



The Objects of Her Affection

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Sophie Porter is the last person in the world you'd expect to be stealing Renaissance masterpieces—and that's exactly why she's so good at it. Slipping objects out of her husband's office at the Philadelphia Museum of Art satisfies something deep inside, during a time in her life when satisfactions are few and far between.

Selling the treasures also happens to keep their house out of foreclosure – a house that means everything to Sophie. But the FBI is sniffing around, and Sophie is close to destroying the very life she's working so hard to build. She knows she should give up her thieving ways. But she may no longer be in control. *The Objects of Her Affection* is a riveting story about the realities of motherhood, the perils of secrecy, and the art of appraising the real treasures in our lives.

The Objects of Her Affection Details

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Author : Sonya Terjanian

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From Reader Review The Objects of Her Affection for online ebook

Catherine says

The Objects of Her Affection kept the tension so high that I had to stay up late to keep reading! When Sophie, wife of a museum curator and mother of 2, finds herself in financial trouble with a new house and a questionable mortgage she is tempted to steal uncataloged museum pieces to bail herself out. The reader knows that this is only going to get worse from there. Sophie is so intent on creating the perfect home that she never had as a child, that she puts her whole family in jeopardy. I was so caught up in Sophie's story that my own stomach was in knots as she tries to find a way out. The tension never stops as we hope that there is a way for Sophie to save her family, her marriage, and herself. Loved it!

Michelle says

The Objects of Her Affection could fall into the coming-of-age category for it is as much about Sophie growing up and coming to terms with some painful issues from her childhood as it is about the realities of motherhood. More than once, Sophie flashes back to her disruptive childhood, and her feelings about it are so obviously influencing her adult behavior that even someone skimming the novel will make the connection. Once Sophie stops trying to make herself not in the image of her mother, she finally finds closure and is able to take responsibility for her actions.

The Objects of Her Affection does present motherhood in all its fantastic and dirty glory, which ends up being one of the highlights of the novel. There are the constant messiness, temper tantrums, lack of sleep, lack of patience, the juggling of societal expectations and reality, and more. Experienced mothers will laugh at Sophie's battles with the SUV of strollers, her gratefulness of wearing a heavy sweatshirt over her braless frame when caught at home by unexpected visitors, and the overwhelming stress that comes with taking two children on any excursion, no matter how educational or appropriate. New mothers will take heart that in spite of all of this, no mother would trade in those moments for the kisses and hugs and unconditional love make it all worthwhile. Even Sophie, as misguided as she is sometimes, comes to realize this.

There are some great lessons about marriage within The Objects of Her Affection as well. The depiction of her marriage, especially in the beginning, is one of strength and love. Readers will have some concerns about the power imbalance within it, but the love and trust are there to offset these concerns. Unfortunately, Sophie's secrecy and her need for control all but doom her marriage. Her inability to redefine her role as parent, mother, wife, and partner crack her very strong relationship and serve as a cautionary tale that marriage may start out as nothing but love, lust, and a general sense of well-being but it requires adjustments and changes. All of Sophie's actions drive home this point with stark clarity.

As for Sophie's actions regarding her thievery, one cannot help but feel that the entire situation feels too trite. Other characters mention the severity of her crimes, but it is as if Sophie never truly does understand. She faces the consequences of her actions but still has excuses for them. She apologizes but it seems as if she is apologizing for getting caught and for letting the situation get out of hand rather than for breaking the law. Then, there is the troublesome aspect of the recovery of those stolen items. The whole scenario is too fanciful and unrealistic, which would not necessarily be a bad thing if it were not for the fact that the rest of the story is frank and candid about the messiness of life.

On the whole, *The Objects of Her Affection* is mediocre at best. There are some very cute and poignant moments surrounding Sophie's struggles with motherhood. Similarly, her fears and frustrations surrounding the questionable mortgage loan company are chilling when one remembers just how many people fell for the same pitch in real life and the consequences of those non-traditional mortgage loans. Even better, the story ends in ambiguity; just as life very rarely ends in clear-cut resolutions and answers, so does Sophie's story. Still, the art theft sections are somewhat ridiculous, and her solutions for fixing everything are even more so. While it is not the main plot of the story, her thefts are such a key subplot that it severely weakens the overall story and all but condones a form of vigilante justice. It is a disappointing hiccup in an otherwise lighthearted but serious story about the craziness of motherhood and marriage.

Leila says

"The Objects of her Affection" by Sonya Cobb, to be released in August of 2014, is the story of how Sophie, a young stay-at-home mother, crosses the line in a desperate effort to hold on to her dreams. Cobb drew me into Sophie's predicament so thoroughly that I was rooting for her to succeed even though her risky behavior is appalling.

Sophie has taken time off from her career to be home with her two preschoolers. She had suffered through a childhood with emotionally distant, rootless parents and wants a better life for her own children. While Sophie's husband loves her and wants her to be happy, he is totally immersed in his job at a Philadelphia art museum. Meanwhile, Sophie struggles with the children and the family finances. After Sophie talks her husband into buying an old Philadelphia row house, she makes an awful mistake. As Sophie searches for a way to fix the situation, she makes decisions that compound her problems and threaten her family.

This book is a good read with well-drawn characters and a plot full of twists and turns. first-time novelist Cobb raises some truly thought-provoking questions. Why are material objects so important to some people? Is it acceptable to cheat one person if it results in something good for many people? Should we lie to loved ones to protect them? Is it acceptable to steal in order to make a better life for our children?

I am still pondering the questions raised in the book. I think book clubs would enjoy discussing the issues that Cobb raises.

I received a free copy of this book from the publisher via NetGalley in return for an honest review.

Carley says

Solid enough plot but nothing too exciting. I didn't like the storyline with her mother was never fully fleshed out.

Bandit says

Almost got put off reading this by all the negative and lackluster reviews and very glad I didn't. In fact it was Karen Engelmann's (an author of the very good *Stockholm Octavo*) praise that convinced me to give this one a read. *Objects of Her Affection*, not to be confused with a romcom, actually shouldn't be dismissed as any

sort of chicklit, though at times it walks a dangerously thin line. It isn't a thriller per se and those expecting one, might be disappointed. There are thriller elements, there is theft and fencing and some suspense, but this is primarily a family drama...or a love story between a woman and her house...or a cautionary tale about pursuing American dream with impractical enthusiasm...or a cautionary tale about the nightmares of house ownerships and motherhood...or something like that. And so the basic plot is a woman whose overambitious house purchase (the house isn't a house, it's a symbol permanence, misguided of course, but anyway, an expensive symbol) sends her on a desperate, not to mention criminal, path in order to maintain financial solvency. Isolated, sleep deprived and exhausted by parenthood, with her husband all too busy with his work, her only friends a slutty yet kind one and a morally and pecuniary challenged fun manipulative gay guy (yes, those two do reek of chicklit), Sophie makes some terrible choices. Yes, pun, such an obvious one at that, sorry. Anyway, for me the book had personal appeal, art world, Philadelphia setting, dream of a perfect house...and Cobb's writing is quite good, especially for a debut. From the author's interview (included) the readers can see just how much of her own life she put in the book write what you know and all that. For the most part I was pretty entertained. Occasionally certain parts strained the credibility just a tad too much. Particularly the legal aspects and Sophie's inexplicable affection for the aforementioned manipulative gay friend, despite his screwed up and/or dangerous behavior. This book might make the reader rethink buying property or breeding. But then again the moral is that one must pick the objects of their affection with great care and make their choices accordingly. If one doesn't overthink the logistics, this is perfectly good, enjoyable read.

Leah says

When I spotted The Objects of Her Affection on Netgalley, I thought it sounded really, really interesting. I was a big watcher of White Collar for a while, until it dropped off my radar, and I loved the idea of Sophie being an art-thief and no one even realising, it's the perfect crime! So I couldn't wait to dive in; some reviews said it was quite a high-class novel and I must agree - Sophie may be suffering after buying her new house, which leads to all the art-related thievery, but her and Brian are hardly suffering. They're certainly not poor and there is a tad bit of snobbishness to the novel, but I didn't let it effect my enjoyment of the book.

Perhaps the whole point of the novel is that because Sophie and Brian are the perfect family, with the perfect family house, that no one knew what Sophie was doing, but I thought it was great, and I rather got a sense of tension any time Sophie decided she needed a new 'score', for lack of a better word. The beginning of the novel sets up the need for Sophie's need to steal, and it was somewhat surprising that despite saying she was the one who took care of the family's finances, that she was willing to play so fast and loose with her mortgage just because she felt like the house was the 'one'. I would have expected her to be on top of her finances, to not be led astray by a dodgy mortgage broker, but I could also understand her blindness, and her need to get the house at all costs, damn the consequences, though it obviously comes back to bite her in the bum.

I enjoyed the novel - it was fun and quite frivolous, with an added edge of danger whenever Sophie went into the museum where Brian worked to steal more stuff. Cobb managed to make it quite tenuous and tension-filled. I felt kinda sad for Brian, considering he had no clue, but really he was way too interested in a French candlestick - Brian's whole purpose for the novel was to discuss that bloomin' candlestick! I was kind of surprised he didn't pick up on Sophie's change of mood, and that he was so oblivious to the trouble they were in, but it was all candlestick this, candlestick that. It was the same old Chick Lit trope, though, if Sophie had opened her mouth sooner perhaps she wouldn't have had to go to the lengths she did, although the best parts of the novel was when she was either stealing stuff or going up to New York, to meet Harry, an antiques

dealer.

One thing I felt *The Objects of Her Affection* lacked was the ending. It just... ended. It was the one issue I wondered about before I started reading - because how do you end a novel that's about stealing? You can't really have a happy ever after and although I liked how serious the matter of Sophie's actions became, I just felt that it all came together too neatly, and that the ending was just a bit blah, for lack of a better word. I wanted closure. I wanted to know what was going to happen going forward, with Sophie, Brian, the kids, everything. It was a shame to have such a short, sweet, unexpected ending after quite the roller-coaster ride. It was a very interesting read, though. I really enjoyed it, *The Objects of Her Affection* was very different to most novels I read, and I enjoyed the art aspect and the thieving aspect - it was great, and had my heart pulsing.

This review was originally posted on Girls Love To Read

Erin says

One star for an interesting plot: the wife of a museum curator steals objects from storage carts and pawns them to an antiques dealer in order to save her mortgage from going underwater. One star for it being set in Philadelphia, and for the museum in question being the PMA. But that's where my generosity ends. While set in Philly --my hometown and current residence, a city of which I am fiercely protective-- and no doubt referencing the author's own time spent here, the descriptions of the city are so generic and vague it's almost as if she'd never actually been here. The way she talks about Philadelphia just doesn't ring true, but rather like someone who Google Mapped all of their reference points. From the first line of the book ("Like all Philadelphians, Sohpie bought her groceries at the SuperFresh, or, if she was across town, the Acme." (rough paraphrasing). No. Girl, no. No one shops at either if they can avoid it) to her references to "the hills" that climb away from downtown, and strolling along the "avenue," I really have to wonder if she ever left her house when she lived in this city or talked to a neighbor or like, any other human beings who live in Philadelphia. Also, the plausibility of the plot fell short for me, and not the parts about her taking the objects out of the museum. Those parts were at least somewhat believable, and the descriptions of the museum were spot-on (though maybe it's because I spend so much time there that I could visualize the spaces better). But are we supposed to believe that her husband is so dippy he really isn't aware they're floundering and defaulting on their mortgage? That he blindly accepts his wife's frequent trips to New York as "client work" even though she never a) works on anything and b) hasn't earned a paycheck? That the nanny of a wealthy art collector would happily let a stranger into his mansion and then be totally okay with playing hide and seek, conveniently allowing said stranger to sneak into a hidden room where --of course-- stolen paintings and objects are stored? I had really high expectations for this book, because of the Philly connection and my interest in art heists in general, but this missed the mark.

Megan says

Why? Why have those last 50 pages. It could have gotten going earlier and ended sooner.

Patty says

Sophie is a married mother of two children who left her career at its peak to stay home with her kids. She had a miserable childhood with uncaring parents. She moved from place to place to place and no real home of which to speak and she wants more for her family. She finds an old house in Philadelphia that feels is just perfect and she rushes to buy it over the concerns of her somewhat absent husband. All she sees is the security of owning a house and not the problems that an old house can hide.

Her husband is in acquisitions for the Museum of Art and he is so involved with his job he leaves all of the "home stuff" to Sophie and doesn't question anything too deeply. She sets up a home office to go back to her computer coding job but finds that it has all passed her by in the time she took off to have her children. She doesn't understand why she isn't getting work and her old friend isn't really helping her.

She signs up for a risky mortgage and suddenly her payment is far more than she can afford and she finds herself scrambling for money. While visiting her husband at his office she finds things in disarray and something overcomes her and she steals a mirror. This leads her into a rabbit hole from which she might not be able to climb out.

I enjoyed the book even though I had some problems with it. Much of the plot surrounding the selling of the artifacts was a little too facile. And as it got towards the end a little hard to believe. I can't really go in to what specifically bothered me without totally exposing major plot points. The strength in the book was the character development as I truly felt I got to know this couple through the reading of the book. I did enjoy it despite the parts I found a bit incredible.

3.5

Rljulie says

I wish we could get to the story. So far, the author has spent all her words establishing the unbearable yuppiness of her protagonists, and firmly establishing class indicators. (A house to renovate, the right kinds of child-rearing.) I suspect this is to make them seem likeable, but this reader, at least, finds them insufferable.

Reading on, I'm sorry to find this is a midlife-crisis of a book. Not just that it's about the character's fictional midlife crisis, but that as a story it's so intent on justification and wistfulness, reading it is like listening in as somebody expresses a flow of discontents. It's all badly-channeled restlessness. I was hoping for an art heist romp. Instead I feel burdened by tiresome characters it seems even their own author dislikes. I will not be able to continue this one.

Sarahz says

Like the idea but it took too long to get to the good stuff.

K. says

I received a copy of The Objects of Her Affection via NetGalley for review.

The Objects of Her Affection begins with a story about a house: the perfect home for Sophie, a web developer, and her husband, an arts curator with a focus in ceramics, to raise their two children. Sophie imagines the house as being the physical embodiment of the hopes she has for her family and herself: a stable, permanent representation of familial commitment. Something that will keep her grounded in a world where she finds herself feeling increasingly uncertain of herself and her choices. If Sophie can make the house work, she can make motherhood work. She can make her job work. She can make her life work.

It is not long before Sophie finds that the house isn't working. Their adjustable rate mortgage adjusts itself, leaving her unable to pay her bills, and before long her lender informs her that she is underwater. Sophie is unable to restart her career after taking a sabbatical to focus on parenting her kids during their infancy. Her husband is largely absent as he traces across Europe in pursuit of a rare Renaissance candlestick. The life that Sophie had been banking on is crumbling around her. And that's when she steals her first art object.

While visiting her husband at work, Sophie discovers a trove of poorly cataloged decorative artworks. Snuffboxes, plates, miniatures. Thinking if she can make off with just a few pieces, she can turn her financial situation around, Sophie begins her life of crime.

I love a book about a caper, but more importantly, I love a book about an emotionally complex caper, a caper fraught with uncertainty, insecurity, desperation. *The Objects of Her Affection* complicates a tale of art thievery by bringing in questions of family relationships, professional success, and gendered expectations that inform our family dynamics. In writing about Sophie's acts of theft, Sonya Cobb also delicately explores the notion of museum's thieving from individuals and communities. How is Sophie's pawning an object on the black market really any better or worse than the predatory object acquisition policies of some museums? How do our cultural understandings of the "function" of art and art museums shape the way we think about object acquisition? Cobb balances these questions well with the action of the plot and while the resolution might seem a little too neat, I found myself happy to suspend a little bit of disbelief, just like I do with any good caper.

RoseMary Achev says

Great premise-The wife of an art curator who has access to parts unseen and storage areas of the prestigious museum begins to pilfer valuable silver to finance the family's lifestyle.

The book had a good rhythm until approximately three quarters of the way through. I cannot describe the exact location without giving too much away...but when you read the novel it is obvious(page 251). I thought this transition was poorly done.

Overall a quick read and might be a good book club discussion book.

Marci Foster says

I really liked the story and quickly felt like the main character Sophie was a dear friend. While reading the book, it was like she was whispering a secret in my ear and I couldn't stop reading. I became connected to her in the way you do only when a character is really relate-able. I worried for her and cheered her on. A great debut novel!

Tamara says

Review originally posted: Traveling With T

Traveling With T received this book at BEA 2014 for review consideration.

The Objects Of Her Affection

Sophie Porter is on a hunt for a house. Not just any house. But the PERFECT house. The house that will give her and her family the stability she longed for as a child. The house that will be in their lives forever. A house with character.

Sophie finds the house- it's an old house- it needs work. But it speaks to Sophie. It makes Sophie think of all the things she longed for as a child. It's the house she wants her children to grow up in, the house that she always imagines being a part of the Porter family- their daily life and their memories. Sophie's husband, Brian, does not have the same feelings- but since Sophie is more in charge of their finances- he lets her take the lead. They get the house. And wouldn't you know that Sophie and Brian qualify for one of those amazing ARM mortgage rates? Sophie jumps all over that- not fully understanding what will take place in the near future. See, Sophie quit her job coding websites in the peak years- took time off to raise her children. Anxious to get back to work, she finds that the world of work has left her behind. Then she gets behind on her mortgage payments. She doesn't want to tell Brian- he's concerned about the museum, a backlog of items that need to be catalogued and stored correctly- and finding this special piece for a show.

One day, Sophie is visiting the museum. And without meaning to- a piece that hasn't been catalogued winds up in her purse. She's a bit horrified, yet not completely. She debates about what to do. Then she wonders if that piece will buy her a little time with her mortgage? When she meets Harry, a man who has great respect for the charming trinket she took, a beautiful friendship begins to develop. Sophie keeps her eyes out for "interesting" things and Harry sells them.

But all beautiful friendships must come to an end- and as Sophie begins to realize that she is "under-water" not only with her mortgage, but her life- she has choices to make. Before someone else makes the choices for her.

Traveling With T's Thoughts:

When I saw this book at BEA, I was attracted to the cover and after reading the back, I thought "Art Heist?!" Yes! Could this be a book similar to THE ART FORGER? (Which I LOVED by the way!)" However, THE OBJECTS OF HER AFFECTION is less about a art heist- and more about a mother- a mother who wants to provide more to her children, than she received as a child. A mother who wants her children to have a sense of belonging. For this, Sophie will let nothing stand in her way.

The parts where Sophie interacted with Harry, their partnership and the tense interactions after the partnership soured- those were the best parts to me. Sophie would zig, Harry would zag- and you were never sure who would come out on top.

The other parts of the book- the marriage, the providing for the children- I understood why Sophie wanted that house. But, I was wishing that she would come clean with Brian- although I can understand why he made it hard for her to do that.

If you pick this book up thinking that it's going to be a thrilling story about an art heist- you'll be a bit disappointed. Because, that is just a small part of this book. Larger themes of motherhood and the lengths you will go to provide for your children are repeated in this book- with a healthy dose of why you should tell your significant other about money problems.

Overall thoughts: Interesting and definitely was worth a read. I look forward to what Sonya Cobb will write in the future.

*Traveling With T received a copy of THE OBJECTS OF HER AFFECTION from Sourcebooks at BEA 2014. All thoughts and opinions are mine alone.

Happy Reading and Bookishly Yours,

T @ Traveling With T
