



The Winters in Bloom

Lisa Tucker

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In bestselling author Lisa Tucker's latest, a family discovers that it's only when the walls between the present and past crumble that the future can bloom.

Together for over a decade, Kyra and David Winter are happier than they ever thought they could be. They have a comfortable home, stable careers, and a young son, Michael, who they love more than anything. Yet because of their complicated histories, Kyra and David have always feared that this domestic bliss couldn't last - that the life they created was destined to be disrupted. And on one perfectly average summer day, it is: Michael disappears from his own backyard.

The only question is whose past has finally caught up with them: David feels sure that Michael was taken by his troubled ex-wife, while Kyra believes the kidnapper must be someone from her estranged family, someone she betrayed years ago.

As the Winters embark on a journey of time and memory to find Michael, they will be forced to admit these suspicions, revealing secrets about themselves they've always kept hidden. But they will also have a chance to discover that it's not too late to have the family they've dreamed of; that even if the world is full of risks, as long as they have hope, the future can bloom.

Lyrical, wise, and witty, *The Winters in Bloom* is Lisa Tucker's most optimistic work to date. This enchanting, life-affirming story will charm readers and leave them full of wonder at the stubborn strength of the human heart.

The Winters in Bloom Details

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Author : Lisa Tucker

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From Reader Review The Winters in Bloom for online ebook

Marla says

I have mixed emotions about this book. The beginning with the kidnapping seemed like this could be a really good suspenseful book. But then we started getting the back stories of David and Kyra. The chapters jumped around between different times and different parts of their lives. There were several times I was lost. Might have been because this book just wasn't holding my interest. Several times I almost quit reading altogether but I'm one to finish a book unless it is truly awful. This one was just boring. I don't think I really got interested until about 30 pages left. Michael, the little boy who is taken, really isn't mentioned much. This book just didn't do it for me. It didn't suck me into the story, didn't draw me to the characters and didn't make me care for any of them. I was so hoping this was going to be good. But I was disappointed.

Lisa B. says

Book Overview from Goodreads:

Kyra and David Winter are happier than they ever thought they could be. They have a comfortable home, stable careers, and a young son, Michael, whom they love more than anything. Yet because of their complicated histories, Kyra and David have always feared that the life they created was destined to be disrupted. And on one perfectly average summer day, it is: Michael disappears from his own backyard. The only question is whose past has finally caught up with them: David feels sure that Michael was taken by his troubled ex-wife, while Kyra believes the kidnapper must be someone from her estranged family, someone she betrayed years ago.

As the Winters embark on a journey of time and memory to find Michael, they will be forced to admit these suspicions, revealing secrets about themselves they've always kept hidden. But they will also have a chance to discover that it's not too late to have the family they've dreamed of; that even if the world is full of risks, as long as they have hope, the future can bloom.

My Thoughts:

I liked this book. Poor little Michael –his parents have so many restrictions, if he were older than five, he might have actually put a sign around his neck that said GET ME OUT OF HERE. On the day he was taken, it was only the second time his Mom had let him outside by himself and this was after reading a book about letting kids be free range!

I won't be ruining anything by letting you know that fairly early in the book, we find out that the police find a "happy kidnapper note" explaining that the person who took Michael does not intend to hurt him and will return him soon. So this isn't a scary book about a child kidnapping, but the story of Kyra and David's past, their perception of mistakes made early in their lives and how they feel it has led to Michael's disappearance. The author weaves a good tale and throws a twist in at the end that I did not see coming.

This book was published 9/13/11.

I would like to thank netGalley and Simon & Schuster Publishing, Inc. for allowing me to read this copy.

You can see this and other book reviews on my blog:

<http://bookaholique.blogspot.com/>

Dale Harcombe says

I hate writing negative reviews but in this case I can't help it. I was really looking forward to reading this book. The premise of this story was good with a child, Michael who disappears from his own backyard. The suspicion is he has been abducted. Yes, another one. I seem to have read a few on this vein lately. Maybe that was part of the problem. But I don't think so.

So many times I nearly gave up on this book. In the end I wished I had. Sheer stubbornness kept me reading but I admit to skimming, largely because I found the story never grabbed me as I had expected it would.

What was the problem? Firstly the characters, Michael's parents, Kyra and David nearly drove me to distraction with their obsessive over protective behaviour. Yes, the author tries to give good reasons for it from their past but it never convinced me. I found them annoying.

Add to that Courtney, David's ex wife and Amy, Kyra's older sister who both feature as background stories are filled in and I felt like I was surrounded by a case of characters that I didn't. The characters all seemed to have certain sameness about them. They never felt real. I also found the style of writing lack something as it jumped around. Though I have liked others of this author's book, which was initially why I picked this up, my advice on this one is not to bother.

Kathryn Bashaar says

This book was pretty bad. It could have been a good book. The premise was interesting and the characters were likable. But it read like a first draft: tons of this-happened-then-this-happened-then-this-happened exposition that should have been turned into scenes, lots of telling instead of showing, clunky language, and really convoluted motivations for some of the characters that had to be awkwardly explained. It needed 2-3 more rewrites before it went to print. This is the author's 6th book, so I'm really surprised at how amateurish it was. She must have been under time pressure, or just gotten lazy. And who was the editor who let this go to press the way it was?!

Sarah (Workaday Reads) says

Kyra and David Winter are both super cautious people because of their painful pasts. Both fear they don't deserve the happiness they currently have and that it will not last. Their worse fears are confirmed when their five year old son Michael disappears from their yard in the middle of the afternoon. Both parents are convinced the kidnapper is someone from their past, and now they must surrender their fears and confess what, and who, they are each hiding.

This is a powerful and emotional book. It is as much a story about each of their pasts as it is about the current kidnapping of Michael. These pasts are sad and heartbreaking. Both Kyra and David have been through horrific situations at a young age, and now they are forced to confront and relive them as they try to figure out who stole their son.

While I loved this book, I disagree with the descriptions calling it an "optimistic... enchanting, life-affirming story". I did not find it positive or uplifting in any sense. To me, this is a story about pain and sorrow and learning to move beyond your past in order to have a happy present. This is a story that tugs at your heart strings, and makes you feel for all the characters. There are no true good and bad characters, just realistic people with heavy burdens.

I would recommend this book to readers who like family stories, and readers who like emotional stories. This is definitely a book that fits both of those criteria, and then some.

Christina (A Reader of Fictions) says

When I started reading my e-galley of *The Winters in Bloom*, I noticed first the page at the beginning where the publisher was talking about how much she loved this book and how it was the best one of the year. Her praise was so high that I kind of rolled my eyes, thinking that she loves it because it will make her money. I am happy to report that the book really was that good. From the absolutely incredible first chapter, I was totally involved in the story.

My one previous experience with Lisa Tucker proved disappointing (*The Song Reader*), perhaps because my expectations were really high. I own a couple of her other books, but haven't gotten to them yet. I am now super glad that I have them.

So yeah, I mentioned how mindblowing the first chapter was. The book opens from Michael's point of view (although in third person) and you can see how much he has been affected by his parent's worries. Young as he is, he has already inherited their fear of everything, as evidenced in the first line: "He was the only child in a house full of doubt." Five years old and he looks around thinking about the many ways he could get injured. This is what he was doing in his time in the backyard by himself when the nice lady came and asked him if he wanted to go on a ride. Wow. Just wow.

While the rest of the story was not as dramatic and intense as this one, the story definitely maintained its beautiful simplicity. I loved finding out what had happened to the various characters to make them into who they now were. There are a lot of hints as you go along, allowing you to make your own suppositions (I was right about David/Courtney, but wrong about Kyra).

If you like stories of family drama and broken people, this is one that is not to be missed. What a completely beautiful, depressing, uplifting story!

Kathleen says

I found this book mostly rather uninteresting. The story of the Winter family - Kyra, David and their son, Michael, is meant to be an uplifting tale of the importance of risk and trust and I imagine some other points that I missed, but it ends up just mostly being a slog. We get the whole annoying backstory on both Kyra and David and are supposed to understand why they are ridiculously overprotective of their son and also why they fall apart when he is abducted (wouldn't everyone?).

I think I was supposed to understand what motivated both Kyra and David and empathize with them, but instead, I found what they did largely unforgivable. The book ends predictably (I mean, seriously, you can see it coming a mile away), but I had pretty much lost interest by that point.

Debra Martin says

Doubt is a powerful emotion especially when it spills over into a child's world. Children are very perceptive

and can easily pick up on a parent's thinking whether it is verbally expressed or not. I doubt he can climb that tree, so we mustn't let him try. Doubt is pervasive whether we want it to be or not.

Five-year-old Michael lives in an environment of doubt. Although his parents, David and Kyra Winter, believe they are doing everything possible to raise a happy healthy child, what they are actually doing is dampening little Michael's free spirit and making him question every natural instinct he has. Because they micro-manage every part of his life, the little boy does not realize that it's not part of his parent's well-orchestrated plan when a stranger shows up in his back yard and asks him to come with her. Of course, Michael says "yes."

So begins the worst nightmare for any parent – their child has been kidnapped. There are no clues and even though both David and Kyra were home at the time, neither of them saw the kidnapper take Michael. As they struggle to come to grips with the situation, they each must face some horrible truths about their respective pasts. Neither has been totally forthcoming with each other during their marriage about their past relationships and now they must not only face their demons, but also face each other. Has their marriage and their life together been nothing but a lie? Can they survive the scrutiny and come out whole on the other side? Does one of them know who the kidnapper is?

These are the questions that Ms. Tuckers explores as she takes the reader on a roller coaster of emotions. She does a masterful job revealing the secrets from both David' and Kyra's past. My one complaint was that the clues surrounding the "Dear Mother" letters were too subtle and it caused some confusion about one of the characters. It wasn't until I had finished the book that I realized who was writing the letters. The letters themselves make a powerful statement and I would have enjoyed that part of the book more if I had known who was writing them earlier in the story.

All in all, this book is full of wonderfully fleshed-out characters. Ms. Tucker does an exceptional job with little Michael's voice. He was my favorite character of all. Recommended.

Cynthia says

Where's my Mommy?

Winters in Bloom is an intergenerational book centered on the loss or lack or just bad parenting. Mostly it's moms who are derided but dads don't come out too great either. Two small girls, Amy and Kyra, watch as their mom packs up the car and leaves her daughters weeping and alone on the front doorstep. They never recover. Though they have a father and stepmother they always feel the only one they can count on is one another. Amy tries to be perfect, perfect grades, behavior, looks and Kyra buries herself in books. When they finally escape from their tiny Missouri town and go to college in Kansas City their lives do open up more but not necessarily for the better.

Kyra's husband to be is David and though he has a brutal father his mother is over the top wonderful. By the time they meet David and Kyra have had tragedies in their pasts involving the loss of children which leads them to decide to marry but to remain childless. Until they change their minds. Their son Michael quickly becomes the center of their world not only because they love him to distraction but because they're so overprotective of him. "What could go wrong?" is always playing through their heads. While their story is engaging and there is a nice twist about a quarter of the way through the characters never quite lift off the page. They're either too syrupy good or over the top damaged or selfish. The revelations of some mysteries are nicely paced.

3.5/5

Michelle says

The Winters in Bloom is a chilling portrait of a modern family and how they react when their greatest fear is realized. As the story goes back and forth from David and Kyra's memories to their present-day sufferings, the reader is left to guess as to Michael's whereabouts and to the identity of his kidnapper. Ms. Tucker explores the long-lasting impact of secrets on relationships.

Kyra and David are so filled with fear that they make one uncomfortable. How they can say they are living life is completely questionable. As for the impact of their fears on Michael, one's heart goes out to him for being hampered by his parents' rules, which do nothing to protect him in the end anyway. In seeing Kyra and David's rules through Michael's eyes, the reader is left questioning whether Michael's parents are causing more harm than good.

As for the much-touted secrets harbored by both Kyra and David, they are decidedly anti-climactic. Both are so scared, that the reader's expectations are artificially raised. The secrets, when finally exposed, are serious but nothing that would require keeping it private from everyone, at least in my opinion. The reader can all but feel the tension leave the story after the big reveal as a result.

There is something fundamentally lacking in The Winters in Bloom that prevented me from enjoying the novel as much as I hoped. Considering a large majority of the action dealt around keeping secrets from loved ones, I struggled finding common ground with any of the characters. I do not buy the fact that two people who are supposedly so in love would hide such secrets for such a long time. The fact that they do is ultimately the root of all their problems and is depressing for how avoidable it all is. While I understand that this is the point, it is a rather gloomy image of trust in relationships that forces the book to fall flat for me.

Acknowledgements: Thank you to Atria Books for my review copy!

Ti says

The Short of It:

I opened the book and fell right in.

The Rest of It:

Kyra and David are happily married, have a nice home and have stable careers. They live with their son Michael and things could not be more perfect. But in the back of their minds, because of decisions they made in the past, they expect tragedy at every turn and it hits when Michael suddenly vanishes from their backyard.

This is really an amazing book. I know it's gotten some mixed reviews but if you enjoy dysfunction, let me tell you...this family is about as dysfunctional as you can get. The characters are beautifully flawed and vulnerable. These people have secrets. Secrets that have eaten away at them for years and years. They are burdened with guilt, filled with resentment and yearning for normalcy. Tucker does an amazing job of

creating an angst ridden novel without making it depressing. In fact, it's quite hopeful and I found myself cheering for this family and wanting things to end well for them.

This was my first Lisa Tucker novel. In the past, I avoided her books because they seemed a tad light for me, but this one had plenty of meat on its bones and left me thinking about it long after I finished reading it. All I had to do was open the book, read the first page and immediately I was sucked in. I read this with another blogger and she felt the same way!

For more book reviews, visit my blog: [Book Chatter](#)

Patty says

My Quick Summary...

This is the story of two families who become oddly connected due to a tragedy. This has to be explained by understanding the earlier life of one of the characters, Kyra , and the first marriage of Kyra's husband, David, to his first wife, Courtney.

The characters in this story have all been touched by some sort of abandonment that leads Kyra and David to totally over protect their five year old son.

At first it was difficult to understand why this overprotection was so over the top but as the story plays out it becomes very clear that they are so afraid of any harm falling upon their son that they will take drastic measures to protect him.

My Thoughts And Reactions...

The telling of the story itself was delicious in its dysfunction.

This was a book that sort of made me read it in huge chunks just because I could not bear to not know what was happening. I thought I would read a page or two more and before I knew it I had read another fifty pages.

I almost want to say that these characters had fascinating flaws...in one family a mother leaves her two daughters and they never see her again. This leads to sort of messed in the head daughters, divorce , custody battles..sort of basic ordinary dysfunction told in a fascinating addictive ingenious manner...I did not think I would like this book and I loved it...devoured it...ate it up and every single one of its multiflawed characters.

I will not tell you more...I had no preconceived ideas about the ending. There were sad sweet surprises in this story. I cared for every one of these people.

This is truly one of my favorite books this year.

Robin Moore says

I didn't care much for this story of 2 overprotective parents and their little boy; I stuck with it to learn who took the boy from the backyard one day. This novel had too many extremes: evil stepmothers, drug addicted sister, eternally patient husband to complaining and off balance wife. The character development was so heavy handed that I had no sympathy for these people. Rather, I didn't care about them.

Lydia Presley says

When I picked up *The Winters in Bloom* by Lisa Tucker I was definitely in the mood for some family drama reading. I got chills with the opening section and felt immediately connected to this small, 5-year old child named Michael. Then, he was whisked away and the story began to unfold.

The Winters in Bloom is a novel that explores not only the disappearance of Michael, but the past histories of his parents. Both are overly cautious for reasons of their own. For David Winter, it was tragedy of one kind, and for Kyra, tragedy of another. And both their pasts intersect in a twisting, winding turn of events that had me guessing until the end of the book.

While I enjoyed very much the "unputdownable" nature of *The Winters in Bloom*, I do have a bone to pick with it, however. The introduction of the book gave me this awesome, fantastic character in Michael and, aside from a few moments here and there throughout the story, there really wasn't much more time spent with him. As a result, what time there was spent with him seemed a bit gimmicky - like he was fairly one-dimensional and, as a result, the end of the book came off as a bit fake. I wanted to feel a powerful emotion of some sort when I got to the ending pages, but instead, I found myself speeding up my reading just because I wanted to finish and had lost that momentum of caring about Michael after the big reveal of who did it happened.

With that said, the rest of the book leading up to the reveal? Kept me guessing and was highly entertaining.

Rebbie says

The Winters are a couple of creeps as far as I'm concerned. It was hard for me to like them considering they are ruining their son's life with how much they smother him and how neurotic they teach him to be. In reality, any child who goes through that would probably need therapy to live a normal life, instead of the anticlimactic ending Lisa Tucker gives the book. Ironically, the only character I really liked was David Bloom's ex-wife. She was refreshingly honest without feeling sorry for herself. This is not a book I would recommend to people, even though the author is a talented and knowledgeable writer.
