all the way through, would have given it a 3 star as with all books I like. However, the end elevated it enough that I wrote down some of the things so that I could put them on my wall and remember them for later and was really glad I had read it, so it bumped up to a four star. For me, that's about the highest it gets for most books. 5 star books are the ones for me that are truly a category beyond. 4 star is for the really really good ones.

Wendy Housholder says

David's insight into the thoughts and fears of young adults brings me right back to those years...It is gratifying to see that, despite not being picture-perfect, his characters have the ability to make something good out of their lives, and find their purpose. A good read for anyone in their "child-launching" years, and also for those young folks about to launch!

Mary says

Is it true that when Satan was banished from Heaven he fell into a blackberry bush and cursed the brambles as he fell into them?

Brambles and fruit, a "bush" that grows snarled within itself, wild with the veracity of a holy terror. A character named Angelo starts this story telling of his witness of the birth of a baby girl born in America on 9/11 ... simultaneously bearing witness to the birth of a baby boy born in Germany on 11/9 (European style) ... the day the Berlin wall fell.

What they share is a seemingly random destiny as tangled as a blackberry bush. Their family trees intertwine; his side and her side. The simple story can be skimmed, or experienced on many levels of profound depths, as the author mingles symbolism and metaphors to tell story inside of story inside of story.

"Life is like a coin with two sides — destiny and random chance. The truth is, each side grows out of the other." Storytelling doesn't get any better than this. The Blackberry Bush is brilliant.

Sorinamckay says

I was drawn to this book by the the title cover and eagerly awaited an unfolding tale of two families on different continents their destinies intertwined. The potential for the storyline could have been so much more than Housholder delivered. I kept hoping that the charecters would rise from the pages and enthrall me. However they never did. Yes the relationship between Kati and her Opa was warm and supportive but still it lacked depth.

Possibly my attitudes were affected by my families personal experiences of the war. Nothing is straight forward and simple. People make decisions because of a myriad of reasons and influences. Housholder was unable to convince or connect me to his characters or events. Nellie's big moment, her decision to commit adultery and become romantically involved with the enemy took less time to develop than my shopping list.

To be fair I did finish the novel and it wasn't a difficult read. David Housholder unfortunately is fooling himself if he believes that The Blackberry Bush has more depth than the "dated classic Catcher in the Rye", please don't dumb down an entire generation.

Lesson learned - don't judge a book by the cover- it may not live up to cover design.

Maureen Timerman says

I love the look of this book with its tattered pages and paperback hardcover look.

The story is about an intertwined family, who really don't know each other.

The book begins in 1989 in both the US and in Germany when two babies [Kati and Josh] are born, and the Berlin Wall is coming down. Watching this while eating Blackberries is Angelo...who is either a Spirit or an Angel.

We go through their lives and the book ends in 2032...there are chance meetings of the two in the book. The heartbreak that unites them is both sad and a double Love story.

I would recommend reading this book, it is an enjoyable story.

I was provided with a copy of this book by B & B Media Group, and was not required to give a positive review.

Luke Allison says

A genuinely unique entry in the Young Adult genre. Housholder seems to have paid close attention to the practical reality of "spiritual awakening" experiences, and crafted a journey that feels authentic in its portrayal of such things.

Perhaps his most successful creation is Kati, angst-ridden arty teenager, and one of the primary POV characters, who could very easily become a stereotype in the wrong hands (I've read this type of character far too many times). Housholder handles her inner monologue with a deft hand, however, making her feelings resonate with all of us created in the image of God. You don't have to be alienated and outcast to empathize with her.

The structure of the novel is intriguing as well, moving gracefully from time period to time period, and presenting a present-tense narration that calls up vivid, immediate images.

This novel does contain spiritual content, but the days of being afraid of such things should fall behind us. While heavy-handed nonsense has certainly been churned out ad nauseum in the past ten years or so (pretty up the covers all you want, a turd is a turd), the religious or spiritual experience remains one of the common existential themes for most people in the world today. It would be a shame to avoid or ignore this type of content due to a vocal minority's distaste.

For anybody whose heart has been dried out by dead religion, or who is tired of insipid narcissistic offal like "Eat Pray Love", The Blackberry Bush could restore your faith in the unseen, and inspire you to seek out the unseeable.

For its unique voice, bravery, and empathetic characterization, I highly recommend The Blackberry Bush by David Housholder.

Dana Hanson says

The Blackberry Bush is about real life lived by real people. You can actually relate to these characters on a page who quickly become part of your family. Maybe you will recognize them, because you will see yourself, your children, your friends, your parents, grandparents- They are all there.

I began reading The Blackberry Bush because my friend asked me to, and I finished reading the book because I needed to share life with my new friends Kate and Josh, and all the rest. Not since reading A River Runs Through It have I been affected so deeply, down to the soul level, by a work of fiction.

I thank God Dave didn't wait as long as Norman Maclean to get out what had been brewing inside. Please tell me a sequel is coming. I need to see how my kids are doing...

Laura says

Title: THE BLACKBERRY BUSH
Author: David Housholder
Publisher: Summerside Press
June 2011
ISBN: 978-1-6093-6116-7
Genre: fiction/general

In 1989, on the same day the Berlin Wall began to be knocked down, two babies were born, at the exact same time, but due to time zones, different times were recorded. One was a boy, named Josh, who lived in California. The other was a girl, named Kati, who lived in Europe.

THE BLACKBERRY BUSH is kind of a difficult book to review. I read the story, parts of it made me sad enough to cry. Parts of it made me mad. And parts of it made me cry because it was so sweet.

The story is all over the place in time. Going from 1989 to 1999 to 1935, to 2001... etc. but once you start reading you get engaged—and you learn that even though these babies born in different continents are born at the same time on the same day in the same year, they have something else in common. Something in history that will tie them together—and something in the future.

The story is told - not shown, keeping the reader distant, and the ending seems kind of rushed.

I was a bit afraid to start this book when I picked it up and saw how it jumped all over the place in time, but it is actually very good and not confusing at all. It's just very difficult to write a review on without giving anything away. \$14.99. 204 pages.

Nora St Laurent says

I was intrigued by the books cover. When I received my review copy I liked the feel of the book and loved the tattered pages. I highly recommend reading the author interview in the back of the book first. This helps set up the story and allows the reader to understand how this book was put together. In the interview the author reveals his heart and the meaning of the Blackberry Bush. This story was gripping and heart wrenching at times and is not one you want to rush through.

I personally found it hard to read this book in the beginning because It was hard to follow as the author switches from character to character and from present to the future. Then there was an angelic being explaining things in-between! Once I got into the rhythm and felt for these characters it got easier!

This is the story of a twisted family history filled with horrific events and trumpets with a few angelic interventions I was thankful for. This fictional story was written in first person so it seemed to touch the depths of your soul and feel very intimate at times. Almost as if you were overhearing a very private conversation you weren't meant to hear and it touches your heart, affects your breathing and you deeply affects the way you think.

I was thankful for Angelo the narrator of the story and how he explained a few things the reader really needed to know. Everyone has a back-story and comes to a cross roads in their lives that will affect the person making the decision and the generations that will follow in the family line. The aspect of this was huge, something I hadn't considered before. I liked the discussion questions in the back of the book; it brought out so much of the book I hadn't thought of before. I see how this would work well for a book club discussion.

Disclosure of Material Connection: #AD Sponsored by publisher.

I received a complimentary copy of this book from the publisher. I was not required to write a positive review. The opinions I have expressed are my own. I am disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255 "Guides Concerning the Use of Endorsements and Testimonials in Advertising"

The Book Club Network www.bookfun.org

The Book Club Network blog www.psalms16.blogspot.com

Book Fun Magazine www.bookfunmagazine.com

Shannon Mcmannus says

From beginning to end I was captivated. How remarkable it was that you captured personalities of both young and old, male and female. I found myself laughing, nearly crying, at the edge of my couch, huddled in a ball. So much truth and wisdom put into this wonderful story. I definitely have learned a thing or two. To be awake... Thank you for sharing your gift with us.

Keith Posehn says

My buddy, David Householder's Novel, "The Blackberry Bush" is debuting June 1st. I've read a pre-release copy and it's incredible. A story of two kids born on opposite sides of the world the day the Berlin wall fell and how their fates intertwine and their lives collide in a crisis of faith.

David's intense and beautiful writing style will captivate you, his story will move and refresh you, and his message will give you hope. This is a great "Beach read" but make sure you bring your sunglasses because you just might shed a couple tears of joy . . .

www.blackberrynovel.com

Yin Chien ?? says

When David Householder asked me whether or not I would like to review his upcoming novel, The Blackberry Bush, I read the synopsis on Goodreads, and the very first line caught my attention: Two babies, —Kati and Josh, —are born on opposite sides of the world at the very moment the Berlin Wall falls.

This is actually a novel about family relationships, interweaving destinies, and journeys of self-discovery. David Householder successfully brings out this story in a creative way - the story is layered with words of wisdom and the plot moves on with a suitable pace with the help of passages of the past and current events. Although this book has something to do with Christianity, it is not written in a "preachy" style, so readers of other religions can read it without problems of any sort.

I can totally relate to Kati's hurt that involves her not being pretty and likable enough. She has pale skin, black hair and a big nose, and her mother, mutti is never proud of her. She is always comparing her with her beautiful elder sister, Johanna. She always chastises Kati's appearance without even trying to see her good points. Kati's (only) best friend is her grandfather, Opa Harald who looks past her appearance and loves her unconditionally. Opa teaches her all sorts of things, and she loves hanging out with him. The loving relationship between grandfather and granddaughter is really heart-warming.

On the other hand, Josh is a gifted child, but he seems a bit unsure about how he should live his life. I'm not sure how to describe him, but I feel like I'm a little like him in some ways. I'm glad that both Josh and Kati eventually find their ways in life, discover the goodness of God's love and the beauty of life itself.

In a few words, The Blackberry Bush is a moving, thought-provoking novel in which lies a powerful message. It is a book to read and keep.

"Life is like a coin with two sides--destiny and random chance. The truth is, each side grows out of the other. Quantum stuff. And life spins and spins."

For more reviews, please go to:
<http://the-bookaholics.blogspot.com/>

Abbie Riddle says

Absolutely stunning!

This is a book that everyone needs to read. There are so many things that are quote worthy that my copy has

pencil markings all in it and page references marked in the back.

As if the story was not compelling enough the author has been gracious enough to include a section of questions. If you are looking for an excellent book for a book club this is it! You will not be disappointed in the storyline nor will your group have a shortage of discussion regarding the topic.

This is a coming of age story of sorts for two very different people separated by a continent. They are connected by the faith of their grandparents and a story that connects them in ways they never would have guessed. An old story of love, treachery, betrayal of all sorts and the prevailing evidence of God's grace and forgiveness. This story comes together in the third generation and with it comes the finality of God's infinite love and power of restoration.

Join the journey that spans three generations. Be pulled into the story and discover the truth that resonates within the pages. Open your eyes to the back light of your own story - - Allow God to reveal to you the same power in your own life.

The book opens with this quote on page 16, "Walls are real, yet they always come down. Creation and Nature never favor walls. They start to crumble even before the mortar dries."

It ends with the following quotes: "But faith and blessings will always find a way to be fruitful and multiply./Faith like water, will always find its way back to its Source. Carry it, and it will carry you. Receive it from others, and pass it on to them." So profoundly simple: The spiritual foundations we build now will impact other generations, even if for a moment they seem lost.

Finally on page 171 and 172: "It takes a crown of thorns and truly good heart to destroy the wounding of the thorns of life./Curses are meant to be broken./Evil and brokenness are never even any good at being evil and broken. the Pharaoh always ends up at the bottom of the Red Sea. The evil dictator must die by suicide. Good is simply good at being good. And prevailing."

Thank you B&B Publishing for this review copy.
