



## **Velva Jean Learns to Fly**

*Jennifer Niven*

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**Velva Jean Learns to Fly** Jennifer Niven

**From the author of the *New York Times* bestselling *All the Bright Places*, after Pearl Harbor Velva Jean signs up for service and gets her wings, risking her life-and her heart.**

Velva Jean Hart, the fiercely independent heroine of Jennifer Niven's (*Becoming Clementine*) spectacular debut novel, *Velva Jean Learns to Drive*, returns in a captivating adventure that literally sends her soaring.

Bristling at the limitations faced by a woman in rural Appalachia and fuelled by the memory of her late Mama telling her to "live out there," Velva Jean hits the road to pursue her dream of singing at the Grand Ole Opry. But after a string of auditions, she begins to lose hope- until her brother pays her a surprise visit and treats Velva Jean to a flying lesson that ignites a brand-new dream: to become a female pilot.

Funny, poignant, and utterly unforgettable, *Velva Jean Learns to Fly* will have fans cheering all over again.

## **Velva Jean Learns to Fly Details**

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Author : Jennifer Niven

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## **From Reader Review Velva Jean Learns to Fly for online ebook**

### **Valerie says**

I listened to the audiobook and it was fantastic! I am very picky about narrators and I thought the reader did a terrific job. This book was slow moving at first but really picked up once she started to learn how to fly. I didn't even know the WASPs existed before I read this book and I certainly didn't know anything about airplanes before reading this. I want a third novel about Velva Jean! I did not read the first book and not sure if I want to revert and read about Velva Jean when she was young....I like her independance she has conquered. This book was a pleasant surprise because I really wasn't expecting much!

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### **Charlie says**

I feel like I found something incredibly special in Jennifer Niven's books. This is the third book I've read by her and the third book I rated five stars. The Velva Jean series is turning out to be one of my favourite series ever. Velva Jean is such a special character and so dear to my heart. She's independent and fierce. First, she learned herself how to drive and went off to chase her dreams. She also realised that dreams can change and became a female pilot in WWII.

It's insane how historically accurate this book is. Jennifer Niven works very hard to research everything she writes about and it shines through in her work.

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### **Cathy says**

Not NEARLY as good as the first book in the series Velva Jean Learns to Drive. Still good for the historical interest about the women pilots and the programs coming out of the WWII needs, but I didn't feel the character relation to the previous book and I wasn't nearly as taken with the writing.

I listened to the audiobook version and the difference in narrators between the first book and this one was enough to bump this one down. She did a fine job, but on the heels of the near perfection of the first book, this one just fell short.

Overall, a good book - not great.

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### **Tyra says**

I recommend readers start with "Velva Jean Learns to Drive" to truly appreciate where the main character is coming from. However, this story can stand alone just as well. I want to be Velva Jean Hart! Ms. Niven has created an endearing character that is determined to live life to the fullest. I was hooked at page one. It is obvious Ms. Niven put a lot of effort into her research. She brings to life a piece of history I did not know

existed! Her writing style is easy to read with enough detail I have no trouble "seeing" the story. I am impatiently awaiting Velva Jean's next adventure! I rate it a MUST READ!

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### **Sarah says**

After breaking free of her old life in the first book, Velva Jean returns, pursuing her dreams in any way they take her.

This book was okay. It was easier for me to get into because I already knew the characters and situations. But, I didn't like the story in this one as much. I was annoyed as hell that, after Velva Jean spent her whole life dreaming of one thing only, she so easily changes her dream to something else once that first dream doesn't immediately work out. From that point on, the story got majorly bogged down in flight and piloting details that were boring. I was also really bothered by the rapid-fire changing of suitors and love interests for Velva Jean, who is apparently the most beautiful woman these men have ever seen and universally admired by men, even those who think she's doing things she shouldn't be doing. This book felt like a lot of build up but then no climax and it just ended without much resolution. It's clear there is going to be another book coming, but I don't think I'll be picking it up.

Thanks to the publisher for an advance reader's copy.

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### **Viviane Crystal says**

Velva Jean Hart is tired of small town living, including a husband who is part preacher and part moonshiner. She'd been told she had a wonderful voice and a record producer actually made a record of one of her "Yellow Truck..." songs, telling her to look him up if she ever got to Nashville, Tennessee from rural Appalachia in Alluvia, North Carolina. So she sang every song she knew as she left her home all the way to the point in Tennessee where she got a flat tire. But Velva Jean is a spunky gal and managed to conquer this problem, find a place to live, and make a friend who would help until Velva Jean finally found a job. Even after those difficult challenges, in which she bore rejection after rejection, she still managed to find a place where people could enjoy her voice and zesty personality! But a record contract did not loom, especially after she was told she needed years of music experience before she'd be ready for recording. She didn't care - she just kept writing song after song after song!

Life, however, changed dramatically with the breakout of WWII, and Velva Jean's brother, Johny Clay, introduces her to a flying lesson that changes her passion forever. She goes on to become a female pilot and joins a select group of women flyers carrying out secret but no less dangerous missions within America. Here the story mixes her increasing love of flying, desire to do more for the war effort, and the horror she experiences as tragedy after tragedy happen to those she loves and others she doesn't know. Some die by attack but some are killed because of human mistakes; the latter are just as devastating and Velva Jean is responsible for bringing it to the attention of those who should be doing something about it.

There is much more day-by-day description of what an amazing woman Velva Jean and other women flyers like her become. It's a quick, shocking way to grow up but this plot is filled with humor and persistent dedication, the essence of Velva Jean's personality.

This novel has some very slow parts but does evolve into a funny, interesting and wonderful historical fiction piece that elevates the place of women in a time when they were expected to stay home and sew for the war effort. It includes as well the respect these women flyers known as the WAFS or Women's Auxiliary Ferrying Squadron. Jennifer has depicted a slice of life in the war that few Americans know about, and Velva Jean Hart is an unforgettable, spunky gal who stands for the best women contributing to the war effort at that time! Nicely done, Ms. Niven!

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## **Carol says**

This book is the sequel to 'Velva Jean Loves to Drive'. But it works very well as a standalone. I enjoyed this book but thought it just a tad too long at the beginning.

What I loved the most was the main character, Velva Jean. She grew up in a very isolated area in the North Carolina Mountains. At the beginning of the book, she decides to leave her husband, Harley Bright and go to Nashville, Tennessee to become a Grand Old Opry singer.

Velva Jean is so full of spunk, ambition and heart; it would be very difficult to not love her. She knew that she could accomplish her dream because she had taught herself to drive! I can't imagine doing that. I took driving class in junior high with a football coach who scared any confidence that I had at the beginning, later after several private teachers, I learned to dream. So Velva Jean is very different from me when it comes to mechanical things. But I could see myself in her can do attitude and that really bonded me to her.

When she hits Nashville in her old yellow truck, she is shocked that you just can walk into a studio and become a singer. The opening of this book was in the pre-war 1940s, so competition in Nashville was already fierce.

Velva Jean had a very close relationship with her brother, Johnny Clay. So when he chooses to be a paratrooper, he introduces her to a flight instructor. Then she falls in love with flying. I have never flown an airplane. I have always been attracted to books about women pilots, Jackie Cochrane, and other early women pilots and so I have a pretty good idea about the accuracy of Jennifer Niven's book when it comes to real events and the real characters in this book.

When Velva Jean decides flying is her dream, she joins the WASPs (Women's Air force Pilots). Women were only accepted as civilians not as a genuine part of the Armed Forces during that time. There was a lot of prejudice against women as pilots. The incidents in the book actually are a true part of history.

This book reminded me a lot of Forrest Gump. Velva Jean was a fictional character placed in places and situations that really happened and with real people of the past. There are many more characters in the book but I think that is for you to discover. There is some romance, some family, and some dangerous situations. I am sure that this book will not let you down. Now I am a fan of Jennifer Niven and plan to read 'Velva Jean Learns to Drive'.

I received this book from the Library Thing but that in no way influenced my review.

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### **Vanessa says**

After reading and loving *Velva Jean Learns to Drive*, I had to read this book. I would definitely read the first book prior to reading this, just because they are both so good and should be read in order. I loved learning the history of the time, facts about the war, and the role of women pilots. Fascinating. Some readers were critical about how long it took before Velva Jean started flying, but that didn't concern me. I loved her life progression, successes and failures. Niven's over-arching message affirms the importance for women to follow their dreams and find their own destiny, independent of what men may want. Back in Velva Jean's era, driving a truck and learning to fly were outlandish ideas, to the point where men would rather see them die than succeed. Hard to fathom today. My only criticism of this book is that the songs were not that well written and didn't add much to the story. I skimmed most of them. The ending left me hanging, til I realized there are two more books in the series!

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### **Susanna says**

Nineteen-year-old Velva Jean Hart has had enough of her life in the North Carolina mountains with her husband, Harley Bright. So, like every good 1940s housewife, she sets off on her own - in the truck she learned to drive in the previous book - for Nashville, where she hopes to start her singing career with the Grand Ole Opry. Once in Tennessee, however, she finds that it's full of people wanting record deals and contracts. Losing hope in finding musical opportunities, Velva Jean turns her dreams from singing to flying and heads off to Texas to join the group that will become the Women's Airforce Service Pilots as the second World War catches hold of the country.

Though this is the sequel to another novel, *Velva Jean Learns to Fly* can be read without having read the first book. I faced some confusion as to minor characters from Velva Jean's hometown and family but for the most part had no problem jumping in on Velva Jean's story in the middle. The first half of the book is rather unexciting, but it's rarely boring. After all, not all of history was a thrilling adventure. The second half of the novel picks up more as Velva Jean begins her training and eventually goes to Camp Davis in North Carolina. For me, seeing the prejudices and trials that the first female pilots faced there was the most interesting part of the book. I also found it surprising that, after completing months of training and courses, the WASPs were relegated to such tasks as flying fabric targets for soldiers to practice shooting at. With live bullets. That would hit the actual airplanes.

Niven has also done her research on the female pilot programs of World War Two. Her writing contains descriptions of the planes flown during the time and how to control them, as well as details on military life down to what the women were given as uniforms. I did a little research on my own and found that some of the incidents Velva Jean hears of or experiences happened in real life and were recorded by the real WASPs at Camp Davis. Knowing that historical fiction is drawn from actual experiences lends even more credence to authors as they draw readers into the lives of fictional characters such as Velva Jean. The end result: Niven has written a convincing portrait of a not-so-ordinary young woman as she tries to find her place in the world as it's in the midst of near-chaos.

I received my copy of this book through LibraryThing's Early Reviewers program in return for a fair and honest review.

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### **Ida says**

I didn't read the predecessor of this book, *Velva Jean Learns to Drive*. But I don't feel like that hindered me too much in following the plot of this one. The characters are interesting and likeable and the pace is good. The information about women pilots in WWII was fascinating. I love WWII era books, movies, anything and this did not disappoint in that respect.

The reason I only gave it three stars (and almost gave it two) is the overall message of the book which is: Don't count on romantic love to last, men are always going to let you down, your dreams and goals are more important than any relationship. (Thank you feminist movement.) As someone who believes in marriage and family relationships that last longer than this life, that message bothered me. And its not one that I think young women should be listening to. The author makes clear that family is important to her main character and stresses that these are the only relationships that should be counted on or invested in. But when you have commitment to blood relationships (children, parents, siblings) but not to marriage or romantic relationships, you end up with fractured families. Sounds a little like today's society, does it not?

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### **PopcornReads says**

#### **Book Giveaway and Review!**

Giveaway entries accepted thru 9/4/2011 at midnight. Use shortlink below review to enter.

As soon as I learned the main character in *Velva Jean Learns to Fly* by Jennifer Niven was a North Carolina mountain girl, I knew I had to read this novel since I grew up in those mountains. FYI: This is the second book in this series. The first book was *Velva Jean Learns to Drive*, which I haven't read and that didn't seem to make any difference. *Velva Jean Learns to Fly* definitely can stand alone just fine. Velva Jean is one feisty, strong, determined and persistent woman. If you like Southern fiction and/or historical fiction you are probably going to like this novel. Read the rest of my review and enter the giveaway by going to <http://popcornreads.com/?p=1558>

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### **Shomeret says**

One of the problems with this book is that I found it to be a slow starter. Velva Jean doesn't start to learn how to fly until Chapter 13. People uninterested in country singing, Nashville or Appalachian culture may become restless. Her first solo flight happens on page 109.

As a novel about a woman pilot, it lacked the dramatic intensity of *Flygirl* by Sherri L. Smith or the unusual perspective of *Call Sign: White Lily*. I'm interested in the Appalachian aspect, but once she started flying she didn't seem identified with her culture in the way that Lilia Litvyak of *Call Sign: White Lily* was always Russian.

I also was uncertain of this character's focus. Why did Velva Jean want to become a pilot? She wanted to become a country singer in the first book and apparently switches her vocation to spy in the third book. I wondered if she was really a sensation seeker who craved excitement rather than someone committed to a particular vocation.

See my complete review at: <http://shomeretmasked.blogspot.com/20...>

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### **McGuffy Morris says**

We first met her in *Velva Jean Learns to Drive*, where she was searching for her dream. Now *Velva Jean* is back in a second novel, pursuing her dreams.

It is 1941, and *Velva Jean* has made it to Nashville. She is struggling to make her way in the music industry. Her heart and soul remain grounded in the mountains of North Carolina, but her dream is still to sing at The Grand Ol' Opry.

To the shock of the world, Japan attacks Pearl Harbor and suddenly everything is changed. *Velva Jean* sadly watches as men she knows go off to war. Before reporting for military duty, her brother finds her in Nashville.

Determined to learn to fly, he takes *Velva Jean* with him to lessons. This opens up a whole new world to *Velva Jean*. She loves the feeling of flying, but even more she loves the challenge of it. She decides to learn to fly.

*Velva Jean* continues to delight and surprise. From the mountains to the city to the wild blue yonder, the sky is the limit for her! Through *Velva Jean* we see the beginning of Women Airforce Service Pilots (Wasps) in World War II.

I wonder what *Velva Jean*, and Jennifer Niven, will do next. I think they are capable of almost anything they put their mind to!

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### **Jessica Leigh says**

I asked for more after reading "*Velva Jean Learns to Drive*". I wanted more of *Velva Jean*, a young, southern girl with a lot of spunk, drive, determination, and love. I got just what I asked for when the story continued in "*Velva Jean Learns to Fly*". It's obvious that Jennifer Niven has taken her time to research and has created a fabulous historical fiction that I absolutely could not put down. I didn't want the story to end, I wanted to see what *Velva Jean* Hart would be doing next. I'm hoping for a third *Velva Jean* novel, and I'm patiently waiting for the story to unfold. I love the story of this character, even though she is just a cleverly crafted character in a book, she has taken a place in my heart. *Velva Jean* has become my favorite female literary character. When I grow up I want to be just like *Velva Jean* Hart! I highly recommend picking up "*Velva Jean Learns to Drive*" as well as the latest "*Velva Jean Learns to Fly*", both are very well written, with such character development you feel as if you know each and every one personally. Fast, excellent reads. Enjoy!

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## Kelsey says

*"Maybe that's what mama meant by living out there."*

Another Velva Jean book comes to a close, and, damn, was it a good ride.

This book, the second in the series, sees Velva Jean join the WASP, so she can live out her dream, flying planes. Almost everyone she knows has joined the war effort, and she doesn't see why she can't be allowed to do the same thing. Her and Johnny Clay each take flying lessons, and soon enough, Velva Jean is part of the air force. Well, kind of. They wouldn't be considered militarized until 1977, even though they flew the most dangerous planes, faced all kinds of sexism, and even had fellow airmen sabotage their planes, which sometimes ended in death. Of course, that won't stop Velva Jean! Butch calls her a "down home girl," a girl that can stand up to anything, and she takes it to heart, because it's true.

Throughout her time at Camp Davis, she experiences happiness, friendship, love, rage, and fear, and becomes one of the best pilots there. In 1944, she, along with another female pilot, are tasked with a top secret mission, where they must ferry a B-17 to Scotland. She can't speak a word about it to anyone, and is partially terrified, but mostly excited, because she knows she's making history. Along the way, she discovers a piece of information that changes her life, and as she flies to Scotland, she decides that whatever she has to do, she will complete this mission that could mean life or death.

Whew, I loved this book! There were parts that were funny, parts that were touching, parts that brought tears to my eyes..and I didn't want it to end! Though this book brings in a whole new cast of characters, we still see the characters that made up the first book, too. And though the first third of the book isn't entirely exciting, it definitely picks up when Velva Jean joins the WASP, it's not boring, either. That could have just been me though. I love WWII history, so I couldn't wait to get to that part!

Perhaps the thing I liked most about the book was that during Velva Jean's time at Camp Davis, it wasn't all sunshine and rainbows. I think we tend to look back to the 40's and 50's and remember "the greatest generation" as just that. Yes, I do believe the title is true, but at the same time, there were terrible things all the same. Sexism was rampant, and many women in the WASP and WAC faced this. Yes, men sabotaged planes that women flew. Yes, men would flood their rooms with tear gas. Yes, it was covered up, because Jackie Cochran wanted the WASP to be a success, and couldn't tell the papers "the men that are risking their lives for you, your brothers and your sons, are killing our women".

Many times I've read fictional WWII books, and everything is hunky dory. This book dismantles that and shows us what the real women *really* went through, and I greatly appreciated that. I mean, they weren't even considered military during this time! If one of them died, there was no flag draped coffin. There was no 21 gun salute. The funeral would be paid for by the parents, without another look from the military.

Another thing that I love with Niven's writing is that everything has a reason. There's a reason Velva Jean has all the trinkets she does, and the reason why Butch is a code talker. There's a reason why Sally plants the garden, and why Velva Jean didn't learn the WAC girl's name, the one who wanted to talk to her. Though it's a great and weaving story, it all blends together so nicely, and it's amazing to see how the Navajo beliefs can intertwine with music writing or flying, or how the simple word "forward" can mean so much.

Of course, the strongest thing about this book, and probably all the books in this series, is Velva Jean. She's such a fleshed out and well written character that I feel as though she's my friend, and she's telling me the

history of her life. The writing is so simple, but it's so darn effective. It's almost so simple that she'll say something in the beginning that seems as though it's just another little piece of information, but by the end, you realize that that one little sentence is symbolism for the whole journey, and frankly, I love it.

I've also used the word strongest for a reason. In all senses of the word, that is truly what Velva Jean is. She's powered through everything in her life, her mama dying, her daddy leaving, getting bitten by a panther, leaving her husband, joining the WASP, and she's accomplished it all. The best thing about her though, is that Niven has chosen to make Velva Jean *feel*. She gets frightened, she shakes because of fear, sometimes she wants to run away, and you know what? That's real. In so many instances of my life, I've seen women afraid to feel or show emotion because the people around them will think that they're weak, or just write it off as another "flight of fancy" that some people think women are prone to. To me, though, that's where women's strengths lie. We are the ones who bleed, who feel the deepest, go through the strongest emotions, and we pull through. That's not a sign of weakness. To me, that's the strongest thing there is, and Velva Jean is the showcase of that. She's one of the strongest characters I've ever read, in spite of her shaking out of fear or crying or wanting to run away, because, when she feels this, she pulls through, and accomplishes what she's set her mind to, and that's what women do.

All in all, while I loved this book, I do have to say that, compared to the first one, this book had a more somber tone to it, but that's to be expected. They're in the middle of the war, and everything they do is dangerous. People get hurt or they die (three characters in particular die or go missing, and there's no real sense of closure, life just moves on), life gets disrupted, Velva Jean seemingly has to face off with almost all of Camp Davis, but in the end, it only makes her stronger. There's a passage towards the end of the book that I really felt was the author trying to reach out to her audience. In it, she (both Niven and Velva Jean) say, *"The other funny thing is that you couldn't hide from the bad things. If you were going to write anything good or deep or true, you had to let in the sadness and the sorrow and the loss. These were all the things I tried to keep at a distance, but sometimes you needed to let them in, just like the blues—you needed to feel them to write them"*, and, really, I think this sums up the whole book. The book shows us that yes, these bad things happened and do happen, but you shouldn't hide or run away from it. You should feel what you need to feel, and realize that, unfortunately, sometimes, this is life.

Though there are four books to the series, they're quick reads, and I would definitely recommend them. I suppose you could read them singly, but there's a lot of information you'd lose if you didn't read all of them. I can't wait to read the third book, *Becoming Clementine*, but that means I'm one book closer to the end, and I don't want this to be finished!

\*By the way, if you ever wanted to know what Velva Jean may look like, look at the *Life* magazine cover of Shirley Slade sitting on the wing of her plane. Though Velva Jean is described as having a heart shaped face with freckles, this photo is definitely the inspiration behind Velva Jean's cover. They were even taken at the same exact airfield, in Sweetwater, Texas.

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### **Mary Connolly says**

I thought it couldn't get any better than *Velva Jean Learns to Drive*, but it did. *Velva Jean Learns to Fly* is a book i read straight through. Supper didn't get cooked and the dogs didn't get walked. Jennifer Niven is a delightful author with an wonderful style. *Velva Jean Learns to Fly* is a book you want to place in the hands of un-suspecting book shop browsers and library patrons. I'm not much on telling the author's story in my reviews, just if i thought it was a good book or not. This is an excellent read that tells an important part of

history, I was sad when i finished reading, it but excited for the continuation of Velva's story. Thank Jennifer for the hours of great entertainment . ( the dogs aren't real happy with you though) lol  
Can't wait for the next one !!!!

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### **Bethany says**

*Velva Jean Learns to Drive* was alright, but I loved *Velva Jean Learns to Fly!* This is historical fiction at its most enjoyable; the setting and characters were extremely well-rendered and I found it a compelling read. What I thought was most interesting was that the WASPs greatest enemy were the male pilots who were supposed to be on their side. I found the fact that they would sabotage these poor women unbelievably saddening and frightening!

I hope Jennifer Niven writes another book about Velva Jean; I've grown very fond of her.

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### **Pamela says**

Every bit as fabulous as *Velva Jean Learns to Drive* - And then some!

"You've got to make your own way in this world and follow your own heart. You got to not feel bad if you have to leave someone behind, if they're happy where they are . . . You got to just go out there like the Bible says and wander far off. Fly away and be at rest. And don't you let anyone stop you."

From the Appalachain mountains, to the music halls of Nashville, to the arid plains of Texas, to the humid coast of North Carolina - *Velva Jean Learns to Fly*. Literally and figuratively.

I thought at length, "how can I expound upon this fabulous book - second in series of the Velva Jean adventures set in the era of WWII - without giving away key plot elements from the first book?" The answer, I can't, really.

But I can expound on the overall theme of 'following ones dreams.' Dreams often require a good bit of hard work and healthy doses of luck or divine intervention before coming to fruition. And when external circumstances rise up, and/or maturity redefines us, sometimes we have to re-imagine our dreams, re-shape them to accommodate a new set of parameters and/or a grander picture.

Additionally, how better to praise a great southern adventure, coming-of-age saga, Appalachian culture-rich book, than let it speak for itself:

"If there was one thing I hated in this world, it was folks who told you that you couldn't do something. That was worse than being told you shouldn't do it. I knew they meant well, but a person had to believe in herself even when on one else did."

"Mama used to say being scared or sad or mad gave you things to write about that weren't just blue skies and spring flowers and ice cream."

"I thought what a lucky girl I was to have so many people I loved in this world, even if they were, most of them, far away, and even if some of them were as far away as heaven."

"When it got down to it, words were just about my favorite thing and you didn't have much if you didn't have words. I thought that maybe they were the most powerful thing on earth. Sometimes they could lift you up like you'd just been saved, and sometimes they cut through you till you couldn't breathe. I loved the feeling when you found just the right one after you'd been looking for it for a while. I hated the feeling when you couldn't catch them like you wanted to or when someone used them against you."

Five Top-Pick Stars of southern and historical fiction awesomeness!!

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### **Tara Chevrestt says**

First of all, I didn't read the first one, *Velva Jean Learns to Drive*. There was nothing in a premise about a girl learning to drive a truck and sing in the Grand Ole Opry that appealed to me. However, I must read any women in aviation book I can get my hands on, especially concerning the WASP, the Women Air Service Pilots. So I got my hands on this one thanks to LibraryThing and despite the fact I didn't know much about Johnny Clay, Harley, or the history of Velva Jean, I loved it.

The book begins with a Velva Jean driving her yellow truck away from her husband and family. She don't like being tied down. She's not cut out to be a preacher's wife... she has dreams that extend beyond her little town. She's gonna make it big in Nashville and sing. She thinks, however, that a business card given to her long ago is gonna lead to fame.... to read full review, click the link below:

<http://wwwbookbabe.blogspot.com/2011/...>

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### **Cara Sexton says**

Having loved 'Velva Jean Learns to Drive,' I was extremely excited to see that there was a sequel. This one, however, didn't win me over nearly as much. It seems to have switched gears--where the first book was character-driven through and through, this book is plot-driven and extremely heavy on technical language. This fits the war-time story about an unlikely heroine learning to fly military bombers and repeatedly crashing them, but I missed the beautiful language and poetic feel that the first book had. I struggled to get through this one because although the scenes were intense and high in drama, I just had a harder time wading through the majority of the scenes involving abundant descriptions of airplane mechanics and war considerations, and the characters seemed only a shadow of what they'd been in the previous book. It was decent enough, but I almost wish I'd have skipped this one and left Velva Jean in my memory where the first book left off.

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