



Sea Music: A Novel

Sara MacDonald

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A beautifully written novel with great emotional appeal, of family secrets and wartime heritage, set in Cornwall, London and Warsaw. The house and the cottage overlooking the sea, on the corner of the big estate, was home to three generations of the Tremain family. Fred Tremain, the country doctor who - with his wife, Martha, for whose sake he had become estranged from his family - came first to this beloved corner of England: Anna, the difficult, determined older child, now a highly successful solicitor; and Barnaby, the easy-going second child, now a vicar to the parish; and the beloved granddaughter, Lucy. It is she whose discoveries of family papers, hidden in the old cottage, brings to light the first of the wartime secrets and begins the process of questioning so many old fears and hatreds, and unlocking the way to new relationships and new loves. Sara Macdonald has created a wonderful range of characters, depicted with great tenderness and understanding, against a background of the human price paid for the upheavals caused by prejudice, violence and wars today and yesterday. A wonderful novel for all the fans of Anita Shreve, Niall Williams and Rosamund Pilcher.

Sea Music: A Novel Details

Date : Published May 17th 2005 by Atria (first published April 22nd 2003)

ISBN : 9780743482127

Author : Sara MacDonald

Format : Hardcover 416 pages

Genre : Fiction, Novels

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Sally Andrews says

This was an AMAZING book. I thought it started slowly, but the author was really just doing a masterful job of introducing and building the characters. The story was one of modern times, with flashbacks to WWII, and the sad plight of the Jews. As one former Nazi comes to realize the horror of what he did, the story spins into one of many twists. It's all explained as we go along, and done beautifully. Extremely good read.

Kani says

quite an all encompassing story from holocaust experiences in poland to alzheimers disease in cornwall, from abandoned children to sibling miscommunication and regret. actually it was a good story raising some interesting questions but it was also a long book and i found myself saying to them more than once: just tell the secret! they were too polite, or so frustratingly isolated in their response to the family "history" that i was frustrated. but maybe that's the point. well written and a deep subject in many ways.

Mandy Szuchnik-townrow says

Have you ever looked at the cover of a book and thought "No it's not for me" that's what I did when a friend gave me this book to read however after reading the blurb I'm so glad I decided to give it a go. It's been a while since I've picked up a book and not wanted to put it down and work, eat or sleep! This story spans over the life of 3 generations of 3 women, Martha the jewish grandmother with dementia, Anna her cold and somewhat bitter daughter and Lucy, Martha's granddaughter and the apple of her eye.

Rianne Kool says

Wat een prachtig boek!

Ellen says

This is a beautiful yet sad and touching story about the generational effects of WWII Jews and what they endured at the hands of the nazis. But it's not all gruesome. It is beautifully written and the characters come alive as if you know them--if you could live in a small village and take life slower than most people.

Again, the title means nothing to the story. Yes, it takes place near the water, but that's about it. I mean, there's no music associated with the sea or living near it. There are images throughout of the different moods around the sea and regarding the weather, which were done quite well.

I recommend this book and look forward to more by Sara MacDonald. She has a gift for bringing out the hearts of hurt people without making a big mess of their lives.

Martina says

Mooi verhaal over de familie Tremain, waarbij steeds flashbacks waren naar de holocaust. Het verhaal is heel goed geschreven, waardoor je echt van sommige familieleden houdt en voor sommige een antipathie voelt. Naast het historische gedeelte wordt ook ruim aandacht besteed aan de "tegenwoordige tijd", kortom een fijn boek!!! Een ding.....misschien super dom, maar ik snap de titel Zeemuziek niet zo, geen flauw idee waarom het noem deze titel draagt. Niet anders dan dat de familie al jaren vlakbij het strand woont, maar dan nog?

Pbwritr says

Okay, not great. Too much telling and not showing. Too much inclusion of Holocaust information as if it were unknown and the reader should gasp and be surprised. So, perhaps trite is the word. Family drama about an older set of parents in failing health, their memories, and their--gasp--horrible secret--that the mother had been in Auschwitz and the daughter conceived in rape by a childhood friend. The mother had been cosseted all her years by husband (who knew) and children (who didn't). Set in Cornwall, England, but just too much mundane detail.

Patricia says

Meine Meinung

Wir befinden uns in Cornwall, in einem kleinen idyllischen Ort und in einem Haus nah an der Küste. In diesem Haus begegnen wir Martha und Fred, die beide am Ende ihres Lebens stehen und von ihrem Sohn Barney und seiner Nichte gepflegt werden. Martha leider unter Alzheimer und kann sich immer schwerer daran erinnern, wer die Menschen sind, die sie umgeben. Fred seinerseits ist wie immer besorgt um Martha und selbst doch auch schwer krank. Eines Tages findet Lucy Papiere auf dem Dachboden, die belegen, dass die Lebensgeschichte die Martha ihnen allen immer erzählt hat nicht der Wahrheit entspricht. Es stellt sich heraus, dass sie als junges jüdisches Mädchen nicht vor den Nazis in Sicherheit gebracht wurde, sondern die gesamte Palette an Gräueltaten miterleben musste. Nach der Befreiung aus Auschwitz sank sie dann halbtot Fred in die Arme, der sie nicht nur wieder aufpäppelte sondern schließlich auch heiratete und dafür von seiner eigenen Familie verstoßen wurde.

Das Buch beginnt zu Beginn mit einer sehr beklemmenden Stimmung, da Fred und Martha sehr krank sind und offensichtlich dem Ende ihres Lebens entgegenblicken. Ihr Sohn Barney versucht seinen Eltern einen Lebensabend in ihrer gewohnten Umgebung zu ermöglichen, gerät aber in dieser Frage mit seiner Schwester Anna aneinander. Sie möchte ihre Eltern lieber in einem Heim unterbringen. Anna ist ein sehr interessanter Charakter in dieser Geschichte. Sie ist undurchschaubar, weil sie sich selbst nicht versteht. Sie wird immer wieder von schrecklichen Flashbacks gequält, die sie nicht einordnen kann. Ihren Eltern gegenüber verhält sie sich sehr distanziert auch wenn es im Laufe der Geschichte offensichtlich wird, dass sie ihr eine möglichst liebevolle Kindheit geschenkt haben.

Wie erleben Marthas Geschichte in vielen Flashbacks. Wir sehen sie als junges Mädchen, dass als Tochter eines Arztes wohlbehütet aufwächst. Wir lernen die junge Frau kennen, die schon unter der Naziherrschaft

unglaubliches Leid erfahren muss und wir bekommen sogar Einblicke in ihr Leben als junge Mutter. Dabei erzählt Sara MacDonald die Geschichte mit viel Gefühl und die Sprache ist darauf ausgelegt beim Leser Emotionen zu wecken. Manchmal war mir dies etwas zu zugespitzt und ich hätte mir an der ein oder anderen Stelle etwas weniger Pathos gewünscht. Auch die eingeschoben wirkende Liebesgeschichte zwischen Barney und der jungen Aussteigerin Kate, passt meiner Meinung nicht zum eigentlichen Handlungsverlauf und hätte gut weggelassen werden können.

Interessant zu lesen waren die unterschiedlichsten Verarbeitungsmechanismen der Charaktere als sie Stück für Stück Marthas Lebensgeschichte erfahren und damit auch ihre eigenen Wurzeln entdecken. Jeder Charakter des Buches Barney, Lucy und Anna geht anders und doch sehr nachvollziehbar mit dem Enthüllungen um. Besonders interessant war auch der Charakter von Marthas Jugendfreund Kurt, der schließlich zu den Nazis übergelaufen ist und damit seine beste Freundin verraten hat. Die Geschehnisse des Krieges und seine Rolle darin haben ihn zeitlebens nicht mehr losgelassen und ihm ein glückliches Leben versagt. Auf der anderen Seite steht Martha, die trotz der erduldeten Leids glücklich war.

Fazit

"Was längst vergessen schien" von Sara Macdonald ist ein tieftrauriges und erschütterndes Buch, dass an den Grundfesten des erträglichen rüttelt. Trotzdem schenkt die Geschichte Hoffnung in dem sie aufzeigt, dass im Endeffekt jeder Mensch für sein Glück selbst verantwortlich ist und es nur ergreifen muss. Mir hat die Geschichte gut gefallen auch wenn mir der sprachliche Pathos und die gezwungene Liebesgeschichte dann doch etwas zuviel waren. Insgesamt vergebe ich für dieses Buch dreieinhalb Sterne!

Trina Hollis says

History. Romance and mystery all rolled into one book and a happy ending as well, brilliant.

Diana Scheffler says

A story of two young children, both born into wealth (their fathers were doctors); one a Jew and one a German. The fathers practice medicine together until the war, where things get very dicey for the Jewish family. However, as the book goes on and times change, secrets are revealed about both families that will leave you reeling. A well developed plot and characters with some very heart wrenching situations. It is a very thoughtfully written story about the price humans pay for prejudice and violence and family secrets. If you decide to read this wonderful book, make sure to have a box of tissues next to you.

vicky becker says

Loved it

Engaging story. Characters and plot unfold gradually. Personalized the affect of the Holocaust on individuals without being a depressing story.

Paula White says

Neither the title nor the cover do this book justice. It should be re-published with both changed. I was drawn into their stories until I forgot everything around me. At times I would take a break because the nature of the Holocaust part of the story was so difficult to sit with. The writing is different but becomes a rhythm once you keep reading. It will bring you to tears and make you appreciate every ordinary day.

Michelle Dickerson says

I found this book very difficult to "get into"...until about halfway through. Several times I almost gave up. But, I'm glad I persevered and finished it. The story was amazing, but the way it was told made it unnecessarily complicated for me...trying to figure out what stories went with what characters. Initially all was identified only by varying typefaces, and it was a well into the book before the reader could figure out what typeface belonged to what character and even the names of the characters. I appreciate the "creativity" of telling a story that way, but sometimes a good story is best told simply. My opinion...I'm sure many will disagree. But, overall, I did enjoy the book and appreciate the insight into the trauma of both the Holocaust and Alzheimer's.

Julia Julia says

"You can't judge a book by its cover." How many times do we hear this proverb? And yet so often we do judge books by their covers. We pick up books that look similar to those we have liked. We rule out books that look similar to those we haven't liked. We believe the work of the marketing teams who pitch their books at us.

A novel that proves the underlying truth of the proverb is "Sea Music" by Sara MacDonald. It looks like a cheap holiday read.

I think the marketing team got it wrong in this case. This novel packs a powerful punch and deals with some brutal issues. The atrocities of the second world war are the thread holding the plot together – along with the more recent atrocities of the fighting in the Balkans.

Wylie Small says

I thought this book was mediocre. The first half is slow and, although the second half is better, the author spends more time telling the reader about what is happening than showing the reader through character actions and dialogue. And speaking of dialogue, I found the dialogue very distracting. Who, in 2017, calls people "dear so-and-so" and "dearest so-and-so" in conversation? Everyone did this in the book - it didn't matter if they were 90 or 20. Additionally, I found the relationship between Barnaby and Kate implausible and most of the characters fairly one dimensional. I was interested in how the story would turn out, hence the two stars, but overall this is not a book I would recommend. If you're looking for a book which

chronicles the stories from the Holocaust, I much prefer Bohjalian's "Skeletons at the Feast" or Richman's "The Lost Wife."
