



The Song Reader

Lisa Tucker

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Sure, we were a small family, but it wasn't lonely. We had the endless stream of my sister's customers and, of course, the music. Every day, all day, our stereo would play and Mary Beth would talk about the lyrics, what they really meant.

Leeann lives with her beautiful older sister -- the world's first and only "song reader." Everyone in their small town thinks Mary Beth is special, and Leeann does, too. Mary Beth helps people figure out how they really feel by using the songs they can't get out of their minds. And her advice is always right. But when Mary Beth makes a terrible mistake and half the town -- including the family of the one boy Leeann cares about -- turns against Mary Beth, Leeann will have to rethink everything she knows about her own family. She will have to be the stronger sister for a change. But she will also have a chance to discover that even an "ordinary" girl like herself can sometimes figure out what the music really means...

The Song Reader Details

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Heather says

This book was a hot mess. I mean, I literally finished it, put it down, and said aloud, "Wow - that was a hot mess!" It was actually fairly entertaining and I enjoyed it most of the way along, until I reached the end and realized that nothing really got resolved or made any sense. If you don't think you will care, then it's an easy read and you might enjoy it anyway.

B- I own a copy from swap so you can have it if you want!

Ferina says

Ternyata novel ini gak sesuai 'ekspektasi' gue. Gue pikir bakal berbau-bau thriller gitu. Yang awalnya gue bayangin, Mary Beth 'membaca' lagu, terus ternyata lagu itu 'menghantui' dia. Novel ini lebih banyak ke drama-nya. Meskipun gue akui, ide pembaca lagu ini keren, karena sampai saat ini yang gue tau ya berkisar di tarot, peramal kartu atau garis tangan, atau pake bola kristal.... Gue berharap ada misteri yang 'mencekam'... Dan, soal pembacaan lagunya pun gak terlalu banyak diceritain.

Mireille says

This book was OK.

It tells the story of Mary Beth, Leann's big sister, who has a sort of a musical gift : the people who come to her tell her which songs are stuck in their heads and Mary Beth is able to give them some advice about their current problems.

Leann is the narrator of this story. She's very admiring of her big sister who raised her since their mom died. She was my favourite character, I could see her coming out of age since the book follows these sisters for a few years. She was a normal teenager while her sister was depicted as a perfect responsible adult, which often irritated me.

If I knew before reading that the second half of the book would be about mental illness, I would have enjoyed it more. I wasn't expecting that story line, it felt strange.

Sisma Dwi says

Mari saya ringkas isi novel ini:

Novel ini berkisah tentang Mary Beth yang tinggal bersama adiknya Leeaan di sebuah kota kecil Tainer. Mereka hanya tinggal berdua semenjak sang ayah pergi dan ibu mereka meninggal dunia akibat kecelakaan lalu lintas. Mary Beth bekerja sebagai pramusaji restoran untuk membiayai hidupnya bersama sang adik, Leeaan yang masih SMA. Mary Beth memiliki semacam kemampuan untuk 'menerawang' seseorang. Bukan dengan kartu tarot, bola kristal, ataupun membaca pikiran. Tapi dengan membaca lagu yang terngiang di kepala kliennya. Banyak dari 'terawangannya' yang berhasil sehingga Mary Beth dipercaya oleh hampir

seluruh warga kota untuk menjadi penasihat mereka. Malah entah apa alasannya salah satu kliennya memberikan anak lelakinya untuk diadopsi Mary Beth, anak itu bernama Tommy yang tak Mary Beth tau siapa ayahnya. Mereka akhirnya hidup bertiga Mary Beth, Leeaan, dan Tommy yang memanggil Mary Beth mama. Masalah datang ketika salah seorang klien Mary Beth, Holly Kramer, datang dengan masalahnya dengan suami yang ingin ditinggalkannya dan ayahnya yang brengsek (menurut buku, padahal saya juga ga tau brengseknya kenapa. Dibuku cuma dibilang "George brengsek, dan suaminya Holly hanya diam saja ketika Holly koma"). Saking peliknya masalah Holly sampai-sampai pada pesta ulang tahun Mary Beth, Holly sampai kayaknya curhat habis-habisan semalaman ke Mary Beth (Soalnya menurut buku itu sampai-sampai Leeaan disuruh pulang sendiri ke apartemen malam-malam. Dan Mary Beth baru sampai di rumah pagi harinya). Sampai suatu hari Holly dikabarkan koma akibat minum obat tidur yang bisa membuat tidur warga seluruh kota. Mendengar itu Mary Beth langsung khawatir dan pergi ke RS tempat Holly dirawat. Tapi Mary Beth malah diusir oleh keluarga Holly. Setelah itu Mary Beth seperti orang stres. Mary Beth jadi tak pernah bicara, tak mau bekerja, tak mau main bersama Tommy. Keadaannya seperti mayat hidup. Dalam keadaan itu adiknya, Leeaan, mencari sang ayah. Dengan harapan mungkin itu yang dibutuhkan Mary Beth. Ayahnya akhirnya kembali tapi tidak sepenuhnya kembali. Ayahnya menjadi sosok yang kaku (agak-agak canggung gimana gitu. Menurut buku sih katanya ayahnya merasa bersalah karena ninggalin keluarga. Jadi dia tuh kerjanya bilang maaf melulu). Kehadiran ayahnya tidak membuat Mary Beth lebih baik. Sampai akhirnya Holly sadar dari komanya dan mantan pacar Mary Beth datang dan membawa Mary Beth ke semacam tempat rehabilitasi jiwa. Akhirnya Mary Beth dinyatakan sehat oleh psikiater yang menanganinya.

Udah sih ceritanya gitu doang. Intinya tentang keluarga dan musik. Tapi yang saya tangkep dari cerita ini cuma:

1. Cintailah hanya yang mencintaimu. Mary Beth sayang ibu dan adiknya, karena ibunya bangga sama Mary Beth. Menurut ibunya Mary Beth itu pekerja keras, masih muda sudah mau bekerja. Dan adiknya Leeaan hanya sebentar mengenal ayah dan ibunya sehingga dia sangat membutuhkan kakaknya. Dia rela melakukan apapun demi sang kakak. Dan Leeaan membenci ibunya karena menurut Leeaan ibunya terlalu keras padanya dan selalu membanggakan Mary Beth. Mary Beth membenci ayahnya karena tidak membuat ibunya cukup bahagia. (ribet ga lo bacanya?!)
2. Yang jadi pertanyaan saya sampai sekarang: Kenapa ayahnya ninggalin Mary Beth, Leeaan, dan istrinya? sampe selesai buku saya ga dapet jawaban secara konkret. Trus kenapa Mary Beth segitu depresinya? lagi-lagi ga dapet jawaban konkretnya. Trus kenapa Mary Beth putusin Ben juga alasannya apa? Awal mula Mary Beth jadi pembaca lagu juga samar-samar dijelasinnya. Kirain di akhir bakal terungkap semuanya. Gak taunya masih abu-abu. (pembaca kecewa)
3. Keluarga macam apa ini? Ibunya selingkuh malah didukung sama Mary Beth. Bapaknya pergi ninggalin keluarga malah dianggap wajar. Orangtua kayak gitu bukannya gak tanggung jawab ya??

Saya kasih satu bintang bukan karena ceritanya jelek. Cuma saya ga ngerti ini ceritanya mau dibawa kemana (menurut saya). Mungkin cuma saya aja yang nganggap kayak gini, soalnya yang lain kayaknya oke-oke aja tuh. Atau mungkin juga saya pembaca yang kelainan.

Mungkin agak subjektif ya, masa lagunya Michael Jackson dibilang jelek sih :(

Bridget says

Lisa Tucker's books always feel *almost* really good, but are always missing that one thing that makes them great. This is the third book of hers that I've read now, and they've all been solidly entertaining (and fairly quick reads) but are never all the memorable and I never feel compelled to recommend them to anyone else.

This book is much the same. I enjoyed the book, but there is definitely a sad undercurrent of what it's like for a young high school girl to grow up very fast and realize that what she thought she knew about her family (her dead mother, her father that abandoned her, and her older sister that's taken care of her) was only just the tip of the iceberg. I think everyone goes through a turning point when you realize your parents are just as flawed as you are, and that as well as you may think you know your parents, your siblings, or your friends -- there are always things they haven't shared with you completely.

I disagree with BCH's review(not shockingly) - I didn't feel like book was a 'hot mess' and I didn't feel like things were left unresolved and unclear. I'm actually surprised that BCH wasn't more interested in the mental illness aspect of the book, but maybe I can look at things like mental illness at a much higher level because I don't understand the details (and therefore, don't need them) and BCH sees through unresolved mental illness issues and therefore was left with more questions.

Either way, I'm glad I finally read this book and I'm sure I'll read another Lisa Tucker book in the future, but don't expect me to recommend them to any of you.

Lightblue says

L'idea che le canzoni che ascoltiamo e che ci rimangono in testa in qualche modo siano un messaggio di quello che siamo e di quello che abbiamo dentro è veramente intrigante. Mentre leggevo cercavo di ripensare alle colonne sonore della mia vita e volevo capire se in qualche modo mi rappresentassero.

Detto questo, il libro è davvero molto coinvolgente e scritto bene. E' la storia di due sorelle, Mary Beth (che ha appunto questo "dono" di leggere le canzoni) e LeeAnn, molto giovane e sensibile. Rimaste orfane della madre e con un padre di cui non hanno più notizie, dovranno cercare di cavarsela da sole. Mary Beth è l'incarnazione perfetta della persona che vuole sempre aiutare gli altri anche a discapito di se stessa e, a volte, anche delle stesse persone che vorrebbe aiutare. La generosità portata all'estremo. LeeAnn è in un certo senso abbandonata a se stessa e vittima dei segreti familiari custoditi per tanti anni. E' una storia piena di buoni sentimenti, ma non per questo non appassionante. La quinta stellina la perde perchè troppi punti rimangono scoperti. Mi piacciono i finali aperti, ma qui troppe cose non vengono chiarite.

La Tucker è sicuramente una scrittrice da approfondire.

Jessica says

This book would also make a good book group discussion, but it was stressful and emotionally draining to read. When it was over I was so relieved it was over, even though the end didnt really wrap up and explain everything as well as I would have liked, I was left wondering, what did that mean, are they going, are they staying? I'm confused.

Kristen says

A nice book about a girl who can help people figure out what their problems are by the songs they are drawn to or can't get out of their head. Its the lyrics of the songs that effect people. An interesting read but a little dark. So many people in Leeann's life with mental problems made me kinda sad when I finished.

ashley lloyd spanton says

I picked this book up because of the title - The Song Reader - and thought the description of song reading was an interesting and creative concept I hadn't really thought about before.

It was marketed as kind of a chick lit book, so I figured it'd be light and fluffy and an easy read about music and growing up, but it was actually quite darker and heavier than I expected. In a good way of course.

I'm always so inspired by characters, even if they are just fictional characters, who are put upon and put upon at such a young age but still manage to keep themselves together and rise up out of their difficult situations. Leeann is an inspiring character. Her naivety and innocence clouds much of her understanding of what is happening in her life, but she pushes on. She has some life changing coming of age experiences that could have sent her flying into the same reckless state that everyone else seemed to crumble to, but she never succumbs to that temptation.

For a character who endlessly feels weak and who was endlessly berated for not being tough enough growing up, she sure as hell came out on top as the one rock holding her family together.

As a side note, I'd like to read more into the theory of song reading, or where the inspiration for that came from. I think it's a very interesting concept.

Carol says

Cute story, but I didn't like the ending so much. It was an open ending and no real conclusion. I wish there had been another chapter or so to wind things up. Instead, I don't know what became of the characters. Strong storyline but weak ending.

bookczuk says

I picked this up initially because I always have a song or two rambling through my head, and often spilling out over my lips. It can be anything from *Immittet Angelus* to the theme from *Sesame Street*. No wait. That's a bad example. There's actually a musical relationship between those two. How about anything from *Stardust* to *When You Wish Upon a Star*. No wait. This is harder than I thought. How about *Greensleeves* to *Happy Trails to You* (which is the song I want played at my funeral, by the way)?

Anyhow, the music in my head (I dislike the term earworm) fascinates me and keeps me good company. It soothes my soul. I like it. So the idea of someone interpreting the playlist of my brain was really interesting.

What does it say about me? What do the lyrics and tunes reveal?

The story didn't actually live up to the hype or hope I had for it, but it was a moderately good read. An interesting exploration into fragile minds, family function and dysfunction, telling secrets and an adolescent coming of age. I really enjoy "first books" of new authors and that added a special delight to me for this. I will be interested to see what else Lisa Tucker brings to the book world.

Now if someone could just tell me why I have *There's No Place Like Home For the Holidays* in my head, I'd be happy.

Devon says

Lately I have found myself venturing away from the type of book that I would normally read and becoming a more well rounded literature and fiction reader. Most often I have been pleasantly surprised by my selections and *The Song Reader* by Lisa Tucker was definitely a pleasant surprise! When I read the synopsis on the back of the book I expected something completely different from what I got from this compelling first novel. I thought that I was reading a light hearted book about a woman who read peoples futures by interpreting the songs that were in their heads and while this plot point is what this novel was centered around it certainly was not what it was about. *The Song Reader*, told through the eyes of fourteen year old Leeann is about how two sisters cope with the breakdown of their family, how it effects them as people and how their love for one another gets them through some particularly difficult times.

When older sister Mary Beth's song reading takes off the entire town begins singing her praises and Mary Beth feels as though she has finally found her calling. However, when she reveals a long suppressed secret involving one of the towns most beloved citizens all of her former clients turn against her and her family. Mary Beth spirals into a deep depression leaving Leeanne to pick up the pieces of their life as well as uncover the deep rooted secrets of her family that may have caused her sisters depression to run even deeper than first imagined.

Tucker reveals the secrets of this unconventional family in a way that makes it almost impossible to put this book down. My only gripe was that I wished the ending were fleshed out a bit more and the reader wasn't left with so many unanswered questions, however, this is a tiny flaw in an otherwise engrossing novel, 4 1/2 stars.

whichwaydidshego? says

When I think of "Chick Lit," I don't think of books by women but rather I think romance and fluff. Sure, this novel is as easy to read as tepid butter is when spread on hot toast in summer, but it's not fluff. It's about the every day, complicated, real life of family. It's about how growing up – whether in an unusual or an average family – is rarely easy. It's about relationships and emotions and all the ways we avoid as well as work through them. It's also about compassion.

When the title character is discussing how it would be hell to not help when she knows a problem she explains, "*I'm not talking about the place filled with flames. I mean the hell the world is when cruelty*

doesn't have a reason. When suffering is unrelenting and unrelieved by love." That's the compassion I'm speaking of – that natural, unforced compassion that embraces the broken with a simple word or gesture. It's beautiful.

It's also a little bit sad when the same character doesn't have that compassion for herself, but as the story unfolds in all the horror of self admonishment, this deep and intense and haunting struggle suddenly becomes vital and real and... strangely beautiful.

This book was a gift for me in the reading... of connection and relationship. Of what can finally come of brokenness. Of what hardness and a lack of love can do. But even more, of what a simple act of kindness, a bit of compassion, an action born of love can do. It was frightening and healing in these revelations.

And in all of that, I find **The Song Reader** is anything but fluff or Chick Lit. It is instead a multifaceted and unfolding story of how to understand, and where hope resides, and in all its complexities, how rich... and how flexible love is.

Erin says

I enjoyed this book for the most part. It was a very sad story, but I found the song reading a unique plot device, and felt like I connected with the main character. I can't imagine how hard dealing with everything would be for a sixteen year old, but I felt like the author captured that fairly realistically.

I had minor issues with some of the other characters here and there, but my main issue was with the ending. It felt so abrupt, as if the author had a word limit and had to rush the last few pages to finish within the allotted amount. I actually reread the last few pages thinking I had missed something.

All in all it was a good (and fast) read, but I would have liked to see her take the ending a little slower.

Brianon Sheffield says

great book.... until the crap ending.
