



## And the Dark Sacred Night

*Julia Glass*

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Kit Noonan's life is stalled: unemployed, twins to help support, a mortgage to pay—and a frustrated wife, who is certain that more than anything else, Kit needs to solve the mystery of his father's identity. He begins with a visit to his former stepfather, Jasper, a take-no-prisoners Vermont outdoorsman. But it is another person who has kept the secret: Lucinda Burns, wife of a revered senior statesman and mother of Malachy (the journalist who died of AIDS in Glass's first novel, *Three Junes*). She and her husband are the only ones who know the full story of an accident whose repercussions spread even further when Jasper introduces Lucinda to Kit. Immersing readers in a panorama that stretches from Vermont to the tip of Cape Cod, Glass weaves together the lives of Kit, Jasper, Lucinda and ultimately, Fenno McLeod, the beloved protagonist of *Three Junes* (now in his sixties). An unforgettable novel about the youthful choices that steer our destinies, the necessity of forgiveness, and the surprisingly mutable meaning of family.

## And the Dark Sacred Night Details

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Author : Julia Glass

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## **From Reader Review And the Dark Sacred Night for online ebook**

### **Connie says**

For an individual, and for a family, events from the past determine what the present will be. The title of the book comes from the song "What a Wonderful World", sung by Louis Armstrong, which contains the lyrics "the bright blessed day and the dark sacred night". A therapist tells two of the characters:

"The past is like the night: dark yet sacred....There is no day without night, no wakefulness without sleep, no present without past. They are constantly somersaulting over each other."

Kit Noonan has been feeling despondent since losing his job teaching art history. He feels the weight of a mortgage and providing for two children, but has the energy of a car in neutral. His wife thinks that his lack of motivation comes partly from not knowing the identity of his birth father. Kit's mother refuses to give him any information, so he visits his ex-stepfather. Jasper is a colorful outdoorsman who raises huskies and works at a Vermont ski resort. After Jasper gives him information about his birth father's family, Kit realizes how much of a caring father Jasper was to him during his teens.

As Kit connects with his birth father's relatives and friends, flashbacks go as far back as his grandparents courting in the 1940s. Some of the characters are favorites from Julia Glass' first book *Three Junes*. The connections of what it is to be a family--warmth, love, missed opportunities, resentment--are all there in this overly large group of characters.

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### **Laurel-Rain says**

Our story opens in a summer camp for talented young musicians; slowly we learn of the unexpected outcome; and years later, we learn more about what happened and what the consequences would be.

Kit Noonan, a husband and father, struggles with his unemployment, his troubled marriage, and unanswered questions from the past. Will he find the answers when he visits his stepfather, Jasper Noonan? And what doors will open?

"And the Dark Sacred Night: A Novel" can best be described as a family saga, as we see events unfold gradually, through the perspectives of various characters. In the beginning, we see Kit's life, followed by some meaningful time he spends in Vermont with Jasper.

Lucinda Burns, an octogenarian whose husband has just suffered a stroke, has secrets she has been holding onto for decades. And her husband Zeke has a few of his own.

How will the snippets they are all withholding come together to complete the puzzle? Will a few phone calls, a weekend jaunt to the tip of Cape Cod, and an unconventional new family bring a feeling of completion for them all?

Because this story also weaves in characters from "Three Junes," a previous novel by this author, I had the sense of rejoining a party already underway. But the author did a great job of revealing what is needed, so this could be a stand-alone tale. I loved how fleshed out the characters were and how much history came

along with them. We learn more about Fenno, a dear friend of Malachy Burns, and his current partner Walter. The two of them are constantly bombarded with reminders of the past.

The past is a recurrent theme, and I liked this excerpt in which a therapist explains how the past is never really past:

"...Which is why psychotherapy exists in the first place. Do you know that song, 'What a Wonderful World'? You do, I'm sure," he said when Fenno looked willfully blank. "Louis Armstrong? We hear it so often that it's become about as moving as a beer jingle. But it's beautiful. Have you ever listened to the lyrics, closely? The list of things that prove how wonderful the world really is? I'm taken every time by this: 'the bright blessed day and the dark sacred night'...But what I mean is that the past is like the night: dark yet sacred...."

There is something so lyrical, emotionally compelling about a story like this. I will think about the characters, the gorgeous settings, and the situations long after I close this book. 5 stars.

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### **Ayelet Waldman says**

I was so glad to reenter the lives of these characters!

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### **Rachel Watkins says**

Oh, Julia Glass! I haven't read you since THREE JUNES and I've missed your sweeping storytelling that engulfs me! I wish I had reread THREE JUNES before reading this but it's \*totally\* not necessary. I consider this a standalone novel, not a sequel, though you'll recognize some beloved characters. Get ready to lose yourself in this intricate story that examines families, relationships, lovers, fathers, mothers, and children. Highly recommend.

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### **Jenny Shank says**

By JENNY SHANK Special Contributor, Dallas Morning News

Published: 11 April 2014 07:24 PM

Julia Glass won the National Book Award in 2002 for her elegant debut novel, *Three Junes*, then continued the story of one character, gay bookstore owner Fenno McLeod, in 2006's *The Whole World Over*. Glass gave Fenno a break in two subsequent novels, but he's back in *And the Dark Sacred Night*.

This novel focuses on the family of Fenno's friend Malachy Burns. Burns was a witty, acerbic music critic dying of AIDS in *Three Junes*. He was a character so vivid it makes sense that, as the events in *And the Dark Sacred Night* show, his absence burns a hole in the lives of those he touched.

Late in this book, a therapist Fenno is seeing with his partner, Walter, discusses the line from Louis Armstrong's "What a Wonderful World" that gives the novel its title. The therapist explains, "The past is like the night: dark yet sacred. It's the time when most of us sleep, so we think of the day as the time we really live, the only time that matters, because the stuff we do by day somehow makes us who we are. ... But

there is no day without night, no wakefulness without sleep, no present without past. They are constantly somersaulting over each other.”

Fенно dismisses his therapist’s thoughts as a “homily,” but it’s clear his words are a sort of thesis for this novel, in which characters are forced to confront people and events they thought they’d left far behind, buried in their pasts.

The novel begins at a summer music camp for talented teenage musicians in 1967, where cellist Daphne is falling for flutist Malachy. Glass dips back into this musical idyll for short chapters between long sections from the perspectives of four different characters, a technique she’s used before.

Next up is Kit, the son Daphne had when she was a teenager, resulting from an encounter at that fateful music camp. She has always refused to tell Kit the identity of his father. When Kit is in his 40s, his life hits the skids — the art history professor has been out of work for several years and is trying to cope with the expense of raising his twin daughter and son. His increasingly exasperated wife, Sandra, makes him visit his adoptive father, Jasper, to find out what he knows about Kit’s biological father.

Kit, the accidental son who glues the characters in the book together, is the limpest one, a nice guy who obeys whatever people tell him to do. It takes awhile for the characters to figure it out, but the reader knows almost from the beginning that Malachy is Kit’s biological father, and that the apple has rolled far from the tree.

Kit seems to have developed his mild-mannered ways in reaction to everyone else’s strong personalities. When Kit was 9, his mom married Jasper, an irascible and lovable character, known as “Ski Bum Number One” in the Vermont town where he works as a ski instructor. Glass captures his rustic temperament and slightly out-of-date social views well.

He and Daphne split up when Kit was a teen, and when Kit returns unexpectedly to visit Jasper, the state of his marriage to Sandra uncertain, Jasper makes this observation of Kit: “He’s back to his essential state of waiting, listening: the cautious child who never took to barreling down the mountain with a war cry of some sort. Suddenly Jasper sees it as sadness, not grace.” Jasper decides to tell Kit what he knows about his biological father.

Jasper’s revelation passes the narrative to Lucinda, Malachy’s mother, and from her the book moves to Fенно. Keeping up with this extended family is like watching a relay race, as the characters only stay near long enough to pass a baton to the next generation.

Although some of these exchanges and links between characters feel a bit forced, Glass’ prose is so lovely and filled with felicitous phrases and insights that when she orchestrates a family reunion, the reader is apt to just follow along like Kit, knowing the music is bound to enthrall.

Jenny Shank’s first novel, *The Ringer*, won the High Plains Book Award.

<http://www.dallasnews.com/entertainme...>

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**Richard Kramer says**

In the interests of transparency I should say that Julia Glass blurbed my own book, but even though I love her for doing that I would have loved this book anyway, I think. Transparency is a helpful word here, as it's a quality her characters share, or a quality she causes them to share. You see, here as in her other books, the story beneath the skin. And it's a corker of a story ... Glass is not afraid of big narrative, of big sweeps of time, of secrets and surprises and ill-timed pregnancies, of big events experienced by the characters and the reader in intimate, private ways; I don't know anyone else who's working in quite this way, right now. She's original. The book has an intricate narrative that covers forty-plus years, brings in characters from other Glass novels (including her wonderful *THREE JUNES*), and hops between present and past. It's masterfully executed. But, even with that, I felt the book happening moment by moment, felt Glass letting the book happen to her, and recording her immediate experience of that. I sensed she DIDN'T know where she'd wind up, and that made it scary and exciting to read.

Even though I've written a novel, this book made me forget that I had, and made me want to write a novel all over again. Maybe what I mean is it made me want to write THIS novel.

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### **Rosie says**

I need to stop reading this author. I am so drawn to the cover copy and then so frustrated by the book itself - too many characters, none of whom are terribly well-drawn; tedious and unnecessary dramatic moments that don't add to the story; very little pay-off. I got 20 pages before the end and almost couldn't find the energy to finish the book.

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### **Kathy says**

Having enjoyed a novella by this award-winning author I took this full novel for a spin and could not like it, having to skip over much... Short story, yes. Full novel, no.

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### **Barbara says**

Julia Glass shows her superior character development writing skills in this novel. She writes so beautifully, that the characters are easily imagined and jump off the page. Her stunning ability ranges from a male old codger's perspective to a seventeen year old girl's perspective. Even when there isn't much action going on in the book, her writing is so beautifully rendered that the reader is adsorbed in her work.

In this novel, Kit, aka Christopher, is stuck in a rut. He is unemployed, has massive bills, a frustrated wife, and twelve year old twins. His wife Sandra motivates him to discover who his paternal father is. Sandra feels that the reason Kit is stuck is because he doesn't know his heritage. Daphne, Kit's mother gave birth to Kit when she was 17 years old. She has refused to let anyone know the identity of the birth father. She's a strong-willed girl who turns into an even stronger-willed mother.

The story revolves around Kit finding his roots and discovering what makes him the man he turned out to be. In this novel Glass has compiled: two women who are forces to be reckoned with; gay men who suffered through the AIDS nightmare; two octogenarian men who want to be earnest and hard-working patriarchs for their families, and a guy who wants to get out of rut. What I love about this novel is that one of the main

characters is dead, yet continues to be a main character in the story as a result of his relationship legacies he left. Even dead, he continues to have strong effects on family and friends.

Glass's writing made this novel a joy to read. She is clever and thought provoking.

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### **Snotchocheez says**

There's something about Julia Glass' writing style (if indeed *And the Dark Sacred Night* is representative of her complete body of work) that just leaves me overwhelmed (in an unnecessary, not at all good way). It's clear she's an exacting, detail-minded *artiste*, but she's *way* too much in love with her "voice" that she doesn't know when to quit.

I thought I was going to get a moving story of unemployed, stymied art history professor Christopher "Kit" Noonan's search for his biological father, and instead got this epic, multi-generational blah blah-fest with a cast of dozens (several of which, probably to the delight of Ms. Glass' fans, had been (so I gather from the discussion guide at the end of the e-book and other Goodreaders' reviews) prominently featured in her earlier novels *Three Junes* and *The Whole World Over*.) (Fret not, Glass neophytes: if you're like me and haven't read those two novels, no problem: she provides AMPLE opportunity to get to know each and every one of her characters (whether or not you want the details). I would have preferred a more pointillistic style of storytelling; instead I felt clobbered with minutiae that, quite frankly, were unnecessary and detracted from the core story.

Because there were several reviewers who commented that her National Book Award winner *Three Junes* was so much better than this, I'll probably give it a try someday. My head throbs at the prospect of duplicating this reading experience, though.

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### **Eileen says**

Parts of this book was pure TORTURE to read. Too many characters-most underdeveloped. Scenes were drawn out and even unnecessary. I'd read and read and read- 5 pages. After the death of XXXX (no spoilers) I thought the story would wrap up and end- no. Another 40 pgs of drivel. My OCD doesn't let me leave a book unfinished and oh how I wanted to stop.

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### **Cynthia says**

Did not disappoint! Classic story and writing by Julia Glass.

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### **Larry H says**

How much of our life's future direction can be gleaned from who we are, or who we believe we are? Do

questions about our heritage really influence the way we think about ourselves?

Kit Noonan is an unemployed professor of art history with a strong interest in Inuit art. He was an excellent instructor but lost his job because he couldn't bring himself to finish his book, a condition of his continued employment. In fact, he can't seem to motivate himself to do much of anything but cook for his family and shake himself out of his daily paralysis to keep some basic routines. This inertia is having a tremendously negative effect on his marriage to Sandra, a strong-willed landscape architect.

Sandra believes that the reason Kit is afraid to move forward with his life is that he's stuck in the past—specifically the fact that he doesn't know who his father is. Raised by a secretive, stubborn mother, Daphne, who refused to tell him who his father was or even share the circumstances of his conception, Kit has always been curious but has tamped down his desire to know where he came from for fear of causing trouble. So Sandra forces Kit out of their New Jersey home, encouraging him to seek answers from Jasper, the outdoorsman and former ski instructor whom his mother married when he was a young child, and was the only father figure he ever knew.

"To change direction, to go somewhere entirely new, maybe you need to know exactly where it is you came from in the first place. A secure foothold. Don't you think?"

Kit's time with Jasper reawakens feelings of nostalgia in both men, as well as stokes the resentment of both toward Daphne. Despite his promise to Daphne never to share the details of Kit's paternity, Jasper points Kit in the direction of Lucinda Burns, the wife of Vermont state senator Zeke Burns, a woman who has been dealing with her own grief for a number of years, and tried to find ways to carry on with her life the best she could. Lucinda has answers to Kit's questions, and leads him on a path of discovery that has tremendous ramifications in his life and for many others. (Even though some reviews of this book divulge more of the plot, I'm going to leave a little mystery for the readers.)

This is a moving and compelling book about the need to understand who you came from, the need for answers, the need to feel a part of something larger than yourself. It's also a book about the strength of relationships, how they can build us up and tear us down, even years after they've ended. It's about trust and sacrifice, guilt and pain, and the pull of family, those to whom we're related by blood and those we choose to make part of our family.

I really love the way Julia Glass writes, and it was good to revisit a few characters from some of her earlier books. Her characters are so nuanced, so complex, they draw you into their lives and you want to know everything about them and what makes them tick. The plot is at times tremendously emotional, at times tremendously frustrating because of the things left unsaid.

I enjoyed this book quite a bit, but interestingly enough, I found Kit's character to be the weak link of the book, even though he is the linchpin around which the other characters revolve. It was almost as if the inertia that Sandra accused him of translated into his character, because he seemed almost lifeless despite what was going on around him. However, this is still a beautifully written book worth reading, a book that will make you think and make you feel—and maybe it might even make you a little emotional.

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### **Jill says**

Julia Glass's latest book strikes right to the core of personal identity. How do solidify our sense of who we

are if we don't know where we came from? In what ways can we take our place in the universe if our knowledge of our past is incomplete?

Kit Noonan has reached a fork in the road. Underemployed with no clear sense of purpose, he is floundering, until his wife urges him to take some time away to work out the secret of his father's identity. That search leads him back to his stepfather Jasper in Vermont – a self-sufficient outdoorsman who effectively raised him along with two stepbrothers. Eventually, the journey brings him to Lucinda, the elderly wife of a stroke-ravaged state senator and onward to Fenno (from Julia Glass's first book) and his husband Walter.

Through all this, Kit discovers the enigma of connections and which connections prevail. As one character states, “..the past is like the night: dark yet sacred. It's the time of day when most of us sleep, so we think of the day as the time we really live, the only time that matters, because the stuff we do by day somehow makes us who we are. We feel the same way about the present.... But there is no day without night, no wakefulness without sleep, no present without past.”

The biggest strength of this novel – by far – is the beautifully rendered portrayal of characters. Kit, Jasper, Lucinda and her family, Fenno and Walter – even Kit's twins – are so perfectly portrayed that they could walk off the pages. As a reader, I cared about every one of them and – as the book sequentially goes from one character to another – I felt a sense of loss from temporarily leaving him or her behind.

The only weakness was an overabundance of detail (scenes, back story, etc.), which robbed me of using my imagination to “fill in the blanks.” While vaguely discomforting, this story is so darn good and the writing is so darn strong that I was glad to be immersed in its world for the several days I was reading. Kit's journey and his recognition of what “family” really means -- and our imperfect connected world -- has poignancy and authenticity.

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### **Mary Lins says**

“And the Dark Sacred Night”, is classic Julia Glass in all the best possible ways; beautiful prose, varied narrative perspectives, always interesting and often lovable characters, and family secrets revealed. At the center, this novel is about Kit Noonan's “origin quest”, as it ripples out to touch many others in (and out) his life. The story highlights the importance of fathers, the effects of long term unemployment; erosion of self-esteem, energy, and hope. It touches on teen-parenthood and its considerable joy/considerable sacrifice.

Julia Glass has a gift for painting very sympathetic and unique male characters:

Japser's home-spun wisdom

Kit's sensitive striving

Rayburn's humor – though we meet him only through Jasper's memories of him

Fenno's steadiness

Walt's child-like joy

Each time one narrative perspective ended (Kit's, Jasper's...) I mourned it for a moment and then was immediately swept up by the next one (Lucinda's, Fenno's...) When I turned the last page I missed them all. This was a novel that I was able to really immerse myself in – what a joy!

If you are familiar with Glass' other novels, you will guess the “secret” early on. But that in no way spoils

the story. And many readers will happily remember Fenno, from “Three Junes”. Julia Glass, you’ve done it again! Thank you!

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### **Knewmyer says**

I'm not even through with this one but I'm rating it anyway. I loved Three Junes and also liked The Widower's Tale and The World Over, but this book just doesn't seem like it's going anywhere but in circles! The cliched characters (Queeny Walter and Mountain Man Jasper, really?) Daphne and Lucinda are just awful (in the case of Daphne, spoiled rotten, she has no redeeming characteristics; Lucinda at least means well but is equally awful).

It's just a tale about people (with detailed descriptions of what they're eating - note to the author: when you say what your character is eating I will somehow know that they're chewing, you don't need to tell me). I'm listening to the audio version, well narrated by Mark Bramhall, but I could probably fall asleep for a half hour at a time and wake up not having missed anything!

It's not really a chore because the characters do come to life, but when I'm not listening to it I'm only thinking of how annoying it is and not pondering Kit's dilemma (the big mystery surrounding who his father is, but really I think the dude is just majorly depressed).

It's books like this that make readers bag on literary fiction. A bit of a plot would have been nice. Sheesh!

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### **Nicholas says**

Three Junes was just so good, and I keep coming back for more. But Glass has disappointed me, at least a little bit, ever since. And sometimes she's disappointed me a lot (her third, I See You Everywhere, was pretty awful).

And the Dark Sacred Night is better than that one, but not by all that much. I thought the section on Lucinda and Zeke was great, but the ones with Walter/Fenno and Jasper drove me mad. She writes Jasper with this down-home, aw shucks New England lingo that irritated me no end. And while she herself acknowledges that Walter is basically a screaming, cliched queen in all his dialogue, he's also a screaming, cliched queen, which was pretty grating. He didn't feel particularly believable. While the whole book is written by an omniscient narrator, when Glass writes anything about Fenno (who is Scottish), she uses all of these phrases and words from Great Britain. But not when he's talking (where it would make sense), just when he's present. It seemed totally affected, like that classmate who went away for junior year abroad and came home with some unidentifiable European accent.

In the end, while the writing is not bad, it's just kind of precious a lot of the time. The issues she's dealing with -- death, illness, unwed motherhood, knowing/not knowing your parentage -- are all really interesting, but she gets way too stuck in the folksy, down home preciousness of the characters and their lives.

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## Madeleine says

*(This review was originally written for and posted at the Chicago Center for Literature and Photography's site. The publisher graciously provided me with a copy of this book.)*

I don't remember many details from Julia Glass's first novel, *Three Junes*, other than stumbling upon it that summer between high school and college when I only read books with award medallions emblazoned on their covers, finding justification for such a pretentious pursuit in my enjoyment of that novel. That same ease of getting lost in a story packed with likably intriguing personalities came screaming back after a couple dozen pages into Glass's fifth and most recent offering, *And the Dark Sacred Night*--a novel that, like the Louis Armstrong song from which it borrows a lyric to refurbish into a title, is unconventionally beautiful and just the right amount of earnest.

Glass returns to a handful of events and characters introduced in her debut novel, dipping into its material for a splash of background color in some places and smaller but crucial supporting detail in others, to spin a new yarn about the connectedness of people and the familial ties that alternately bind and throw out that last viable lifeline. Kit, an out-of-work husband and father, is not only in the throes of a mid-life crisis of crippling proportions but also pushing his wife, however unintentionally, to the limits of her patience. The only solution to Kit's inactivity, he and his wife, Sandra, agree, is to finally seek out the identity of and story behind the father he never knew, as Kit's mother, Daphne, has remained doggedly silent about her teenage lover who died in his 30s, more than 20 years removed from the book's present. Kit's efforts reconnect him with his first stepfather, the man who formally adopted Kit as a boy and with whom a teenage Kit lived well after his mother left, who puts him in contact with the paternal family he never knew existed.

Here, the rich backgrounds and layered stories that give each character dimension have also made each character palpable and engaging. These are everyday people with the kind of problems people face every day--making ends meet with dwindling resources, the slowly realized crisis of a faith that was once unshakable, the dawning of an augmented understanding of the self, aging parents and spouses, chronically underestimating the decency of which most people are capable--and who are forced to yield their secrets as others' unanswered questions become too much to bear. What's more, Glass's characters actually behave like adults, aware as they are that no two people want the same things or see the world the same way because every individual is a composite of their unique experiences and places, as well as the private details that add further duality to their personalities. The maturity with which Glass graces her characters allows for their adult dilemmas to be addressed in an adult manner, fostering an effective contrast between the teenage urgency and freedom that emanates from the flashbacks to Daphne's fateful summer at the music camp where Kit was conceived.

As Glass demonstrates her knack for believably and effectively linking people and events across time and connections, she twines them together to revelatory but largely positive effect: A book with a less optimistic regard for human nature wouldn't have allowed Kit to be so warmly welcomed by the grandparents and extended family he meets for the first time in his 40s, nor would his mother be so understanding (but forgivably reluctant) of Kit's need and right to discover his genealogical past for himself. But this isn't a novel that seeks external conflict to move its plot along so much as it demands that the personal growth of its characters develop the story. The recurring element of underestimating people only to be pleasantly surprised is evidence enough that this is a warm-hearted book, as is the way it embraces tragedy as one of the greatest unifiers among those touched by it.

Every good story needs some friction, though, and that which punctuates *And the Dark Sacred Night* is the

novel-long query of consciousness that weighs the benefits of lifting the veil of ignorance to gain a fuller understanding of one's self against its consequences, namely the risk that an escalating ripple effect could throw another's life in complete upheaval. But since there is no way to accurately compare what is with what could have been on account of the myriad unpredictable, unforeseeable variables of the roads not travelled, the limbo that comes from a lack of closure is deemed to be a far worse fate than the fleeting hell of slicing open old wounds and setting oneself for new ones. All anyone can do in an unpredictable world is take responsibility for their own happiness and find peace in knowing that any chance is taken with the best intentions.

*And the Dark Sacred Night's* many successes, unfortunately, do make its faltering missteps jarringly obvious. There is some heavy-handed drawing of parallels (a blizzard forces Kit to prolong the visit to his stepfather; later, when a hurricane similarly traps a house full of newly acquainted connections that share Kit's father as their common bond, it's a bit obvious that storms signal momentous occasions, diminishing the shock of the tragedy the latter sets up) and somewhat laboriously emphasized meanings, as if Glass doesn't always trust her audience to follow her implications. But such things are mostly innocuous grievances, as Glass deftly navigates her way through the most important instances of foreshadowing and symbols.

As a whole, Glass's newest novel is a largely successful one that, like its characters, is a bit uneven and imperfect but is buoyed by hopeful optimism that certainly deserves kudos for avoiding the kind of pat sentiment that is all too tempting to deploy when matters of the heart float so close to the surface.

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### **Ang says**

This book took me forever to finish, and there's no good reason for that except that it simply wasn't compelling enough. I didn't feel like I wanted to pick it up in random moments. I didn't feel the burning need to read while I ate dinner, or while I watched TV or while I waited. I feel like I've liked Glass' books in the past, but...this one. I don't know. Slow. When I realized I was halfway through the book and NOTHING MUCH had happened, I sighed inwardly and trudged on. I probably should have just quit.

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### **Betsy Hetzel says**

It has happened again....two in a row: loved an author's 1st book that I read(Donaghue's ROOM/ Glass' THREE JUNES) /disliked the next novel(FROG MUSIC / AND the DARK SACRED NIGHT).

I liked the premise of AND the DARK SACRED NIGHT: Kit, a middle-age man goes off in search of information about his biological father(well, he's literally pushed out the door to do so by his wife Sandra) that his mother Daphne has ADAMANTLY withheld from him for 40 some years. Now, I believe in a strong sense of identity; I believe that where and who we come from, our roots, are important as pieces of who we are but.... I did not understand:

1. Kit's present situation of total inertia, unemployed, not doing anything about finding/getting another job was because he didn't know who his father is/was ??
2. His mother Daphne's absolute reluctance/refusal to reveal Kit's paternity. I can't believe that it was because he was homosexual ??

Kit and Daphne were not my favorite characters. Kit was too uninteresting, bland, wishy-washy (certainly nothing like his dashing father, maybe a good thing?), and Daphne I liked in the early pie-baking stage of her marriage to Jasper, but her selfishness throughout,for whatever her reason, did not attract me to her. I

strongly enjoyed the step-father Jasper, who Daphne later divorced for a man who gave her what she wanted: a 2nd chance at motherhood which Jasper denied her. I liked Jasper's lifestyle, his basic, simple views on life/family, and his surprising wisdom with his sons. I also rather liked Lucinda Burns, the paternal grandmother, for her strength at dealing w/ adversity, her faith, and her determination to work at reuniting this far-flung blended family. BUT, although I had started to lose interest much earlier, after the "catastrophe" at the reunion in Provincetown, which I still don't understand why that was added to this falling-apart plot, the book, its chaos, its resolution, simply spiraled downhill so quickly for me, I almost didn't finish it.

Then there was Fenno, whom I vaguely remembered from THREE JUNES, and his flamboyant "queen" of a partner Walter whom I thought was a hoot and who provided some comic relief to all the "sticky" drama. I liked Fenno's story the most, although I wanted more of it, especially more of his insights into the talented, complicated, private man who was Kit's father.

In all, the book about which I was so excited, fell flat for me but with a very loud crash. It was a disappointment. I would not recommend it. It makes me glad that Harper Lee and Margaret Mitchell only wrote ONE magnificent novel.

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