



Pearl in a Cage

Joy Dettman

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On a balmy midsummer's evening in 1923, a young woman foreign, dishevelled and heavily pregnant is found unconscious just off the railway tracks in the tiny logging community of Woody Creek. The town midwife, Gertrude Foote, is roused from her bed when the woman is brought to her door. Try as she might, Gertrude is unable to save her, but the baby lives. Gertrude's daughter Amber who has recently lost a son in childbirth and her husband Norman take the child in.

Pearl in a Cage Details

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From Reader Review Pearl in a Cage for online ebook

Sonia says

Hated it!!

Kylie Duthie says

I really persisted with this book. But I just could not keep going. I made it through 340 of 576 pages. I wanted to love it, especially given that it was Book 1 in a series of 6. But there were too many characters & just not enough happening. I just didn't really care what happened to anyone. I wasn't connected to them. And like another reviewer has said, I felt like I was hovering over the characters, rather than immersed in their world.

Tracy says

Dumped it. No idea why the waitlist to read it. Listened to the first half a dozen chapters and found it very annoying. Too many characters straight up and they are all unlikeable. It's like a story about a town of hillbillies, don't bother

Cate Ellink says

DNF - I hate doing that but I had to. I was loathe to pick the book up because no matter how well written, or how lovely some of the descriptions were, I didn't care what happened to the characters. I got halfway and I don't really know where it's going and I don't really care at all. Too many other books to read.

Catalina says

I highly recommend listening to this story on audiobook; the reader does an excellent job of conveying the personalities of the characters.

I was riveted to the story and hope to get hold of the sequel in order to learn the the outcomes of the unanswered questions in this book.

The plot lines are richly described and interwoven and I enjoyed the great writing and character development. However, it was sometimes difficult to continue reading simply due to the never-ending abuse Jenny was subjected to.

If I have any other criticism it would be how completely unlikeable Cecilia and Amber are. The first chapter led me to believe that I might empathize more with these two characters when they narrated their own

perspectives, but this was not the case. I didn't feel as strongly that the evil twins should have redeeming qualities to lend them more credence.

Overall, it's beautifully written and a fascinating exploration of Depression-era Australia, despite it's heart-wrenching tone.

Orna says

I Learned that a miserable life will stay a miserable life. This book got worse in sorrow as it read. No happy beginning or ending, I was waiting for turn of events but the turn just circled into misery

Karen ?🌸 says

This book follows the lives of the residents of Woody Creek, a fictional small rural town in Victoria, Australia, from 1923 until the late 30s.

It mostly focuses on Gertrude, the town midwife who lives on the outskirts and her family who live in town. Namely, her daughter Amber, son in law Norman and their children Cecilia and Jennifer. The latter who, as the book synopsis tells you, they adopted from an unknown mother.

I quite liked the descriptions of country life in Australia in this time period, and I thought the writing was very good with a cast of interesting characters. I just got very frustrated with the book because almost all of the characters are quite unlikeable and the treatment of Jennifer just becomes all a bit much. I mostly listened to the audio, but with about 80% done I had to pick up the ebook just so that I could get to the end faster - I found it just too difficult to listen to some of the abuse (most of which is psychological).

The discomfort I felt with the book is why I won't be continuing the series. I just really want nothing more to do with Amber, Norman, and most of the residents for Woody Creek and I wish them all the best for the next five books.

Wizzfizz says

Pluses: Beautifully descriptive insight into small village life in Australia in the early years. Rich characterisation.

Minuses: A cast of thousands it seemed. Long winded and unnecessary descriptions of what I felt to be minor characters. Found myself skimming large sections due to boredom.

Carol Preston says

This is a story set in a small country town in Victoria, Australia, in the early 1900s. As such it appealed to me in an historical sense. Sadly, I almost gave up on the book a few times. I found it had too many characters for me to keep track of, too many side stories that interrupted the main story; most of them tragic. No doubt in a small country town there are many interesting characters with fascinating stories, but in a novel I found it overwhelming. I also found the POV very difficult. It was mainly in a universal POV which left me feeling I was hovering above the story rather than experiencing life through the characters eyes - even the main

characters. However, in spite of all that, I was intrigued by the central characters; a middle aged woman and a baby born in tragic circumstances whose lives become entwined. I couldn't put it down until I found out what happened as the child grew up. This is not a light-hearted story by any means and in parts is almost unbearably tragic. Even the ending brings only a little relief to the sadness of the story, though it does offer some hope. Certainly not for the faint hearted.

Ange Rogers says

The start of the best Australian book series I've ever read. I'd advise that you have all the books in the series before starting as you'll want - scratch that - NEED, to keep reading. So, so good! I wish I had never read them so I could be reading them all again for the first time.

Sarah says

This book would be one of my most loathed reads. I hated it all the way through, and was so annoyed with the end I threw the book. I felt it was a waste of my time getting to know all the characters, not to mention trying to keep up with the all over the place writing.

Trinaread says

At first I wasn't sure sounded a little gossipy but then when I got further into it I really enjoyed it and liked the era and the Australian setting. I was eager to read onto the next in the series.

Kerry says

I don't normally write reviews but I just had to for this book. It was amazing, I couldn't put it down. Loved the era, that it was set in an Australian country town and the characters and their personalities. So well written. Loved it.

Tracy Smyth says

Not a bad book. Didn't like many of the characters in the story. Not sure if I would read the others in this series

Luke Devenish says

Oh wow. This was such a surprise. I never thought this would be the best book I'd read all year, but it HAS been. Couldn't put it down. Such a knockout story, and so beautifully told. This is a very fine weepie. Joy

Dettman suffers from the curse of spectacular commercial success, I think. I'm ashamed to admit that this was the reason I had unaccountably avoided her. More fool me. 'Pearl in a Cage' poops on just about every other novel I've read this year, for the simple reason that it engages so immediately, without employing any showy tricks, but wholly through strength of character and situation. Sublime. I compare this with the least engaging book I've (attempted) to read this year - the 2010 Booker Prize winner. My only quibble with 'Pearl in a Cage' was the ending, which felt a tad, well, unsatisfying, despite the nice full-circle quality it has with the use of trains to bookend the story. But I'm an A Grade idiot. Only discovered today that there are two other books in this series, which continue the lives of these indelible Woody Creek characters. Thank God! I wasn't remotely ready to leave them behind. Highly recommended.
