



Beauty Shop for Rent: . . . fully equipped, inquire within

Laura Bowers

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Abbey Garner has a plan: to earn a million dollars by the time she's thirty-five. Financial independence will allow her to break the cycle of unhappiness endured by the women in her family. Determined to fulfill her dream, Abbey works at Granny Po's struggling beauty shop, where the feisty Gray Widows go to primp, polish, perm . . . and, of course, gossip. There, among the hair dryers and perm rods--and with the help of a new friend--Abbey finds the courage to open her heart and take risks required for her to live life to its fullest.

Debut author Laura Bowers creates a funny and touching first novel about family--both the one we are born to and the one we create ourselves.

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Author : Laura Bowers

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Valerie says

This book is different from what I thought it would be. The girl has real problems and I can understand why she is the way she is. Its has some depth in it, but not anything confusing or unbearable. It has its fun parts too.

Elizabeth Wallace says

Guess where I found this . . . on an awesome list of the books-to-review on Book Muncher! Book muncher, for those of you who don't is a blog where a girl (Rachel, is that her name?) reviews many books. I discovered this because I saw several of her reviews and got curious, so now I'm converting you. Here's a link to the site: <http://thebookmuncher.blogspot.com/>

Anyways, on to the book. I loooved everything about this book. The characters are well-developed, the plot is original, it held my interest all the way through. I also liked it because, although it's a romance, you don't get sucked from the story to the romance and that's what holds you in. But I won't give away what happens, so enough with the romance!

The main character, Abbey, has lived with her great-grandma in a beauty shop for about three years (if I got it right). She's worked in it for about as much time. After, she has to earn a million dollars by the time she's thirty-five. Why does she want to do this? To prove she's not like her mother, grandma, and great-grandma, pregnant and way over their head at a very young age. So she doesn't want to fall in love, doesn't want to be poor. But it's going pretty slow, in a beauty shop that only the Gray Widows and their pals, her (did I mention great) grandma's gang go to. By this time they've pretty much given up hope on that, considerng how long their BEAUTY SHOP FOR RENT, INQUIRE INSIDE (fully equipped) sign has been hanging on their front lawn.

But then someone does come to rent it (duh). And her mother visits. Another thing I like about this book: it's not a chick flick. Though I was expecting it to be one a tiny bit, the entire thing was real problems and real life. Excellent, fun/funny read. Maybe it had to do with the fact that I was up reading it late, but I cracked up laughing sooo many times!

alekxandra says

A little different from the kind of books I usually read, but this one held something really beautiful. Just awhile ago, I was telling my friend about the difference between the family you're born to and the family you make for yourself, unconscious that it was from this book where I got that same idea. I love how it has the right mixture of everything a book like so is supposed to have. Plus, the funny moments and dialogue the author tried to put in are genuinely laughable.

Jennifer Wardrip says

Reviewed by Safia Abdul for TeensReadToo.com

There is nothing like Polly's Parlor, where a free dose of gossip comes with a manicure.

For Abbey Garner, her great-grandmother's old-fashioned beauty shop and the familiar elderly customers are home and family to Abbey ever since her mother left her several years ago. Now fourteen-year-old Abbey works alongside her great-grandmother, Granny Po, giving perms and haircuts and investing her earnings towards her goal of becoming a millionaire before the age of thirty-five.

But in the last few years, the outdated Polly's Parlor hasn't been doing too well due to competition from more modern beauty salons. In fact, Granny Po has been trying to rent out the beauty shop, but nobody has been interested...until now. Gena is a fun and ambitious woman with big plans to turn the beauty shop into a friendly modern-day spa. Can the beauty shop be transformed and still remain Abbey's home?

In addition, between work, high school, and thinking about boys, Abbey is also worrying about her fragile, depressed mother. When she shows up for a surprise visit, Abbey's world is about to be turned completely upside down.

BEAUTY SHOP FOR RENT is the story of a girl growing up and trying to find a place in the world. Realistic, yet humorous, this is a satisfying novel that I'm sure many readers will be able relate to.

Hope Curry says

Very sweet YA fiction with likable characters. As a native Marylander, it was fun to really know the settings that were referenced in the story.

Ash says

I admit that because of the cover I wasn't expecting much from this book. I ended up liking it a lot more than I thought I would.

quick overview: Abbey lives with her great-grandmother and works at her beauty shop saving every penny for her MBTF (millionaire before thirty-five) plan to be financially independent. She is determined not to end up like 3-generations of women before her. Getting pregnant young, what seems to be a tradition for her family. When the beauty shop is finally rented by Gena, a young stylish women, things seem to be going well. She's making money and is sure to reach her MBTF plan. But when her mother (who left her with her great-grandmother four years earlier and has had little contact with Abbey since then) show's up she is forced to look at her life, and in the end realizes who her family really is.

I loved the characters, they were so funny and real. I was cheering for Abbey the whole time and was happy when she had a happy ending. I loved the message and Abbey's story.

Arminzerella says

Abbey Garner comes from a family of women who made some poor decisions – marrying or getting pregnant while they were still teens. She vows that she’s going to break the cycle – she’s not going to fall in love or get knocked up, and she’s going to be able to support herself. Abbey’s goal is to become a millionaire by the time she’s thirty-five. She lives with her great grandma, Granny Po, who has a close-knit circle of friends, the Gray Widows, who come to her beauty shop to hang out and shoot the breeze. Abbey has been working at the shop since she was eleven. The beauty shop itself has been “for rent” for a long time (with no serious inquiries), so it’s a big surprise when Gena Hopkins shows up with plans to turn it into a day spa. The changes that Gena makes to the shop have far-reaching effects – everyone who gets involved with the new business is also changed by the contributions they make.

While all of these changes are going on in the beauty shop, Abbey also has to contend with her feelings for her friend, Mitch Anderson, and for her mother, who essentially abandoned her when she left her in Granny Po’s care. Mitch wants to get closer and Abbey’s afraid to open her heart to anyone – she’s not sure who she can trust. When Abbey’s mother visits her during the holidays, Abbey has to face some harsh truths about her – it’s her anger that has caused most of her problems – and Abbey promises herself that she’s not going to make the same mistakes.

This reminded me of one of Lorna Landvik’s novels – very girl/woman centric with lots of ups and downs (funny and heartbreaking). The relationships and characters are the most important thing here. There are a lot of quirky characters (the Gray Widows are a hoot), and Granny Po is this cantankerous Force of nature. While Abbey has a lot of fears and feelings to overcome/unravel, her determination is infectious. It’s nice to read about a young person who knows what she wants and has a plan for getting it – even when that all changes. The fact that she can change says something about her strength. Teens and adults who like quirky, feel-good, character-driven stories will love this.

Yalonda says

I had one of my students choose a "Blind Date with a Book" book for me. When we opened it, we were both rather leery of it. The title coupled with people on the cover? It just didn't sound like our sort of book but I thanked her & promised to suffer through the date. I am so glad I did. I connected with this book when I didn't really expect to do so. The 'feels' were incredibly rich: feeling like the odd man out because you are so dedicated to a plan/idea that you forget that there is more to life than the plan; being betrayed by the person you love & trust; being knocked down despite your best plans; having to find the strength to get back up; and finding true happiness in the family you create for yourself. I am so blessed to have a biological family that is close and loving. But seeing as I have spent almost 20 years of my life an ocean away from them, I am so glad I have been able to create another family here. This book touches on all of that and has a wonderful slant for YA readers. What a surprisingly wonderful read!

Allison says

This book is a sweet, sort of breezy read.

Tranna Foley says

From Follett, "Raised by a great-grandmother and a bunch of beauty shop buddies, fourteen-year-old Abbey resolves to overcome her unhappy childhood and disillusionment with the mother who deserted her."

This book is a Missouri Gateway Award nominee for 2009-2010. I really enjoyed reading it (and I didn't think I would). The cover makes it look like "fluff," but it has a good message for teens.

Review from Publishers Weekly (May 21, 2007):

Fourteen-year-old Abbey Garner, the star of Bowers's debut novel, has lived with her great-grandmother Granny Po since her mother abandoned her three years earlier. Abbey believes the women in her family are cursed because, starting with Granny Po, each had a baby by age 17. ("Not only did the women in my family inherit overly fertile eggs, they each married men who were total, complete, and absolute duds.") Abbey is determined to avoid the same fate; instead, she intends to become a millionaire by age 35. Working at her grandmother's beauty shop and on her neighbor's horse farm, Abbey is well on her way to her financial goal, yet she still hopes to be reunited with her mother. Then Gena Hopkins breezes into town and rents Granny Po's beauty shop, transforming it into a posh day spa and giving Abbey a new job and an ambitious, entrepreneurial role model. During a rare visit, Abbey's mother promises they'll be reunited as soon as she can afford a down payment on a house. Reluctantly, Abbey hands over her savings, but she soon discovers her mother has deceived her. Teens will find Abbey's emotional turmoil rings true, as does the reason behind her final act of forgiveness. But it's the multigenerational friendships--the feisty, sniping conversations with Granny Po and her close circle of friends, "The Widows," brim with humor--that make Bowers's first novel a delight. Ages 12-up. (May) Copyright 2007 Reed Business Information.

Minli says

I would really rate this book 3.5 stars, but it appealed to my sentimental side so I'm rounding up.

Some girls like to read about glitz and glamour, high society, balls, gorgeous clothes, and the decidedly upstairs portion of *Upstairs, Downstairs*. Actually, lots of girls do, which is why franchises such as *The Princess Diaries* and *Gossip Girl* are so popular, and why society as a whole just can't stop obsessing about Hollywood starlets or young royals.

And yes, I like that too, sometimes. But those girls don't capture my heart, not like Mattie from *A Northern Light* or D.J. Schwenk from *Dairy Queen* or Kel from the *The Protector of the Small* books. In fact, if you go through my favourites list, most of them are books about girls who *work*. I am proud to add Abbey from *Beauty Shop for Rent* to this list.

Fourteen-year-old Abbey lives with her great-grandmother, Granny Po, who runs an old school beauty shop. No gleaming walls or fancy spa treatments--instead there's 70s decor and the biting wit of a group of old ladies. No one under fifty is seen in the shop except for Abbey.

The problem, of course, is that the beauty shop is operating at a loss, which Abbey is acutely aware of. She's an oddity--a tenth grader who takes far more interest in finance and investments than she does parties or popularity. She works every weekend and after school, sweeping, cleaning, shampooing, manning the register. Abbey, having been abandoned by both of her parents when she was eleven, never wants to rely on anyone--and sees financial independence as the solution to everything. I give the girl props, she wants to be a millionaire by the time she's 35. And as Abbey well knows, the sign "Beauty Shop for Rent" has been up for

two years, with no prospective buyers... until Gena comes along.

The characters are fantastic. Caddie and Rosemary and the rest of Granny Po's Widows are unforgettable, and Gena is one of the best role models a girl could have. Unfortunately, Abbey has mommy issues, which was excruciating but understandable to read. You just want to smack her for pining over her mother despite being let down again and again, and still hug and feel sorry for her. And don't even get me started on Mitch.

Still, this book is ultimately empowering and everything that should happen, does. It's like comfort food for me, hearty and warm with the plus side of not making me feel guilty.

Rachael says

Ambitious Abbey Garner spends a lot of her time hard at work at her great-grandmother Granny Po's quaint though struggling beauty shop. It's all part of her MBTF plan; Abbey has vowed to make a million dollars before she is thirty-five so she can be financially independent and not follow in her family's tradition of getting pregnant young with the wrong man. When Gena, a posh young woman, decides to rent the beauty shop and turn it into a modern spa, Abbey is both excited and little apprehensive. She fears losing her job, but once Gena assures Abbey that her employment is guaranteed, Abbey realizes that she will be able to make some real money. But Abbey's carefully constructed plans are altered when Abbey's mother, who abandoned her four years earlier, reenters Abbey's life. Abbey must learn to see through the lies and figure out who her family really is.

There is something so down-to-earth about Beauty Shop for Rent that makes the story so likeable. The characters have no shame, which was sometimes a little shocking but mostly refreshing because of their honesty. I loved how all of the characters were nicely developed, especially Abbey and Granny Po, who were my favorite characters. I also loved watching Abbey mature through the story. All the characters' connections were easy to understand. I really loved Abbey's family of friends, because though each contrasted another slightly, they all fit together perfectly. Laura Bowers wrote this story in a way that even though specific years and locations are given, it seem that this story could happen anytime and anyplace. I had a hard time believing Beauty Shop for Rent was a debut novel because it was so incredibly well-written.

Fans of Stephanie Kuehnert's I Wanna Be Your Joey Ramone will also enjoy Abbey's coming-of-age story in Beauty Shop for Rent. I definitely recommend this funny, cute, and beautiful story to all readers.

reposted from <http://thebookmuncher.blogspot.com>

Stephanie A. says

Adorable story. I want to be Abbey and/or work at this beauty shop. THIS is how you write empowering, female-focused stories with universal appeal.

Lori says

This book is so sweet. I loved it because the main character was strong despite her unmeasurable vulnerability. I appreciated the honesty and underlying message of "what you do now may screw up your

kids later."

viemag says

Beauty Shop For Rent by Laura Bowers is a cute book that is a quick read (I finished it in one day!). I enjoyed the characters, especially the main character, Abby and her Granny Po. The secondary characters of The Widows, Gena, Sara, and Mitch were also very interesting although Sara and Mitch weren't very well developed characters. The plot is quick moving and comes with enough surprises that the reader does not get bored.
