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From author Jamie Langston Turner, this story of reconciliation, for two people who come to see God's vast mercy, evokes small-town southern life.

No Dark Valley Details

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Author : Jamie Langston Turner

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From Reader Review No Dark Valley for online ebook

Rachel says

I could use this book to make a list of literary devices I dislike. First, the author continually (As in, multiple times per chapter) refers either to the fact that this would make a great story for a book, or that it would not, going so far as to put, in italics, the words she would use if it were actually written in a book... yuck!! Second, the hymn references, while meaningful in moderation, quickly become a distraction, and seem to be forced into the storyline.

Finally, the author uses flashback in a frustrating way, leaving the dialogue hanging for several paragraphs or pages while the characters wander off in their brains to a real or imagined corollary. clean, but useless.

Laurie says

First read when the book came out, so 2004 or 2005. 3rd person narration, but tells the first half of the story from her POV, and the second half of the story from his. Very clever, as we discover slowly what we didn't know. I liked these characters very much.

Re-reading now (2014) on my Nook.

6/17 Just finished. I still found it a pleasurable read. I get the feeling that the author decided in advance to stick strictly to the narrative and POV choices she made early on, no matter how clumsy. The last 50 pages especially felt a bit flat, as if we were getting the story third hand. It is a lovely story but I don't call it a completely satisfying piece of storytelling. On the other hand, since the story was largely the backstory of the two protagonists, telling it this way avoided clunky repetition or waiting too late in the story to learn vital information. If I could change one thing, I'd allow the Valentine's Day chapter to be told by an anonymous omniscient narrator, rather than still from the man's point of view. At least we'd have a scene with a more natural flow of dialogue.

Deb says

This book was good, but long. Both of the main characters would tell their story in a stream of consciousness type of way--so that it could take half an hour of listening to get through a simple dinner scene because they would stop to comment on the family eating at the next table and make up a story about them. For the patient listener the story is wonderful though, about a girl named Cecilia who after her grandmother's death fulfills her promise to go back home for her funeral. In the process she rehashes her childhood and painful memories of the past, eventually finding redemption through a litany of old hymns, an artist, a tennis club, and an annoying next door neighbor. The narrator was perfect for the story as well.

Debra Torgerson says

An okay read

A story of two people who made choices in their lives that caused them regrets and how that affected their lives and how God brought them to himself and each other. I felt it to be somewhat drawn out. I found

myself wondering when a chapter would end. I didn't feel that the Grace of God was presented as well as it could have been. I did like how the author showed what they were thinking and felt I believe we can relate with our own regrets, and that God is our answer. The Lord's Grace has taken care of all our regrets, our shame, our mistakes, our religiosity through His love sent down to us in Jesus. I felt sad that the Grandmother and others were in a religion of judgement and condemnation which is probably why the Grandmother couldn't show Celia how much she loved her in a way a hurting teen could receive. Not sure if I will read other books by this author or not.

Rachel M says

I'm inclined to give this book 2.5 stars. It kept me reading, which makes me lean toward a 3, but it also had some corny and unbelievable elements, which makes me slide backward to a 2. She might have been attempting to be coy with all of the "if Celia were a character in a book, how would she describe this moment"s...but they got on my nerves. And then, at the end, when two characters discuss the plot "as if it were a novel" and talk about how cliché it would be if they tried to write it all down, and how every character might seem like a throw-back to Jane Eyre or Jane Austen - all of this seemed like a thinly-veiled apology for certain drawbacks of the book.

That being said, it was a good story of forgiveness and mercy. Celia's character was memorable, and her journey from bitterness and hurt to forgiveness and love was believable in that it was a very gradual process. She didn't have just one moment of total enlightenment and then experience a sudden conversion. I enjoyed how Jamie Langston Turner showed the changing of Celia's heart in little moments of inspiration, or in her encounters with all of the various people in her life.

One irony of the book is that, for all of the detailed descriptions of minute events in Celia's and Bruce's past (many of which I think could have been omitted without having any effect on the story), Turner left some of the most important moments untold, or told from retrospect - for instance, when Celia finally takes the step of conversion, she tells about it after the fact to another character in about two sentences. I think that such a pivotal turning point deserved more notice.

Sarah says

Rather mediocre

Rather mediocre

The book kind of started out as annoying, like when the character decides to put what she just into a book. That annoyance fades only to be brought in the third part of the book. Another thing that was irritating was the incessant "I am getting too old not to be married/ maybe I am too old too find anyone to marry". Also in the third part the main characters were switched and the new character did not seem to be as developed as he should have been. As for the first character, her spiritual journey which agonize through in the first two parts is brought to an unsatisfying and abrupt finish. All that being said, I did read the whole thing(I skipped any boring parts) but that was mainly because I liked the first two parts and read the more aggravating third and fourth parts only to see if it ended as I thought, which it did.

Jane says

So apparently I read this in Aug of 2006 and never realized it!! Omg. I do have a rotten memory. I downgraded it from a 4 to a 3 because it was too wordy. I guess I am too impatient now. Celia is a 30+ young woman who had to go as an orphaned teenager to live with her simple, God-fearing grandma. She turns away from faith, severs the relationship, has an abortion and now is lonely and works in an art gallery. She comes home for grandma's funeral. It has a happy ending: faith and hunky Christian man to love.

Allison Anderson Armstrong says

2nd time through, and as always, I love the whole impetus behind Mrs. Turner's writing - to show that normal Christians can (and should) have an impact on the world around them, even in normal daily events. My one complaint is that I read this book right after reading "Some Wildflower in my Heart" and noticed a lot of similarities in characters and certain wordings and phrases. Both books talk about how "cliche" their stories are and how a "nobody would ever read a book that went like this..." Which is ironic, obviously, but maybe a little overused? That's my two cents, I'm no literary professional, but something I noticed since I read these two books in a row. I've read all her novels and think them to be very well-written and interesting.

Renee says

I loved this book. I enjoyed Garden to Keep, Winterbirds and Suncatchers a little more, but this was excellent. I love how the author educates you on many different topics as a part of the story. In this book, you learn about poetry, clarinet, tennis, art, life science, and Shakespeare.

I felt the characters were very real and the story is much more about Bruce and Celia's journey to God and believing God could forgive their past than it is about them getting together, so definitely not a cheesy romance. I did think the last chapter about the cliches was maybe a tad cheesy and maybe not believable, but still wonderful story.

If you like Terri Blackstock this will not be your style. Ha. You have to want to enjoy their thoughts and going slow through the process of Grace working in their lives. It is what I would call a comforting book.

Andrea Stoeckel says

Celia, a single woman with a fundamentalist church past, has left both the church and her smalltown Georgia upbringing to start over.

Bruce, a single man, has left his devil-may-care lifestyle to live in the basement apartment of the house his sister has just purchased.

This book is unabashidly and unapoligetically riddled with cliché. It's also very long, possibly 2 books worth long. A bit Biblical parable, a bit Jane Austin and a lot of forgiveness and searching later.....

It's a sweet book I wouldn't have been intrigued by had it not been a freebie.

Jean Cowden says

The book was 500 pages long. It went off onto many rabbit trails, but I couldn't seem to put it down. In the last 200 pages it came together. It let you get to know so much about the characters lives. The main character had turned her back on God during her youth. She had made many mistakes, and they haunted her. She couldn't date any man for long until they irritated her and she broke up with him. When she was 38 she finally found what she was looking for and returned to God. The story and content made it a five star.

lavera kopacz says

No dark valley has a few dark valleys.

This author is very wordy. I like her work. I suppose if you take words out you wouldn't have much.

Mary says

I have liked every single one of her books. She's a great author

Theresa says

Celia is a director of an art gallery. Having lost her parents in an auto accident as a young teen, she spent her tumultuous high school years with a emotionally hardened but determined grandmother, a grandmother who not only has very high standards morally but expects Celia to follow suit. When Celia rebels and leaves for good, she finds herself in later years regretting her treatment of her grandmother and wishing she had another chance.

Fast forward several years, and now in the beginning chapters of "Some Dark Valley", Celia finds herself back home again to attend her grandmother's funeral and close up the house she inherited. As she reaps what she has sown in the mistakes and moral failures of her life, Celia has decided to keep her personal relationships brief and distant. Although always longing for a home and family of her own, she closets her real self within, trying to find comfort in her own 'space'.

" 'Face your fear.' That's what Todd has said that came back to her now. He had tried repeatedly to probe into her past, wanting her to 'open up her shell,' as he called it, but she had always managed to elude his questions. "

Celia has some tough memories to overcome in her past.

"... she had remained very still with her eyes closed, picturing herself standing in a large field, digging for more pleasant memories with a little silver pickax. Over and over she lifted the pickax and brought it down. Surely there were multitudes of other good memories underneath all the bad ones. She even imagined that

she heard the soft plunging sound of the pickax as it sank into the loose soil, little glints of mica and quartz chips flying up with every stroke.

And, happily, she at last began to see the pickax uncover what she took to be more good memories..."

Like most of her novels, the main character will have some hoops to jump through in order to find a resolution to the hardships in her life.

The reader has to decide whether Celia's fears and avoidance of her grandmother are legitimate, or not.

"After they ate that night, Grandmother took out some plastic grocery store bags and divided up all those berries, every last one. Then they walked up and down Old Campground Road delivering them to all the neighbors. Grandmother kept one bag for herself. One bag out of probably twelve or fourteen. The next day she made one blackberry pie and two jars of preserves. Not much to show for all that hot work under the July sun."

This book started out a little slow for me, but soon picked up and I found myself really wanting to know if Celia would ever be able to come to terms with her grief and remorse. This author really has a talent for bringing characters to life and not glossing over the hard questions we all struggle with. Her honesty within the context of fiction is not only refreshing but saturated with authentic snapshots of the tragedies within life.

I think I would have given this book five stars had the point of view not changed from Celia to Bruce in the second half of the book. I found myself wanting to see the resolution more from her viewpoint as I had bonded with her throughout the book.

'Some Dark Valley' comes close to being one of my favorites from this author. Although called 'too introspective' by some, I thoroughly enjoyed the soul-searching that the main characters undergo in this latest book I have read. Jamie Langston Turner is fast becoming one of my favorite reads (and I am obviously on a JLT kick!)

Eldeen, the one of-a-kind quirky character who never stops talking resurfaces, but only briefly, in this latest episode in the Derby Series. As Celia meets and interacts with her neighbors, tennis team players, and cautiously begins to make friends, the reader is pulling for her all the way, hoping that in the end, Celia will find closure and contentment.

The message (or theme if you will) of this book can be found in the last few chapters.

"Given sun and rain, a flower will bloom. To the human heart, love is irresistible. Though I have not solved the mystery of suffering, I have felt the healing work of love."

Sally Ewan says

My second time through this book. A story about a young woman who has turned her back on God, blaming Him for her parents' death and despising her grandmother's simplistic, practical faith. In God's sovereignty, He puts people in her life who show her what a real relationship with Christ looks like, and she 'enters into the joy of the Lord.' Turner writes well, and I particularly enjoy the characters she creates. My appreciation for hymns continues to grow, and I liked the way the characters think of hymn lyrics and link them to events in their lives.

