



New Mercies

Sandra Dallas

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Natchez, Mississippi, in 1933 is a place suspended in time. The silver and china is still dented and cracked from Yankee invaders. And the houses have names...and memories. Nora Bondurant is running away--from her husband's death, from his secrets, and from the ghosts that dog her every step. When she receives a telegram informing her that she has an inheritance, Nora suddenly has somewhere to run to: a house named Avoca in Natchez, Mississippi. Now, she's learning that the lure of Natchez runs deep, and that, along with Avoca, she's inherited a mystery. Nora's aunt Amalia Bondurant was killed in a murder/suicide, and the locals are saying nothing more--except in hushed, honeyed tones. As Nora becomes more and more enmeshed in the community and in her family's history, she learns surprising things about the life and death of her aunt: kinship isn't always what it seems, loyalty can be as fierce as blood relations, and every day we are given new mercies to heal the pain of loss and love.

New Mercies Details

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Wendy says

This was a great read. I loved the Natchez culture, the character's and the time period. This was the 2nd book I have read of Sandra Dallas and it won't be the last. She is a great author and has a way of putting you right there in the book. Definitely recommend this book for a fun, quick summer read.

Carole says

This book is set in Natchez, Mississippi, in the 1930's, and contains plenty of Southern culture and dialogue, i.e., (spoken by a colored ex-slave) "I guess I've been in Hell's kitchen and licked the spoon." And another: "It's just narrow-hearted littleness."

Spoken by the town Sheriff: "We train our women to be charming. Miss Amalie couldn't hardly teach or operate the typewriter....We treasure our womenfolk in the South, but there ain't no market for 'em."

The "new mercies" refer to God's gifts to man, which are new every day. And because Sandra Dallas always works quilts and quilting into her stories, that added to the enjoyment for me.

Heidi says

It wasn't awful; there was just nothing about this book that I found remarkable or particularly engaging. The story line could have been interesting, had more life been breathed into it. The author very clearly presented two mysteries near the beginning of the book (why was Aunt Amalia murdered? And how did Nora's husband die?). But the characters were not interesting enough to draw me in or to make me care about the answers. (Plus, the answer to the first questions seemed pretty obvious to me before I even reached the middle of the book.) In short, just nothing to rave about here.

Jillaire says

I always enjoy Sandra Dallas and did enjoy this one, but it wasn't my favorite. This one was set in the South, but included the signature Colorado element by transplanting a Denver girl there. I just didn't feel like all of the characters were as well developed and therefore as likable and sympathetic as those in her other novels. I also felt like the ending was wrapped up too quickly. There was a secret being guarded for the whole book and then suddenly because one character said it was okay to go ahead and tell, the other character did. It felt abrupt. Overall, I was pleased with the storyline, and the epilogue left me satisfied, I just didn't find the storytelling to be up to Dallas' usual par.

Sue says

I read Sandra Dallas' "Tallgrass" with my reading group, really liked it, and determined to read more of her books. 'New Mercies' is the second of her books that I've read. I enjoyed that it was set in Natchez, Mississippi - a place that I knew little about prior to some reading that I've done in recent years. I've learned that Natchez was a great economic center before the Civil War, and that there are many historic mansions in the town. Another interesting facet of 'New Mercies' is that it is set in the 1930's, a time period that is less commonly covered in historic fiction. Although I think I probably liked 'Tallgrass' better than 'New Mercies', I would still recommend 'Mercies' to my Goodreads friends. Besides the interesting setting, the characters of Nora, Aunt Polly, Ezra, Pickett Long, Mr. Satterfield and Holland Brown are engaging. (I didn't like Magdalene Lott and Odalie, but, I don't think the reader is supposed to :0) Sandra Dallas weaves a good tale, with the process of discovery throughout the book, both of Miss Amalia's story, and of Nora's own recent history of love and loss. Nora's journey to her family's roots in Natchez helps her to see that, for the healing of our hurts, we are always shown new mercies.

Beth Spangler says

Sandra Dallas has a gift with weaving tales. This was another well-crafted book set in 1930s Mississippi (and Colorado). Maybe I needed a break from reading of wealthy heiresses- in order for me to give it a higher rating...?

Alison Robinson says

First Sandra Dallas book I have read and I really enjoyed the historical setting mixed with mystery Nd a little romance. Great book that wove all three genres together. Excited to read more of her books!

Sarah says

I have become a devoted Sandra Dallas fan. Some themes continuously run through her books, some of them I find refreshing and enjoyable (small niblets of faith). Others I find tiresome when they keep popping up in each story (somehow the main character is always drawn to quilting or something....fine for a quilting story, but annoying when it keeps popping up in all of her stories!).

Although I loved this story and I appreciated some of the real, raw heartache that I experienced with the characters, I found myself confused after finishing the book. It seemed like there were too many loose ends and too many questions. Maybe that is more true to real-life, but let's be honest...sometimes at the end of the novel, you just want the author to answer those questions and solve those mysteries!

I think that this novel had my favorite Sandra Dallas characters thus far, but the story itself was not my favorite.

Kim Graves says

One of my favorite reads, kept me interested till the last page

Ann Boytim says

Nora is running away from her ex husbands death and his secrets when she receives news that she has an inheritance of a home in Natchez Mississippi from an Aunt she never knew existed. Nora finds things very different in the South and she finds out that her aunt was actually murdered. When Nora arrives in this small town and goes to find the house she sees it is a very run down old property. Nora gets involved with members of the community and learns that two former slaves live on the property as caretakers. Nora knows nothing of this Aunt who reportedly is the sister of her deceased father. Nora uncovers some shocking things about the family's past.

Marleen says

I've always enjoyed Sandra Dallas's books. Although here, with "New Mercies" it took me practically getting to the middle of the book before I started to get interested in the story and charmed by the characters. First off, it was very difficult to visualize the 1930ies era – I really didn't feel it from the pages – and I needed to constantly remind myself – okay this 1933 so see the clothes, the cars, the furniture. It was sort of challenging.

As for the story, I enjoyed it because it felt very authentic. There were no embellishments. I absolutely liked Nora Bondurant. She not only has to deal with divorce (in 1933) and the recent death of her ex-husband, but now she's suddenly confronted with inheriting a Southern mansion and discovering she has family in Natchez, MI.

What was great about that era, was their sense of discretion. For some things, I think it's still advised to be discreet about family matters. Not always, though.

Overall this was an interesting read with mystery elements and endearing characters - ***3,5 ***

Chris says

I had picked up the book because it was set in Natchez, MS. I've never read Sandra Dallas before. If you are looking for a light-weight treatment of fictional history, this book certainly fits that category.

?Laura says

I was really torn between three and four stars for this one, so I guess I'm giving it 3.5. I found myself very wrapped up in the story and anxious to continue reading yet at the same time I recognize that it was at times predictable and not quite of four-star status. Definitely an enjoyable, easy read for me and a nice break from the "heavier" books I often gravitate towards.

Diane says

This book was good but not as great as some of Sandra Dallas' other books. The story is about a divorcee who finds that she has inherited a home in Natchez, Mississippi. She did not even know she had an aunt from her father's side. The tale is about her trying to find how her aunt was murdered, what her father's relationship was to this aunt and how all this ties to her. She also is recently divorced & her ex husband dies soon after the divorce in a plane crash.

The story is good but predictable and drags at times.

Lewestover says

Interesting tale involving a young divorcee who discovers relatives she never knew existed when she is willed a southern mansion in 1933. The word miscegenation was added to my vocabulary. The side story of this woman's divorce added an interesting twist, especially considering the time frame of the book.
