



The Lake of Dreams

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Lucy Jarrett is at a crossroads in her life, still haunted by her father's unresolved death a decade earlier. She returns to her hometown in Upstate New York, The Lake of Dreams, and, late one night, she cracks the lock of a window seat and discovers a collection of objects. They appear to be idle curiosities, but soon Lucy realizes that she has stumbled across a dark secret from her family's past, one that will radically change her—and the future of her family—forever.

The Lake of Dreams Details

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From Reader Review The Lake of Dreams for online ebook

Cheri says

oH, WHAT A BOOK!!!! I realized finally that I couldn't get into the book initially because I was trying to read in the hospital as my husband was having surgery. Not the best place to begin a book. Finally, however, I was able to concentrate. So glad that I was.....the characters in this book are people I would want to meet.....people with whom I would want to spend time.

Kerry says

A wonderfully written book that pulls you into the world of Lucy Jarrett and the Lake of Dreams her childhood home. A story about life, choices, grief, love, friendship, hidden mysteries, history, women's suffrage, the past meeting the present, secrets and a truth that must come to light.

It's a book that carries you away into another world and you feel bereft when you leave. It's hard to put down especially as the story unfolds and things long hidden start to be revealed. A wonderful read.

Barbara says

Twenty-nine year old Lucy Jarrett left her upstate New York home town - called 'The Lake of Dreams' - soon after her father accidentally drowned a decade ago. Lucy went to college, became a hydrologist, and took a series of overseas jobs. Two years ago Lucy met Yoshi in Jakarta, and they fell in love and settled down in Japan - where Yoshi has an engineering job. Lucy is looking for work and teaching English to Japanese students to stave off boredom.

When Lucy learns that her mother had a minor accident, she debates returning to 'The Lake of Dreams' for a visit. Yoshi encourages Lucy to go, and plans to join her after he concludes a scheduled business trip.

When Lucy arrives back in 'The Lake of Dreams', she decides to stay in her old upstairs bedroom, even though her mother shut up the house's second story after her husband's death, because of the painful memories. While Lucy is nosing around in the upstairs window seats - using the lockpicking skills she learned from her locksmith father - she comes across a batch of pamphlets and a few notes that belonged to a long-dead relative named Rose. None of Lucy's relations have ever mentioned Rose, who seems to have been deliberately erased from the family tree a century ago, during the era of Lucy's great-grandfather.

Some of Rose's unearthed leaflets are about the women's suffrage movement, and others contain information about women's biology - a subject that was discouraged, or even forbidden (can you imagine!! ?), during Rose's time. In fact, in one of Rose's notes she mentions that she never saw her own naked body until she visited an aristocrat's house that had a large mirror - a visit that had dramatic consequences.

When Lucy's mother, Evie, sees Rose's dusty pamphlets she remembers a packet she found hidden in an old trunk years ago, and brings out a beautiful silk scarf and another note in Rose's distinctive handwriting.

Lucy becomes intensely curious about Rose's story and goes to great lengths to learn more about this long-lost relative - researching church documents, visiting historical societies, and so on. Lucy learns that Rose was born in England and came to the United States under difficult circumstances. Moreover, Rose was a rebel who supported the suffragette movement, dreamed of being an Episcopal priest, and may have modeled for an artist who made stained glass windows for churches.

Lucy begins researching the stained glass windows in an old abandoned church, and is helped by her old high school boyfriend, Keegan Fall - who's a glass artisan and the owner of a glass-blowing factory. Lucy is strongly attracted to Keegan.....but she loves Yoshi.....so she has some issues to work out.

Meanwhile, an old army depot in 'The Lake of Dreams' has been decommissioned, and there's intense disagreement about what to do with the land. Native Americans think they have a claim on it; ecologists want to establish a nature preserve; and developers want to build houses and commercial establishments. As it happens, Lucy's Uncle Art - her father's brother - is in the developer camp, and thinks his proposed projects would make him very rich.

Not only is Art hoping to purchase the depot land, he's also trying to convince Lucy's mother to sell him HER property, which abuts the depot. However, Art cheated his brother (Lucy's father) out of his inheritance years ago, and there's been bad blood between Art and Lucy's family every since. It's true that Art has been 'nicey nicey' since his brother drowned - helping with house repairs and the like - but he's not been forgiven by a long shot.

All these issues - the story of Rose's life; Lucy choosing Keegan or Yoshi; and the future of the depot - play out as the story unfolds. Other things are going on as well. Lucy's mother has a new beau; Lucy's brother and his girlfriend are expecting a baby; and Lucy's obnoxious cousin stirs up bad memories. All this gets Lucy speculating about her past.....and her future. There are also startling revelations about the death of Lucy's father, an incident that has haunted Lucy for a decade.

The book has a solid plot and engaging characters, but moves much too slowly. A big chunk of the narrative is about Lucy researching Rose's history, which includes a lot of driving around, talking to people, and philosophizing about life. There's also a lot of blather about a pattern of overlapping circles woven into Rose's silk scarf. For me, all this is less than riveting.

Moreover, the author is heavy-handed about imbuing her characters with feminist ideals, which is so pronounced as to be unrealistic. Both Rose and Lucy daydream about being an Episcopal priest, and there's an actual female priest (Suzi - a lovely woman) in the story. In addition, Rose's support for women's suffrage has consequences that seem extreme. I'm an ardent feminist, but writers need to be careful about overly politicizing novels - which can detract from the story.

I'm probably not the target audience for this novel because I find it just so-so. However fans of historical novels, feminist literature, and/or chick lit might be more enthusiastic, and I'd recommend the book to those readers.

You can follow my reviews at <https://reviewsbybarbsaffer.blogspot....>

Blair says

The Lake of Dreams is about, and narrated by, 29-year-old Lucy Jarrett. After the trauma of losing her father, who drowned when she was a teenager, Lucy left her hometown behind to go to university and travel the world. At the start of the book, news of her mother suffering an accident prompts her to leave the home she shares in Japan with her boyfriend, Yoshi, and return to her family in America. There, she discovers a package of old pamphlets and letters hidden beneath a window seat. These contain clues that lead Lucy to investigate a mystery in her family's past, uncovering the existence of an ancestor she never knew she had. In the process, she begins to re-examine her relationships with those she loves, as well as her memories of the night her father died.

I thought the story had a lot of promise at the beginning - I loved the first chapter's enchanting depiction of Lucy's life in Japan - but it soon became obvious that the whole book is overloaded with whimsy. The title, *The Lake of Dreams*, is also the name of the town Lucy grew up in and returns to. Yes, the town's actually called that. I understand that the name is supposed to have Iroquois origins, but in the context of this story, it does seem more like part of a forced attempt at creating a 'magical' atmosphere than a genuine historical reference. On top of that you have the Jarrett family's sprawling lakeside mansion; the ludicrously popular glassblowing factory and the stunning vegetarian restaurant which (as we're told numerous times) smells absolutely gorgeous/is packed with people every time Lucy goes in; the painfully eco-conscious subplot about a local campaign to preserve an area of marshland. Does a town such as this seriously exist anywhere? And Lucy's former high school sweetheart is called *Keegan Fall*. I could not take this character seriously, nor the exceptionally contrived romantic elements.

The dialogue is often poor and sometimes terrible; very stilted. People really do not speak to one another like this. Phrases are repeated endlessly; a common pattern is Lucy saying something along the lines of 'I looked at ____, remembering the ____, the ____, the ____.' This might not sound particularly unusual, but the format is used so many times within the narrative that it becomes very noticeable. Also, every time I thought Lucy couldn't possibly say *again* that her life with Yoshi in Japan 'felt so far away'... she would actually say it again (seriously, it's *every time* she speaks to him). The action drags at points, with Lucy wandering around the town *looking at* and *remembering* things, but then there are points when it moves at unbelievable speed. (For example: when Lucy and her mother have a meeting with the director of a local museum, he is able to spontaneously arrange for them to meet an acquaintance immediately afterwards, despite the fact that this person is a very elderly woman living in a nursing home.) Finally, the book is inconsistent. There were various little things that got on my nerves throughout, but my favourite had to be when Lucy's brother and his girlfriend brought TURKEY sandwiches from their VEGETARIAN restaurant to a party...

There's little here to really recommend this book, apart from the fact that one major element of the plot gave me a pleasant surprise by not taking the obvious route - (view spoiler) I really did have faith that the story was going to gather steam at some point, but instead it just plodded along with far too much meandering off in various directions - is it a story about Lucy's ancestor Rose and her involvement in the suffragette movement, or is it about Lucy herself and her issues with her father's death? The narrative never quite seems sure, and doesn't manage to balance the two threads effectively. By the time the last few chapters delivered what I suppose were meant to be shocking twists, I didn't care what happened, and was just glad to get it over with.

Lindsay says

Lucy Jarrett has been living overseas for several years, most recently in Japan with her partner Yoshi. She is

unsettled, looking for direction in her life. On hearing of her mother's minor accident, she returns home to The Lake of Dreams, where her thoughts turn back to her father's mysterious death several years ago. Whilst wondering around the large old family home one night unable to sleep, she discovers items that are actually family heirlooms and papers relating to suffragettes, which all give clues to a whole unknown past that goes back several generations.

This is a multi-layered story, wherein Lucy slowly uncovers so many secrets from the past, and some painful truths are revealed too. As the first-person narrator, it is Lucy's perspective on events that dominates the novel. She is determined, sometimes perhaps even a little pushy, in following through the story to try and uncover everything she can, once she has started.

The past she discovers opens up a whole range of topics within the novel relating to the early days of women's suffrage, beautiful stained glass windows in a chapel that is on ancient sacred land now threatened by developers, and most importantly of all for Lucy, the discoveries about the lives of relatives she didn't know existed. Additionally, Lucy encounters her lost love from her schooldays, Keegan, and has to face up to her feelings and decide where her future lies.

Reading the novel, it's amazing how few rights women had, and how it's really not that long ago that this was the situation. Back in 1916, Lucy's relative Rose, who is the key character for Lucy in finding out how all the different strands of history are tied together, is arrested, because she 'handed out booklets with facts about the body' to other women. Lucy is shocked and realises that 'the rights I took for granted seemed suddenly very new, measured against the centuries.' Lucy is inspired by the sacrifices Rose made, and by the stand she took back then, and how she stood by what she believed in even when it caused turmoil in her own life.

I think this story is strongest when it deals with the discovery of Rose's letters, the unearthing of the history regarding her life, and the discoveries as to how Rose came to be the model for the stained glass windows. This strand of the novel is weaved well with the story in the present day, of the unrest between the remaining family members; between Lucy and her brother Blake, and their Uncle Art, and the future of the family lock business. There is a lot of history just between them, with fragile relationships and secrets that emerge. The sense of place is also strong, and the beautiful descriptions really do conjure up the atmosphere. There is a lovely thread running through the novel with regard to the pattern that is identified on one of the heirloom's, and then on the stained glass windows, and which is reproduced on the heading of each chapter in the novel (I read the UK hardback edition).

A read that requires you to take time to digest it all, with many strands to the story, and a main character who doesn't give up!

Rebecca McNutt says

The Lake of Dreams is certainly no Memory Keeper's Daughter, but it's still a compelling mystery for the most part where small town family life meets the magic of the past.

Britany says

Hidden Letters, a father's unexplained death, and stain glass artwork are the three main points that echo throughout this book.

Lucy Jarrett comes home to visit her family at the Lake of Dreams. While there, she faces her past head on. Her high school love, Keegan, and the unexplained death of her father. She discovers some hidden letters in an old window seat and that leads her on a journey through her family's history, uncovering a secret that is fighting to be freed.

I was expecting so much more from this author after reading The Memory Keeper's Daughter, but was disappointed. The first half kept me entertained and interested, but by the second half, I was bored. I found myself not invested in the characters and the anticipation leading up to the big mystery ended up falling a little flat and anticlimatic for me. The ending was terribly, almost perfectly tied together. I was frustrated as a reader, why introduce certain characters when they suddenly go away. (view spoiler)

Susanhayeshotmail.com says

Apparently I had The Memory Keeper's Daughter confused with a book I liked better because I remember being quite happy to get my hands on The Lake of Dreams because it was by the same author. I didn't hate it and I did finish it but I was not completely captivated. Actually, I was kind of captivated by the main character's genealogical sleuthing and her family's past but something, or some things, just annoyed me. As in Memory Keeper's I just never really felt engaged with any of the characters. Then there were the just a little too coincidental finding of things to tie up the ending just a little too tidily. (Spoiler alert here) A will, previously hidden in a wall and then in a fishing tackle box hidden in a car not driven for how long? Really? Not to mention the baby blanket with a note found hidden in the lining of a piece of luggage years and years as in quarter of a century ago, forgotten until just this moment when she recognizes the handwriting? I also found myself skimming many of the excessively lyrical descriptions (which could admittedly simply be my mood, perhaps I should have been reading a thriller instead). And I kept vacillating between finding the history of the suffragettes interesting, appreciating their tremendous sacrifices (amazing) and feeling a little annoyed or perhaps really I was just anxious that this would bog down in feminism, the kind that judges the actions and beliefs of yesteryear with today's yardstick. I think my favorite thing was when Lucy was kind of grilling her mother about her mom's new boyfriend and the her mom points out how offended Lucy and her brother would be if she were to behave in the same manner regarding there relationships. Anyway, this sounded to me a like a great book but in the end, the sum was just less than the parts.

Johanna says

I love Ms. Edwards lyrical and descriptive language. Every scene is brilliantly painted. Her story was riveting - flowing between past and present with complete ease. I was probably most intrigued by the discovery of old letters and the main character's (Lucy's) journey to decipher the author's (fascinating) story.

But this book has so many components beyond that. There is the veil of mystery surrounding Lucy's father's death, her residual feelings for her first love, her feeling for her current love, and her complex relationships with her mother and brother (not to mention a few other family members).

Ms. Edwards explores early feminism, religion, and art. She also adds in a dose of environmentalism and multiculturalism. The book bustles with characters and complex themes.

Jackie says

I wish I had liked this book better. It held some promise, at the beginning. But finally, after having persevered and doggedly pursued the end, I mostly just felt let down.

I didn't read *The Memory Keeper's Daughter* - I kept picking it up, and thinking, maybe, but then putting it back on the shelf at the library. And I almost wish I had done that with this book. It has received mostly good reviews. But....

1. This story seems like one I've read a million times before. Nothing remarkable, earth shattering, different or even compelling.
2. IMHO, Ms. Edwards tried to do too much - at times this was a book with an agenda, at others a book about history and at others a mishmash of dream sequences meant to tell a story that just muddled things.
3. Nothing felt, to me, very genuine. Few of the characters were sympathetic, and even Lucy acted "out of character" a time or two.

And eventually, I came to conclude that there really isn't that much potential here. I didn't even find any memorable passages that I wished to remember. So, sad to say, I won't be reading anything by this author for quite some time. Her writing just doesn't resonate with me.

And now, back to my ever-growing, rarely diminishing stack of books...

Arah-Lynda says

This book, while brimming with possibility, is a promise unfulfilled.

A young woman, Lucy, returns from Japan to her upstate New York home, actually a Victorian mansion by The Lake of Dreams, a place from which she has distanced herself since her father's death. As she adjusts to the changes about her she finds some old documents in a locked window seat, documents that soon reveal an unknown family history.

Having once discovered the old documents Lucy then shares her find with her Mother who just happens to remember that over twenty years ago she found an old baby blanket, with a note that matches the handwriting on the documents. A beautiful blanket with a pattern on it that was tucked away twenty years ago and not thought of again until just now. And so the plot advances. Lucy becomes obsessed with the long lost owner of the documents and the pattern woven into the blanket which just happens to be a recurring pattern in a stained glass window that her once upon a time boyfriend Keegan Fall is restoring. Naturally this discovery leads her to more stained glass windows and convinces her that the owner of the documents could very well be the woman depicted in the windows, which of course take her off to find out more about the

artist. Biff, boom, bang more connections are made.

While all of this is happening Lucy is coming to terms with the guilt she has carried all these years about her father's death and struggling with her newly awakened feelings for her long lost love Keegan and worrying about her mixed feelings for her current fellow, Yoshi, due to arrive any day now from Japan. Good lord can this plot get any weaker? Spoiler alert..... it can.

Beyond all the astoundingly weak plot forwarding devices, the biggest problem I had with this is that the protagonist does not act the way a real person would, ever. She is in good company though as most of the other characters are equally unbelievable. Case in point - (view spoiler)

I have been thinking about time well spent. That was not the case here.

Lauren says

I received this book through Goodreads First Read contest. Thankfully I didn't spend any money on it! I have to be honest and say that I was pretty disappointed in this book. It was hard to believe the same author that wrote my beloved "The Memory Keeper's Daughter" wrote this...this...boring crap of a book. Well, maybe the word "crap" is a little harsh. The book did get a lot of good reviews so it could just be me and my crazy opinions. I just could NOT get into the story at all. I found myself practically falling asleep before finishing chapters and having to reread paragraphs because I was drifting off. The main character, Lucy, decides to visit her home town and she falls head first into her family history when she discovers she has a great aunt who was banished from the family for participating in the women's rights movement and being arrested. The whole book is all about the letters she finds and the history of this long lost relative who she supposedly feels like she has a connection with. I just wasn't interested. I couldn't understand Lucy's need to keep on going back to the past when she had so much going on in the present. In fact, the author does little to make the present time interesting at all. I think it would have been much more appealing if the chapters rotated back and forth from different points of view, particularly from Lucy to Rose, which was the long lost great aunt. However, Lucy is the only one who "tells" the story. So much more could have been done to make this book more of a page turner. Family genealogy is only interesting if it's my own family. Other than that, I don't give a crap.

Jeannine says

I made it to about page 100 before giving up.

The author had too many subjects in this book; women's suffrage, Vietnam war, environmentalism are just a few of The Big Issues she tried to weave into a cohesive story that really dragged especially when you add in family secrets, mysterious stained glass windows and letters, a family locksmith business, and a confused young woman poking around in all of it.

The author's previous works (Secrets of a Fire King and The Memory-Keeper's Daughter) were much stronger and lyrical. I found myself bored stupid with the pace of this novel: "And then she ate a muffin. She walked to the front of the building. And then, and then." I also found Lucy, the main character, to be

unsympathetic in her uninterestingness.

I can't think of anything more difficult than following up a huge bestseller - the pressure! Unfortunately, this one wasn't nearly as good as the other two. Hopefully she'll try again.

Lauren says

Ugh. Just... ugh.

It started off beautifully.

And then...

-The characters were tedious.

-The dialogue was tedious, indeed. (In contemporary America, do people seriously use "Indeed" commonly when they talk to each other? It seemed to be used so much in this book, it might as well have been slang.)

-Continuity errors with dates, the family lineage.

But most of all...

I could care less about the "protagonist." Lucy was a selfish, condescending well-to-do.

From the trivial details:

Her niece expresses excitement and fascination at Lucy, all that Lucy can do is whine about how the niece is annoying and superficial because she's intrigued by Lucy's travels.

To the entire plot:

Lucy travels the world, then takes it upon her arrogant self to just show up in the hometown she conveniently discarded and meddle into everyone's life, with a grating self-proclaimed-savior sort of attitude. UGH!

Dear authors, unless you are going for a sort of angst-ridden J.D. Salinger effect, a novel is worthless if you're going to make us despise the narrator.

Kristen says

To be honest, I didn't finish the book, but in all fairness I wanted to quit about five pages in and gave it my best effort. 200 pages later, I finally succumbed to rational thought and replaced this time-suck with something else. I've read *The Memory Keeper's Daughter* and *The Secrets of the Fireking*, both of which I remember being interesting and well-told. So much so in fact that I have been eagerly awaiting Kim Edward's newest book for two years. Two years, I have searched the Fiction shelves in vain for her new story, only to be disappointed by this strange piece of literature. The metaphors are painful, excessive, the prose pedantic, ordinary. The story is sadly, something that just makes me cringe. Girl blames self for father's death, travels the globe to escape emotional pain, returns to her very wealthy, country club community where she rekindles an old romance (the dark, brooding, glass artist that once drove a Harley now turned father... gross), discovers hidden secrets to her family's past in the crumbling Victorian (?) that still haunted by memories of her childhood.

My critique might be fired by my own hurt and disappointment. I was just so excited for her newest book

and I feel burned in every way possible. But alas, maybe it will bring someone else pleasure, far be it from me to judge.

Jennifer Rayment says

The Good Stuff

Wonderful realistic characters

Author really understands the inner workings of a family and its dynamics

I really understood Lucy's need to understand about her family history

Fascinating information and history and the portrayal of women in organized religion

Loved the character of the priest Suzi and her conversations with Keegan. If she was real, I would actually go to church

I was totally engrossed in the mystery of Rose and Iris and I think I wanted to find out the truth as much as Lucy did.

A truly fascinating tale and history lesson all in one

Beautifully written, author has some serious talent. Must go get me a copy of The Memory Keepers

Daughter

I really enjoyed all the information about the suffragette movement and realized even more how grateful all of us women should be for what those women fought for

I could definitely see this one being made into a movie

The Not so Good Stuff

It was hard to get into at first. I struggled at first, but am glad I did, as it ends up being a fantastic book

Would have liked a family tree or a who's who at the front of the book for my mommy addled brain to remember who was who and where they fit into the family

Honestly I would have taken out some of the dream sequences but dammit I am a Mom I need things to pick up the pace more -- that's just me though -- nothing against the author -- it was just one of those irritating things to me.

Favorite Quotes/Passages

"In those days God seemed as silent as my father, as angry as my uncle, as distant as the portrait of my great-grandfather in the hall; when I closed my eyes, those were the gazes I felt, and I was always nervous."

"This history, told through Rose's eyes, didn't seem very far away, and it made me wonder how my own life would have unfolded if I hadn't been abler to study or work or even know the most basic facts about my body. A difficult history was hidden beneath my independence, like the ruins of the factories beneath the tranquil surface of this water. The rights I took for granted seemed suddenly very new, measured against the centuries."

"Close-up , their lives were as complex and chaotic as my own, full of mistakes and disappointments and good intentions gone awry."

What I Learned

A crap load of information on the history of women and their portrayal in organized religion -- truly fascinating stuff

Tons of facts and history about the suffragette movement -- and how glad I didn't grow up in that era. I would totally have been jailed too!!

That I would love to know more about my ancestors and how they lived and their emotions. Damn why couldn't either side of my family been good at keeping journals!

Who should/shouldn't read

Those who need plenty of excitement and romance might not get into this one

Anyone interested in the suffragette movement or the portrayal of women in religion will love this

Really almost anyone will enjoy this as long as they give it a chance

This is not a light read so if you are looking for something on the light and fluffy side, this ain't it. Not that there is anything wrong with light and fluffy - since I also enjoy those types of books, just more of an FYI
4 Dewey's

I received this from Penguin in exchange for an honest review

Sidna says

I totally agree with another reviewer said this book is "awful." That was the only word I could think of to describe it.

Edwards' first book, *The Memory Keeper's Daughter*, was o.k. Not my favorite book, but worth reading. Edwards wrote a draft of this book long before she wrote her first published book. After *Memory Keeper* was published, she pulled it out and reworked it. She should have left it in the drawer.

Recently, I attended a literary luncheon with brief talks by three authors. Edwards was one of the authors so I bought her book. I'm glad I didn't bother to have her sign it.

This book tries too hard to be something it is not. Lucy Jarret has travelled the world since she graduated from college. She has worked in several different countries and in many failed relationships. As the book begins she is living in Japan with her boyfriend Yoshi, where Yoshi has a job, but Lucy is unemployed.

Lucy's father died in a boating accident 10 years previously. Her mother, who lives alone in the family home, has been in an accident and her arm is in a cast. Since she is not working, Lucy decides to go home for a visit.

Lucy finds a scrap of material from a dead ancestor who has never been mentioned. She jumps to all sorts of conclusions about her ancestor's having a relationship with a man who makes stained glass windows. The ancestor's name is Rose and he has roses in some of his windows so, of course, they were having a relationship. The book is full of dumb stuff like that. "Metaphor" must be Edwards' favorite word because

everything in the book is a metaphor for something else.

Lucy's ancestor Rose jumps out of her bedroom window at the age of 14 to see a comet that passes over. Edwards tries to make something out of the comet (I could never figure out where she was trying to go with that) and connects Mark Twain because at one time he lived in Elmira, New York, which Lucy visits in the book. Twain was born when Halley's Comet appeared and died 76 years later when it appeared again.

Edwards also uses the dead ancestor to explore the suffragette movement and explain how difficult it was for women to get the right to vote. We've had the right to vote for 90 years now so I think it is time to get over it.

Apparently Edwards forgot some of the conditions she set up in this book. Lucy comes home because her mother has her arm in a cast, but this perfectly healthy young woman sits on her rear and lets her mother wait on her, instead of letting her mother rest. Edwards has the mother carrying a tray full of drinks at a party when her arm is supposed to be in a cast (pretty tough to do one handed) and putting both hands on her face. Why isn't the daughter helping?

The other word that comes to mind to describe this book is "pretentious." I would not recommend this book to anyone.

Bre Teschendorf says

Wow.... This was one of the worst books I have ever read. I didn't finish it... I couldn't. I was trying to force myself and I suddenly realized how stupid that was. Why waste my time?

Reasons I didn't like this book.

1. Uninteresting story line. The "mystery" that the main character uncovers, isn't mysterious enough to hold my attention. It is dull, lacking drama or luster, romance, exciting historical relevance, seriously, "eh."

2. I found this book to be badly written.

Examples

A. The author mentions, "The family eyes- blue speckled with gray" 10 times within 20 pages. (I counted.) Yeah, I think we got the point... the family all have similar eyes and it is not really very relevant to the story.

B. VERY unrealistic inter-personal interactions. For example, the main character visits home after being abroad for a long time (another over used expression, "world traveler", didn't count this one but at least 7 times, come on... aren't there other ways to say this?). She goes to her brother's boat, which he lives on and his pregnant girlfriend is there. The two women don't greet each other, "Hi, wow, nice to see you, welcome home, it's been years," etc. The girlfriend says, "Your brother isn't here. Do you want to stay a minute?"

C. There is lots of really mundane description about what the main character is doing that has nothing to do with the plot.

"I had a sandwich", "my mother put olives on a plate", "I walked through town." "I called him, he didn't answer." "I called him again he didn't answer." "I listened to the answering machine a second time." Oh my word.

it just goes on and on and on like that.

D. Weird mistakes that an editor should have caught....

One morning the main character goes swimming, she spends the day in town, comes home, takes a nap and then goes swimming again, using the "bathing suit she used yesterday"... I was so confused, "When did the day change?" I finally realized, "OH... this is just badly written."

Another example,

The main characters father died around 5-7 years ago. Her deceased father had a brother who is less than 1 year older than he is.

So, 5-7 years after her father's death she returns home and meets her uncle who is older than her father... and this older brother has somehow managed to age so that he looks exactly like his younger brother did when he died 7 years ago..... right. Makes total sense to me.

This book reads like something an editor hurried off the press to make money, money, money, make money, money, money, off of a previously successful author. I recommend, giving it a miss.

Rebecca says

I had a serious love-hate relationship with this book. I loved the family-history part of the story, both the suffragette's actual story, and how the protagonist traces this forgotten branch of the family through historical archives (what can I say? That sort of thing is crack to a librarian). I also loved the colorful settings and activities the author used and described.

I hated the protagonist, though. Her arrogance, self-centeredness, and sense of entitlement beggared belief for a 29-year-old woman who has lived internationally for most of her adult life. I would have believed it of a 15-year-old girl, but not a cosmopolitan, near-thirty-year-old woman. If someone asked her to keep something secret or not to do a particular thing, and she either didn't understand or didn't agree with their reasons, then she judged that clearly the promise/request/etc. did not apply to her and she could do as she pleased no matter what the consequences for anyone else. Also, since she had inherited a gift for unlocking locks, clearly locked doors and gates were not intended to keep her out; if she could undo the lock, she had a right to go in. After all, her enlightenment and self-actualization and worldview trumped anyone else's reasons for doing anything at all. I seriously wanted to slap her upside the head multiple times, even when I agreed with whatever sketchy thing she was doing (which happened once, because someone else's interest was also at stake). You just know she was a popular girl at school, no matter what she says.

The writing also had a few places where I wanted to tear my hair out, though that might have been because I was listening to it on CD. Several times the protagonist would discover potentially life-changing documents, and instead of opening and reading them immediately, she would spend several paragraphs musing about the sunlight over the lake, or memories of her father on his fishing boat, and the significance of that to her life, etc. etc. ad infinitum. ARGH! Just read the damned document already!

Maybe I would have liked the book better with a different narrator. She read everything in tremulous tones, as if she were hovering on the edge of tears and bravely fighting them off to tell this story of monumental pain and sacrifice (and of course her own bravery in enduring it) even when she was just talking about a visit to a glass factory.

And at least 2/3 of the epilogue was overkill.

Lormac says

This book is awful. Let me count the ways...

I hate books where the characters act nothing like real people, and this book is a prime example of that failing. If you lived away from home for five + years and returned for an extended visit, and immediately pissed off your brother (who never left, by the way) by telling your mother that his girlfriend was pregnant after he specifically asked you not to do so, would you call him at 1:00 am when you knew he was sleeping next to the prgenant girlfriend (who now hated you) to tell him that you thought that he was handling his career choice all wrong? Ummm, no, you wouldn't. But this character does.

I also hate books that base their plot on coincidence and unbelievable events. The plot starts with the narrator finding a package of documents in the cupola of the charmingly dilapidated Victorian mansion on a lake where her mother lives (more about the ridiculous descriptions later). By the end of the story, you still do not know why those documents were ever placed there since the person who wrote or collected them never lived in that house. And when she tells her mother about them, her mother says, 'Oh my gosh, I found a baby blanket hidden in the lining of an old trunk in the barn twenty-five years ago, and it has a note with the same hand-writing on it! I never thought to mention that I found this blanket or note to anyone in 25 years, but now let me show you since this will move this ridiculous plot forward another step.' Well, she doesn't say exactly that, but you get my drift. If you found out that a relative committed manslaughter and killed another relative of yours, would you contact the police, or would you vandalize the relative's store? Why, of course, you would start vandalizing immediately!! This way, no one would ever believe you when you later told your family about what your relative said. Yes, it is that stupid.

I also hate books which include flowery descriptions of every minute detail. The water never just laps at the dock - it laps at the dock like the rhythmic rustling of a lady's taffetta skirts as she sweeps across a marbled floor of a grand drawing room. For pete's sake, couldn't it just lap? And when the narrator tells her mother about some documents she found, we need to first hear about the coffee that she made and blueberry muffins she served with the coffee, studded with moist berries that recall to the taste buds those glorious summer days when the warm sun touched each berry in turn ripening them to the peak of their perfection.

Arrrggghhh. By the time you get done listening to the description of the muffins, you have forgotten all about the documents which were so all fire important that she had to wake her brother up in the middle of the night. [This raises a point - I listened to this book on CD - I wonder if I would have noticed this so much if I had read the book on paper. I might have skimmed over the descriptions and they might not have annoyed me so much.]

Finally, Do you think it is tacky for an author of a best-seller to have a character in her next book reading the best-seller? Well, I do. In "Lake of Dreams" the narrator notices her mother reading a book with a black cover on which floats the ethereal image of a delicately embroidered baby dress. Why didn't she just say, "Oh, I see you are reading 'The Memory-Keeper's Daughter'?" At least when the narrator asks her mother how she likes the book (!!) her mother says, "Oh, I just started it." But by then the damage to my respect for this author has been completed.

In conclusion, don't waste your time on this book. Even if you really, really liked "The Memory-Keeper's Daughter" this book is not half as good as that one was. (Incidentally, I thought the MKD was just okay but at least it was not the train wreck this book is.)
