



O My Darling

Amity Gaige

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O My Darling tells the story of a devoted young couple whose marriage begins to implode when they move into their first house. The external lives of Clark, a high school guidance counselor, and Charlotte, a bookkeeper, are utterly ordinary, but their interior lives are as bold and complex as abstract paintings colored by imagined possibilities, childhood joys and, more darkly, by deeply buried fears. When Clark rescues a young boy from drowning, a chain of events—some comic, some harrowing—is set in motion, revealing the fault lines of the couple's marriage and individual psyches.

Amity Gaige is a consummate stylist. Her every sentence contains a tiny world—marrying striking images to deep, soulful ideas in perfectly concise fashion. Her cool, slightly off-kilter sensibility expressed in spare, lucid prose will remind readers of Paula Fox (*Desperate Characters*), while her pure, hyper-real vision of suburban America places her among the most talented of the generation of writers dubbed "the children of Cheever."

"Given its level of sophistication and off-center wit, it's a bit startling to realize that *O My Darling* is Amity Gaige's first novel. The characters, beautifully drawn, are as unsentimental toward one another as their author is toward them and yet, wonderfully, this novel with its many ambushes of lyrical moments, is deeply felt."

-Stuart Dybek, author of *I Sailed with Magellan* and *The Coast of Chicago*

O My Darling Details

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From Reader Review O My Darling for online ebook

Diana says

It reads almost like a long poetic meditation or a very long short story. Some of the images and sentences are glowing. The plot wasn't the strongest I've read, but it didn't matter that much because I wanted to keep reading and I appreciated that it was in no way formulaic. The writing is lovely.

Abbie says

Such a charming little story. I don't know if I understand how the dad fits into it - the lesson he wanted Clark to learn, i don't quite get - but I loved the melody of the writing and the interactions between Clark and Charlotte.

I wish there'd been more of a linear telling - less little events - but it worked for this kind of novel.

Cheryl says

First of all, the writing is gorgeous in this book. The central characters are a young married couple who have bought their first house. But things seems to go awry as soon as they move in. The house seems to have a life and presence of its own, made up from the previous lives lived there. The couple are in their late twenties but actually seem to be more like fifteen year olds playing house. Despite their incredible immaturity, naivety and sometimes down right stupidity, you hope for the best for these hopeful idiots.

Annemarie says

Wel aardig voor een debuut, sommige hoofdstukken zijn een stuk sterker dan andere.

De introductie van de vader van Clark aan het einde van het verhaal voegt weinig toe. Het 'inzicht' dat Clark op het einde krijgt, had misschien ook zonder Wallace gekund. Het personage van Charlotte had beter kunnen worden uitgewerkt in het begin, zodat de parallel en de tegenstelling duidelijker en aangrijpender zou worden.

Ruby says

Wat een worsteling om dit boek uit te lezen. Naar mijn mening: afschuwelijk boek. Ik had enorme verwachtingen bij het lezen van de achterflap en de omschrijving van 'lyrische' proza.

Het begon al enorm saai, je wordt midden in een verhaal/leven gesmeten en eigenlijk krijg je heel weinig achtergrondinformatie (of toch achtergrondinformatie die belangrijk is). Dan plots is zijn heroïsche daad door een jongen van de verdrinkingsdood te reden en dan denk je - YES, eindelijk een beetje schwung in het verhaal. Niets is minder waar. Het blijft saai tot op het eind, verhaallijnen leveren niets op en het enige moment van vreugde die ik gevoeld heb in de afgelopen dagen was toen ik het boek eindelijk uitgelezen had en het nu ergens ver weg kan bergen.

Elizabeth Garcia says

The book was about this two newly wedded couple, that has resently movie to a town where they live in a "yellow dream house". Clark, is a tall and skinny man, curly hair, with blue eyes. Charlotte is a young women, long blond hair, and blue eyes. They are both starinng out there new life married. in the second Chapter explanes Clark's family. then it gose in to a flash back of the day his mother died. Clark mother was a very crazy women. she would tell him story about the way things where; for example everytime it snow, she would tell him that snow bears would throw snow. Charlotte dosn't like his mother because from the first day she has been trying to get read of her. they end up keeping her dog T>>>> and Clark is now working at a middle/high school as a counser. he also has to take night classes but he dosnet want to becuase it is so boring. CLark hate the face if him haveinng to be an abult n hate all the strees of it. thy both get into a fight and thy dont what to take to each other.

Angela Wade says

The writing was beautiful. I'm just not sure what the point of the story was?

Matthew says

Perhaps I enjoyed this more than I normally would have coming off the back of reading a real stinker but I completely loved this book. I loved it's ambiguity and the depth of the characterisation. I totally believed in every person in the story and their relationships, some of the passages were just beautifully written. The

possible 'supernatural' element, the unclear ending, the central married couple, everything just felt really nicely put together and real. Some achievement for a debut novel.

Maria Paiz says

The thing with Amity Gaige is that she writes so wonderfully, so brilliantly, that we can forgive her for a book that doesn't really cut the mustard. This novel is about a couple, and we see how they interact, how they think, how they carry the weight of their pasts. But... the story itself is pretty much plotless and pointless. Still, her writing is too beautiful to merit harsh judgment. Looking forward to her next.

Carrie Gulledge says

That was probably the most well-written piece of junk I've ever read. Gorgeous prose, plenty of imagination... And all jumbled together into one big, hot mess.

Marian says

Slightly strange story (not a lot actually happens) but Gaige can certainly write.

Leesmenu says

Ieder huis zijn kruis. Het is een keukenwijsheid die jonggehuwden Clark en Charlotte Adair aan den lijve mogen ondervinden in Amity Gaiges Alledaagse Wanen, de vertaling van de roman waarmee de auteur van het veelgeprezen Schroder in 2005 debuteerde.

We ontmoeten Clark en Charlotte wanneer ze net hun intrek hebben genomen in hun eerste huis samen, het geelste hoopje bakstenen in het idyllische Clementine. De locatie mag dan met honing overgoten lijken, zeemzoeterigheid is een smaak die Gaige – de hemel zij geprezen – uit alle macht schuwt. De dialoog waarmee de roman opent zegt veel, maar vooral dat zowel Charlotte als Clark met momenten, en zonder dat ze het willen, olifanten in porseleinwinkels zijn. [...]

Lees verder op: <http://www.leesmenu.be/index.php/comp...>

Octavia Cade says

A marginally haunted house nearly breaks up a marriage. The effects are somewhat horrifying, but I don't really class this as horror because it's all so muted, and really if the house acts as a catalyst, it's perfectly plausible that the two main characters could screw it up all by themselves. Clark, especially, is imaginatively tiresome in all sorts of petty ways, and I imagine he would be very hard to live with.

Ief Stuyvaert says

Mooie zinnen vormen kleine hoofdstukjes in het alledaagse (jewel) leven van een jong stel. De emoties zijn vaak herkenbaar, maar de zeer Amerikaanse kleinstedelijke omgeving misschien net iets te ver van mijn (ons) bed. En wat erger is: het kan je op het einde niet echt veel meer schelen hoe het met Charlotte en Clark afloopt. Neen, dan liever 'Schroder', want schrijven kan Gaige.

Tq says

I don't know where Sarah Shun-Lien Bynum and Adam Haslett- from the cover blurb- got "bristling with humor" out of this book because there is no real humor to be had, nor any "scalpel-sharp sentences". What you will get is a vague story about a yuppie couple with no personality moving into a town full of equally yuppie old people and kids with no personality, and a father who is both gruff and old-fashioned and yet spouts of silly things better suited to an episode of "Everybody Loves Raymond".

Neither of the main characters are particularly likeable, mostly because they are so flat and underdeveloped there isn't really much to grasp onto. Clark somehow gets a job as a school guidance counselor despite a complete lack of training and lack of desire to complete the education necessary despite the school offering it, reflecting his mother's condition. Charlotte's career and history is equally vague and only serves to give her something to do besides drink and wallow in bed with jelly toast. When Clark rescues the weird little boy from drowning at the pool, he needs an entire summer to recover and yet only stayed in the hospital for a night. Little bits like these only serve to lazily fill in the gaps where some real development could have occurred.

The exact nature of the ghosts in the house is never explained and leaves you wondering if they were supposed to be a shoehorned metaphor or symptoms of Clark's probable mental illness, but then Charlotte sees them too and reacts just as poorly. The house has a vague reputation in town but again, it's briefly mentioned in a couple of paragraphs and then never brought up again leaving the reader in irritating suspense after already being left to wonder what the stupid gift Clark had in the beginning was supposed to be.

The writing is very stilted and the prose purple. We are constantly reminded that Charlotte is blonde and cute and that Clark is very tall and has curly dark hair, almost to the point of certain passages reading like something out of a cheap romance novel. None of the characters ever really talk the way normal people do, with pithy phrasing and words that aren't usually used in spoken informal speech. Most guilty of this is Clark's father who alternates between "stern old man who takes no guff" to someone who likes delicate pink things and dancing and randomly shows off too much affection while making bad jokes.

I do not recommend this book, even as cheap and light vacation reading. There are far too many holes, and not enough rusted old spades with long wooden mahogany handles to fill in the various lacunae. (Also, at one point in a scene at a movie theater, the narrator says the theater smells like "false butter". Who the heck calls it false butter?)
