



Pargeters

Norah Lofts

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In a largely Puritan section of England, strong-willed Sarah Woodley's Royalist leanings trapped her in a dangerous web of political intrigue. And when she saved a handsome young man with a Puritan price on his head, she knew if they were caught, both would die. But neither war nor tyranny would take away the man she loved--or the house she so proudly possessed!

Pargeters Details

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Author : Norah Lofts

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From Reader Review Pargeters for online ebook

Florence Penrice says

Norah Lofts, so it's OK, but Norah Lofts going through the motions. Read one of the classics instead like The House at Old Vine.

?Ruth? says

Norah Lofts books are always interesting, as much for the historical content, as for the story itself. They are deeply researched and peppered with fascinating detail. Apart from being well written and historically convincing, this book was particularly memorable for me, as it was my first foray into audio books. I find I still very much enjoy being read to and there is the additional bonus of being able to listen as you work, rest or exercise - absorbing even more books!

Nancy Ellis says

I've read most of Lofts' books and have loved each one, but this, her last novel, exceeded even my expectations. She had such a gift for reaching out from the early pages of a book and dragging you into the story, making it your own. This one is about a house called Pargeters and the family who lived and loved there in the period leading up to, including, and falling slightly after the English Civil War of the 17th Century. At first we meet the builder, Adam Woodley, a man who has tragically lost his love but becomes the object of his client's daughter's determined love. He marries Penelope and the story moves on to their children, particularly their daughter Sarah. Her narrative forms the bulk of the story, and what a fascinating story it is, full of love and enmity, intrigue and betrayal, surviving the horrors of civil war and walking the tightrope of economic ruin. It's a beautiful love story, the love of people as well as the love of the traditions of a household. I was sorry to reach the ending and have to return to reality!

Susannah says

Excellent historical novel, very entertaining

Sara Giacalone says

A rather depressing yet fascinating look at the English Civil War and the early days of the Restoration. Since this time period was new to me, I found the details of daily life and the changes the Puritians made to be very interesting. Norah Lofts depicts a life that seemed rather real - dreary, depressing and hard, with bits of sunshine thrown in so as not to be totally miserable.

Beth Appel says

Warning. I can't read two novels by Norah Lofts in a row without the danger of becoming depressed.

That said, I wish I owned all her novels and had a huge chart to link them. Each book (or group of books) stands alone, but there is a richness gained when you discover links from book to book between the people and the places throughout history. Characters and places in one book will have cameo appearances in other books. She must have been an incredible woman to have kept track of the details.

As always this book showed both the positive and negative aspects of people, who though they are situated in historical events, could be our neighbors today. Lofts understood the spiteful motivations that some people have. She also understood the gentler hearts.

~?~Autumn♥♥ says

I always enjoy this book which I have read about 5 times but I am fortunate enough to forget so much of it that its easy for me to read it again. I never forget Eli Smith as he is so horrible. I don't forget Sarah either but sometimes she behaves like an idiot. I am very glad each time that she finds true love at the end.

Her daughter is an amazing person and I wish that Norah Lofts had written more about her. She goes off with Sarah's best friend and her son when their property is restored. You also get to read about Lady Alice Rowhedge who is a witch and appears in other Norah Lofts books. Her legend lingers on in many of them.

Joy H. says

Added 2/6/15.

My old notes say I didn't like this book.

I read it a long time ago.

Sharon Zink says

A simply marvelous book! It takes place during the English Civil War and the Restoration in the 1640's. The historical aspect of this novel is not heavy handed. Things I like about the book include the way Norah Lofts explains customs of the times by incorporating a short explanation as incidents occur in the book; and the way she refers to characters and places that she has written about in other books. An amazing read.

Jane Wetzel says

Read it some time ago. Forgot much about it, though I did enjoy it.

Carole Lehr says

Pargeters (I had to look up the pronunciation on that one) is an English manor house built in the 17th century. Adam Woodley, the pargeter (plasterer) who works on the house in a very personal and artistic way, catches the eye of the owner's daughter. This novel takes place during several generations of residents at Pargeters which begins in 17th century England. Times are difficult on so many levels, which includes the Civil War between Royalists and Roundheads.

The village is Baildon, in northern England where the daughter of Adam Woodley, Sarah Woodley-Mercer, struggles to hang onto her beloved Pargeters though women of that time held no rights. Forced into a loveless marriage in order to keep her home and care for those closest to her, she hangs onto hope. Her verbally cruel Puritan husband makes life miserable for everyone in his path.

A child is born from this hatefilled marriage which will ultimately change the future for all connected to Pargeters. Sarah maintains the responsibility for Pargeters and those under her care. Dealing with backbreaking day to day chores, a mean-spirited husband and his mother, and the needs of her aging grandfather all take their toll on her. To add a cherry on top, she often thinks of the one man she ever loved and wonders what happened to him. When he left to go to war (before she met her cruel husband), he said he would be back.

Although this story has plenty of dark moments, it proves that through perseverance you just keep on going. The characters have strong personalities and I had a hard time putting the book down. I was not totally pleased with the ending, but that's just me. It is a wonderful novel to read if you want to see how life was lived in that time period--the prejudice against women, the cruelties of certain denominations of faith, and the hardships endured. Norah Lofts weaves a masterful tale in her own unique voice. It's definitely worth a read.

Jeanette says

3.5 star rounded up for the skilled and exact ways in which Lofts cores the mood, purposes, and translations into daily acts for the beliefs and entire cognition of Cromwell's Roundheads and the fanatic Puritan changes within England. She begins to grab those opposite and sometimes effete aspects of the manners for the Restoration period that followed with a return to monarchy too.

It's about a house named Pargeters. After the skilled and beautiful work of pargeting that our plasterer has adorned with love upon the trim and sides of the house.

It's mainly the story of Sarah too. This is a departure for Lofts' house books. Most follow the house through generations. This one- NO. This one, it is only the one woman's lifetime and the changes in the country, ownership, manners, and every aspect of class hierarchy, as well- that comes with the Civil War, success of the Roundheads, and then the eventual return to monarchy after 1660 with the restoration of the monarchy.

Pargeters is grabbed by a heavy and cruel taskmaster during the Roundheads' rule.

Many readers who love action and plot foremost will not like this novel. Here we have page after page of what the reality has been and then become within husbandry, sheep farming, dairy progression, crop changes, use of foodstuffs etc. etc. etc. It's about England as much as it is about Pargeters. Here we actually have characters trying TEA for the first time, for instance.

Our heroine is 17th century. She shows no druthers for most issues that would be center core emotional for a 21st century reader. She even marries the enemy and suffers near slavery conditions to keep her lodging.

Good read. Especially excellent as a superb sample of having to walk a politico line of access or ownership during this severe division to family, neighbor, town, boss of trade. And religion intrinsically at core but not only the entire issue either. Tradition is assaulted. No Maypoles, no crosses, no wedding celebrations, no saint days, funerals not recognizable. Joy outlawed.

Another slant of Pargeters is that it is the ending of Lofts' career and it has dozens of cross-over characters from her other house books of Suffolk or of Baildon. In fact, there are characters in this one of portent connection and more than under character role that are main protagonist or homeowner or farmer supreme of and within other books. People from Old Vine, Hawk in Hand, Mortiboys, and especially in this Pargeters, Lady Anne. They all play roles here; more than rounded out, we are detailed more about their motives, outcomes. And of course the horse breeder Tom Throughgood and Hattons are also throughout this novel again. And to greater detail for this exact era of the Civil War. In some of the other house books they did things or made connections that seemed odd or manners "out of order". Now in this one, for that time when lines of life and death are draw on the sides of either Parliament or King, we understand some of those inexplicable nuances of other Lofts books. Very, very few people, regardless of class or condition, could balance between on an impartiality line as Sir Walter did in this Pargeters novel. And even two centuries later, memory served exact on who wore ribbons and used Papist oaths (like By my Lady for a knocked funny bone of the elbow) or which family deemed it innocently to frame the face in curls. So acts of descendants, or patterns of trade or bargaining for the next 2 or 3 hundred years, they are more easily understood.

Janet says

I read this so long ago that I just recognize the title, but I remember I liked it.

Pam says

I'd had this book on my shelf for decades. I finally decided to pick it up. I love historical fiction. This began as an interesting tale - lots of woe and hardship in maintaining Pargeters while married to a strict Puritan and his nasty mother.

Over time the tale turns until at the last 25 pages it seems to wrap up rather sadly and without much explanation.

Surely there's a sequel but I doubt I'd bother to read it.

D.w. says

There are technical problems with this tale that make me want to wish the author could have told a tale that engaged me.

We start with the Plasterer of the house, a few decades before the English Civil War. But once this man is wed to a woman he does not love we jump forward and the entire book changes to his daughters viewpoint. In essence we have just had pages and pages of backstory. Too much backstory.

We now have a first person view of the 20 years of the Civil War and the Protectorate of Cromwell. But here is the second major problem. Time elapses in this period of misery so poorly done that my sense was that the war took place over months, not years. Charles I was a 'guest' of Parliament for weeks, not years, and Cromwell had free reign with his horrid Puritanism for a few seasons, not more than a decade.

First Person stories should engage and this does not. The tale of living under the dogmatic, unfair laws of the era are told to us, and somehow the distance that the heroine places to survive force a distance in the reading. One minute she has a baby, the next the baby is able to work in the farm.

The passage of time is very skewed.

Then my last problem is that the book is about misery. And Lofts puts in a ten page love story amidst 400+ pages of story. I just can't buy it.

I want to study the period. I want to have the derring do of the Cavaliers and the glitter of the Restoration, and instead I get the dark dankiness of Puritanism so bad that I am inclined to think of all Puritans in any form as the most close minded of people. I am led to further believe that Parliament and Roundheads are still the enemy today. And that this tale gives you three lines of happiness and all the rest anguish.

There are other parts of the writing where it looks like Lofts wanted to put a historical term in and just dropped those in to the monologue without the heroine actually using that period relevancy in their every day life. This is a never again read, and a read I would never recommend.
