



Someone Else's Love Story

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At twenty-one, Shandi Pierce is juggling finishing college, raising her delightful three-year-old genius son Natty, and keeping the peace between her eternally warring, long-divorced Catholic mother and Jewish father. She's got enough complications without getting caught in the middle of a stick-up in a gas station mini-mart and falling in love with a great wall of a man named William Ashe, who willingly steps between the armed robber and her son.

Shandi doesn't know that her blond god Thor has his own complications. When he looked down the barrel of that gun he believed it was destiny: It's been one year to the day since a tragic act of physics shattered his universe. But William doesn't define destiny the way other people do. A brilliant geneticist who believes in science and numbers, destiny to him is about choice.

Now, he and Shandi are about to meet their so-called destinies head on, in a funny, charming, and poignant novel about science and miracles, secrets and truths, faith and forgiveness,; about a virgin birth, a sacrifice, and a resurrection; about falling in love, and learning that things aren't always what they seem—or what we hope they will be. It's a novel about discovering what we want and ultimately finding what we need

Someone Else's Love Story Details

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Author : Joshilyn Jackson

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From Reader Review Someone Else's Love Story for online ebook

Megan says

What happened to this book? It started as a light and quirky story of a young woman with a breezily dysfunctional family and a precocious child, and quickly deteriorated into a mess of unfinished story lines, awkward transitions, and an extended and very uncomfortable commentary on the gray nature of rape. By the end of the book, Shandy, the main character, turned into an erratic and unlikable character who could not be wished on anyone's happy ending.

Rashika (is tired) says

This was one of those rare books that I knew would be good before I even got into it. Even if I was surprised by some of the turns it took.

I mean a book that has an epigraph with the lines of my favorite poem (and one of the few I actually know); well let's just say we were meant to be.

I have no idea where to start though.

I've re-read certain parts of this book multiple times, I've had more than a week to think about it yet I am completely lost when it comes to this book.

There is so much to say about this beautiful book and I have no idea how to put it into words.

This book starts off with Shandi telling us how she fell in love, at gun point. Then it goes back and tells us the story of how she got to the point (don't worry the whole book isn't set in the past). The story goes back and forth between Shandi and William's past, showing us how this incident changed their life and is causing them to reevaluate some of the things they chose to avoid.

For Shandi it was finally accepting what had happened to her, finally accepting that her child wasn't the wonderful miracle she had always tried to make herself believe but a result of something horrid. But she realized that that wouldn't change the fact that she loved him. Shandi is a very refreshing character. She isn't a kick ass female lead, she isn't a mary sue. She is the grey in between. She is human. Just like the rest of us. Her best friend is her crutch but she isn't spineless. She's been through a lot yet she still manages to remain cheerful. She is confused as anyone would be at her age but she isn't stupid. But being held by gunpoint made her realize she needs to stand up to the ghosts of her past, she needs to face the truth and so she enlists the help of her fellow survivor, William. She also uses this as an excuse to hang around him and try to win his heart as he won hers (oh don't blame her, you would have done the same, hell I would have done the same).

William has Asperger's, so he made for a really interesting character and it was fun reading things from his POV. For him the incident made him realize he may or may not need to finally face what happened to his wife and child. The heartbreaking incident he tried to push out of his mind and pretend never happened. He tried to forget the two things that really mattered to them, aside from his best friend. He is using Shandi as an

excuse to avoid doing that but he slowly realizes he cannot do that. Honestly I think reading about him, as a male lead, was one of the best experiences I've had. He was such a fresh breath of air from all those broody and other tropes out there.

I cannot even pick a favorite character; even the secondary characters were great.

Paula was one of the best best friends ever. Everyone should have a best friend like her. Someone who will always have your back. Someone who is ready to be a bitch for you. Someone who is willing to fight for you when you cannot do it yourself. Someone who will help you win the love of your life. She could be a complete bitch to Shandi but I understood why she did that.

We didn't get to see much of Walcott in the role of a best friend in the 'present' but in the 'past' he was the best best friend anyone could ask for. He helped Shandi through a hard time and took the burden off of her, he took care of things she couldn't. He kept secrets until she was ready. They have a wonderful relationship. Let's just say that.

The romance in this book is a mixture of different love stories. I am probably the only one who didn't connect the title with the romance and shipped for William and Shandi until I realized it wouldn't happen and not because William didn't have any romantic feelings but because even I didn't feel like Shandi would have been a suitable replacement for Bridget. What William and Bridget had had been beautiful, you cannot replace that. What Shandi and Walcott could have, we don't know but maybe it'll be even more beautiful. I think the story that stuck out most to me (and wasn't really a focus of the book) was Shandi's parents' story. The realizations Shandi had about the two of them and how they would never really have a chance to fix things. It kind of breaks my heart.

The story the author tells is beautiful. She presents it wonderfully. It may seem slow but it's worth it in the end.

Maybe I'll pick up another book by the author, maybe I won't, but that isn't the point. The point is that this is a wonderful book about second chances, about giving life a second shot, about not giving up and maintaining that hope that lives in your soul and about facing your destiny head on. It's a story everyone should read.

This review has also been posted on [The Social Potato](#)

Judy Collins says

Joshilyn Jackson's **SOMEONE ELSE'S LOVE STORY**, a complex, brilliantly written and inspiring love story!

I recently discovered this author through some other fellow authors; Wow, so glad I did---Since then been catching up with her back list. Southern Jackson is highly talented ; creative and love the way she thinks "outside the box" not afraid to tackle any issue.

Highly recommend the audio version--Jackson is the narrator, which is always special (like who knows the book better than the author)? I found when listening via ipod, it is not a mindless book; you need to pay attention-- you do not want to miss any part of this story. (I found myself stopping--if someone interrupted

me I would have to rewind to the beginning of the track; It is this GOOD- you do not want to miss a word or phrase!

I would not change a thing about this book -carefully developed, full of suspense, southern humor, rich characters, and quite engaging--covering so many diverse topics and feelings. Hats off to the author for pulling you in from beginning to the end--and giving you enough to keep you hanging throughout. Superb!

A thought-provoking read ideal for book clubs and further discussions. Would encourage readers to review all the reviews on Goodreads and other sites (not the spoilers). A beautiful and inspiring love story which makes you think about this book and the characters, long after the ending. A Winner!

Check out her latest, The Opposite of Everyone *Coming Feb 16, 2016.*

Cheri says

Edit: Available on Kindle for \$1.99

Shandi is a young woman who believes in miracles, with faith in immaculate conceptions, struggling to finish college and raise her own three year old mini-genius and major miracle, Nathan, aka "Natty Bumppo" with some help from her Mom, her friend Walcott, Walcott's "Momses" and some financial help from Shandi's Dad, despite his new wife and Shandi's half-siblings. Shandi isn't lacking in the love department, so long as we're not talking romantic love.

"I fell in love with William Ashe at gunpoint, in a Circle K. It was on a Friday afternoon at the tail end of a Georgia summer so ungodly hot the air felt like it had been boiled red. We were both staring down the barrel of an ancient, creaky .32 that could kill us just as dead as a really nice gun could."

From the moment I read that, I didn't want to put this book down. There are many love stories that follow, but love stories in an unconventional sense. There are stories of love and forgiveness, new miracles and love once thought lost is found. While there are heavy, dark topics that are covered, Joshilyn Jackson's touch covers these with a sweetness that borders on a spiritual forgiveness for all.

Charmingly sweet.

Shelleystrae at Book'd Out says

The moment William Ashe stepped in front of her three year old son to protect him from the gunman in Circle K, twenty one year Shandi Pierce recognised the stranger as her destiny, a truth William seemed to confirm in a whisper as Shandi hovered over him after he was shot saving their lives. Though Shandi believes William to be her saviour, her soul mate, and as a geneticist, the man able to help her identify her son's father, William's heart, and his destiny, are not yet determined.

We are told from the beginning to expect an unconventional love story in Someone Else's Love Story, and

that is exactly what we get, and more.

"That afternoon in the the Circle K, I deserved to know, right off, that I had landed bang in the middle of a love story. Especially since it wasn't - it isn't - it could never be, my own."

Someone Else's Love Story is a funny and poignant novel exploring the miracles of love, faith and science. The plot seems fairly light and simple, a romantic comedy flavoured with southern eccentricities, but there are serious undertones as her main protagonists, Shandi and William, struggle with loss, grief and anger associated with the tragic events that have touched their lives.

One of the issues I thought Jackson dealt with particularly well arises from the circumstances of Natty's conception. Though the situation may make some readers uncomfortable, I felt it was handled in a thoughtful and realistic manner.

Jackson's characters are quirky and complex, never entirely what you expect, but somehow ordinary and familiar as well.

Shandi is an appealing protagonist, though young she has an admirable core of strength evidenced by her mothering of her precocious son Natty, her determination to finish college and her resilience in dealing with her warring parents (and her bitch of a stepmother). Her life has not been easy but, with the support of her best friend Wolcott, she refuses to let go of hope.

William is an complicated hero, a man whose has suffered an awful tragedy and struggles every day with shattering loss. I am a little over the glut of characters on the 'spectrum' in contemporary fiction at the moment but William is high functioning, a brilliant geneticist, and his difficulty with processing emotion works well within the context of the story.

I found Someone Else's Love Story to be an engaging read. There is grief, pain and tragedy, wonderfully tempered by heart, humour and southern charm.

Zoeytron says

Thoroughly enjoyable story that jerked me to attention with the opening sentence and did not let go until the end. With just a handful of pages remaining, I still didn't know how things were going to play out. I call that a job well done.

The characterizations reign supreme here. Shandi, Natty, Walcott, William, and Paula were made very real to me. The author's way with words was stellar. Nothing too flowery - it would not have fit with the story. Tuna sandwiches and Vicks Vapo-Rub - old people smells, a girly purse dog, a big brain with baby emotions, a big fan of the fresh start. Good stuff here, and fun to read. Love how Shandi notes that the picture of Jesus in her Mom's house totally 'looks like Mom'.

There are all kinds of love stories we come across in our lives, some are ours if we are lucky. All the others are someone else's. Good story! This was a first-reads giveaway, thank you.

namericanwordcat says

There is so much to love about this book. The lyrical writing, amazing characters, details of place and time.

This isn't a romance really (exactly) as the actual couples (there are two) spend most of the book apart but we do get Happily Ever Afters that are well earned,

Our hero is a brilliant neurodivergent and utterly wrecked with grief and rage. We get his love story in flashback. He is the king of romantic gestures and has an amazing bestie.

The heroine is much younger (and not his heroine it will turn out. Not a spoiler! The title gives this away). You have to read the book to get her story (cause that would be a spoiler) but the writer has a very interesting exploration of a pile of topics with her. You may or may not like it but it will make you think.

I wish her love story had been given more page time and after time. I am a romance reader and I want my romance. lol

It is a great book with a lovely ending.

Jessica says

Ahem.

Excuse me a moment, while I get out my feminist soap box.

Okay. This is going to be a tricky book to review from up here and this is why: rape plays a significant role in the plot of this book and I'm not sure I was comfortable with the way that it was portrayed. This book doesn't come out for six more months, but I kind of wonder about the fact that no one's thought about putting the brakes on it given the recent troubling events in Stuebenville and Halifax.

I'm not giving anything away here – you know from pretty early on that our narrator, Shandi, conceived her three-year-old son through unconsensual sex. She never pressed charges because she was drunk and had been drugged so her memory was hazy. She lived in denial about the fact until the two are involved in a hold-up at a convenience store.

An attractive man named William is commemorating the anniversary of a devastating accident by trying to pick out laundry detergent at said convenient store and is also held hostage. He's the one who lays out the gunman and puts an end to the nightmare scene. Shandi, feeling like she owes her life and her son's to William but also feeling a little tingly in her lady bits, goes to visit her hero in the hospital and learns that he is a genetic researcher. She then asks him to help her track down the identity of the man who drugged her and forced himself on her at a frat party when she was eighteen.

There's several additional plot threads including the fact that William may or may not be on the autistic spectrum, his over-protective best friend who acts aggressively towards Shandi, Shandi's best friend who's

long carried a torch for her, and Shandi's complicated family life. Those extraneous threads add allllmost nothing to the book, which is strange because there was a lot of that in a relatively brief 240 page book. They're just too underdeveloped to work well.

I liked Shandi a lot in the beginning of the book. Joshilyn Jackson is awesome at creating three dimensional, complicated and imperfect women with a rock-strong Southern voice. That's why I requested an advance e-galley of this book. *A Grown-Up Kind of Pretty* was a pleasant surprise – smart, well-constructed “chick lit.” When I thought this book was going to be about Shandi falling for the guy who saved her from the robbery and realizing it wouldn't be a good idea, I was fully prepared to like this book well enough.

But then it turned out that's not what the book's about.

Joshilyn Jackson's track record shows that she can write some pretty smart female characters and I think you could make the argument that Jackson's trying to say that these sorts of situations are complicated and can't be approached from a black-and-white standpoint. That is absolutely an important conversation that we ought to be having, but I was ultimately very uncomfortable with the direction that this conversation ended up going.

Honestly, there were times when it felt a little bit like rape apologism. I seriously doubt that was Jackson's intent, but I do think that's something that is easy to draw out of the text. To lay out exactly how would be to give away too many spoilers, so you can send me a private message if you're interested in discussing specific plot points with me.

Jessica says

I never felt comfortable while reading this book until the very end. This is fitting; this is right. None of the characters are fully comfortable with each other (or, let's be honest, even with themselves) either. And that's perfectly okay, because this book isn't about fitting in, but about finding the right fit. Shandi Pierce is struggling through figuring out what has even happened in her own life, forget about trying to figure out what's going on in someone else's. Her parents are long-divorced but still in a tug of war that has long stretched Shandi out of shape, so much so that the addition of her son Natty just seems like another piece of rope to add to the war. She isn't even sure whom or what to believe in, let alone what's going on.

Destiny doesn't mean the same thing to everyone, and in a novel that is about that **ever-perched thing with feathers**, it certainly doesn't mean what everyone seems to think it does. **Hope** is more than destiny, and sometimes it means jumping and finding out where you fall. And sometimes, again, where you fall isn't remotely close to where you were aiming.

I just wasn't sure whom to root for in this story. The person you want to root for, you just aren't sure about, and the person you aren't sure about, you kind of wonder if you should be rooting for instead. And the big epiphany you just had? We learn that sometimes, just sometimes, that epiphany isn't the one you should be having, but it's so overwhelmingly breathtaking that one could ruminate on it for almost too long without realizing the real epiphany is about to hit you in the face.

And then it all hits you and you realize that Joshilyn Jackson has done it again. And you love her and hate her all at the same time, but mostly you just wish the book wouldn't end.

ARE from the First Reads contest here on GoodReads, but I had already purchased the book from her Virtual Book Tour. (This just meant that I got to read it a lot sooner!)

Tania says

3.5 stars. I wanted something light, but something I knew I would enjoy as we were away with friends for the weekend, and this definitely hit the spot. I have to admit I wasn't wild about Shandi, but I loved everyone else, especially William. I was laughing out loud at some of the antics, which was so well done, because there are a lot of sad things happening in the book. I also did not see the big reveal coming. I adore this author, her personal notes always sounds like she is so much fun, and that comes across in all her novels. She has the ability to write about depressing issues while giving you a warm feeling in your heart. If you enjoy Jodi Picoult or Liane Moriarty, you should add one of Joshilyn's books to your TBR. An example from this books Acknowledgements: *If you're one of those passionate and miraculous bookstore hand-sellers or big-mouthed, wonderful readers who recommend my books to other people, then I feel so warmly toward you, we should probably make out a little.*

Ashley says

I can't stand this book for one main reason. There is a rape at the core of this book, and the author writes it very sympathetically with regards to the rapist.

I've read Jackson's books in the past, and I've always enjoyed her portrayal of strong southern women. This book grabbed my attention because of the strength of the first chapters. After that, she loses me, and the plot. We've got some side characters that aren't as fleshed out as I would have liked, a main protagonist male character who is written as the romantic lead, so it's a little disconcerting when he doesn't end up even having a hat in the ring at the end. We've got a somewhat lame plot twist (view spoiler). And then, the rape.

Look, I'm not giving away any major plot points that aren't already in the books synopsis. I think we all know that babies aren't immaculately conceived. However, I absolutely refuse to put a spoiler cut on the fact that said rapist is treated as if he was owed an apology along with sweeping the enormity of having a child born from rape and said rapist possibly wanting access to the child under the rug. I feel as if Jackson really dropped the ball on handling the entire plot based around this singular act, almost excusing it away to finish the book. I can't deal with that.

It can be extremely triggering to readers, and even I was extremely unsettled with his "apology/excuse" which essentially is : sorry, my frat brothers got you drugged out of your mind without your or my knowledge, but you totally said you loved me, even though you were clearly intoxicated, so that doesn't mean I'm a bad guy for taking you out back and having sex with you. Let's maybe talk about child visitation in the near future.

I don't know why I originally gave this book two stars, when in actuality, I should have given it zero. No thanks.

Oh and Ps? Gone Girl it is not. Stop making the comparison.

Will Byrnes says

I guarantee that when you reach the end of this novel the sound you hear will be coming from your own mouth, 'Awwwwwww.'

The last book I read and reviewed before this was David Vann's magnificent *Goat Mountain*. Outstanding stuff, heavy with content, violent, dark. *Someone Else's Love Story*, while not the opposite, is certainly worlds away. An antidote. Maybe chicken feathers for the soul.

The book opens with a poem by Emily Dickinson:

**"Hope" is the thing with feathers—
That perches in the soul—
And sings the tune without the words—
And never stops—at all—**

Keep it in mind. But back to beginnings. Consider the first actual paragraph

I fell in love with William Ashe at gunpoint, in a Circle K. It was on a Friday afternoon at the tail end of a Georgia summer so ungodly hot the air felt like it had been boiled red. We were both staring down the barrel of an ancient, creaky .32 that could kill us just as dead as a really nice gun could.

Hooked yet? I was. And glad of it.

Joshilyn Jackson

Shandi is 21, the mother of Natty, a precocious three-year-old. Her bff, Walcott, is helping her move to an apartment her father keeps in Atlanta. She is a familiar sort, a good-hearted everygal of a single mother, except stuck between her long-divorced and still contentious Jewish father (remarried with three more kids) and Christian, still-single, bitter mother. Stopping en route at a convenience store, her journey is interrupted when a gunman holds the place up, shooting a cop and taking those present hostage. Good thing there is a hulk of a guy there, football-player heft, and with brains to boot, a godlike hero who makes sure neither Shandi nor Natty come to harm.

Of course William Ashe has issues of his own, and maybe he has other reasons for risking taking a bullet than solely to protect a damsel and child in distress. Maybe he is choosing his own destiny, on the anniversary of a terrible event in his life.

Destiny does figure large in this story, and it is the consideration of this and other underlying concerns that gives the book greater heft than if it were a simple rom-com. Religion figures as well. It is no accident that Jackson, for example, uses "ungodly hot" in her opening paragraph. It could just as easily have been *unbearably* or *unspeakably*. There is a wide range of content here that relates to god. There is a virgin birth, no, really, a resurrection, miracles of one sort and another, sacrifice, concern with mythological beings like Norse gods and animated anthropomorphic creatures from Jewish legend. The book also looks at love, not just between the plus and minus poles of human magnetism, but between humans and god, between friends,

between parents and children.

There are some things you will want to note as they pop up in the book. Birdhouses, birds and feathers flutter into view from time to time. I just bet they stand for *something*. Flowers and flower beds receive similar treatment, always raising Eden-ic possibilities. Ditto fireworks of one kind and another as an expression of love.

There is an investigation here of a back-story crime. It is handled with considerable nuance and maturity. Doubtless, there will be some who take offense at how this is treated. I thought it was excellently done. There is also a jaw-dropping (and wonderful) twist late in the book.

I was reminded very much of the feel of *Silver Linings Playbook*. Shandi, (can Jennifer Lawrence play her, pleeeeease) William, and Walcott will win your heart. These are lovely characters, people worth caring about, facing difficult decisions and looking at core elements of life. *Someone Else's Love Story* is about all sorts of love stories. It is about doing the right thing and struggling to figure out what that actually is. And it is lovingly and beautifully told. One right thing *you* can do is read this book. It may not be a religious experience for you, but I guarantee that it will be uplifting and leave your spirit feeling light as a feather. This is a lovely, charming book.

PS – I really hope they keep the cover art that is on the ARE I read. The image of birds, along with a few bursts of fireworks, is nothing short of perfect.

review originally posted 5/17/13

Re-posted March 31, 2017

EXTRA STUFF

Links to the author's personal, Twitter, and FB pages

Reviews of other Jackson work

----The Almost Sisters

----The Opposite of Everyone

Valentina says

I didn't really understand what this book was trying to be. Although it does have romantic elements, the story is too strange to really be considered a romance. I think that the author tried to do too many things, mixing too many genres at once.

It's hard to create a believable love story with a character like William, one of the protagonists. He is supposed to have Asperger's syndrome, but it is not a well developed aspect of his character. He was a very "blah" character. Even when we were in his head, I was bored. It would have been much more interesting to have been in the other male protagonist's mind, Walcott's. Instead we jump from Shandi, who is another dull headspace, to William's.

The plot starts off strong, with the big, robbery scene right at the beginning, but doesn't manage to keep that kind of pace. There is too much pining and whining throughout the rest of the novel to truly be interesting. I am sure there are better romance novels out there.

Sonja Arlow says

Sometimes you must break yourself apart to become whole again.

There are some authors who can dish up anything and I will happily tuck in. Joshlyn Jackson is one of those. Although not my favourite, this story was the perfect end to my spree of fluff reads.

Shandi is on her way to start a new life for herself and her savant 3-year-old. A quick pit stop at a convenience store on route changed the projection of her life forever. But then again, a hostage situation with a gun wielding drug addict will do that to a person.

At times Shandi came across as a complete hot mess and at other times more put together. But at 21 most of us were probably a little crazy and coupled with all her baggage as a teenager I tried not to be too harsh in my assessment of her.

I liked William and how he must deal with the mess his own life has become after the loss of his wife and daughter.

The only issue I had with the story was that the concept and consequences of Natty's conception was just a bit too incredulous for me.

But like all this author's books this was full of quirky writing, laugh out loud moments and interesting characters. This will make a great beach read where you won't mind interruptions, sand in your eyes or a little sun block on the pages.

Kerry Ann Morgan says

I had big expectations for Someone Else's Love Story—the kind that can be scary for a writer if they know how much we anticipate from their shiny strings of words and disappointing to a reader if those words don't flash like diamonds.

Someone Else's Love Story did not disappoint.

The opening scene is like a bad joke: a meth head, an autistic genius, a too-young mom, and a brilliant toddler born from a virgin walk into a convince store . . . What happens next is far from convenient. (Oops. I almost wrote covenant. Nuns play a role in this story, too.)

If you're held up at gunpoint, your life MUST change in some earth-shattering ways, right? Since almost all the characters involved were already living beside the river DENIAL, things start flowing.

This book deals with a smorgasbord of heavy stuff: crime, trauma, grief, child-loss, rape, religion, autism, drugs, and more. But before your forehead gets all scrunched up—this book is also damn funny. In between, Jackson manages to wriggle in destiny vs. choice, science vs. religion, chemistry vs. friendship, miracles

vs.explanations—and fireworks, birdhouses, and sweet poets named Walcott.

I couldn't help being engaged by William and Shandi, flaws and all. The characters are just so colorfully drawn. Even little Natty is divine (I pictured him as that precociously adorable blond kid from *Jerry Maguire*). And although some of the secondary characters come off as a might-bit brash, a little off, or lacking morals, I came to see the motivations for their ways.

These characters, even the ones I held dear, fight against things they know to be true. They banish their golems to the closet even though they know the door locks are broken, and eventually the bad is going to bust out. They make choices the reader may not agree with, but hey, it's the character's choice.

So much of this tale is backstory. Technically, all the answers must be found there, and the reader is lured along as hunks of the characters pasts are unveiled, sometimes even to the characters themselves. This can be clunky in novels, but here it's integrated so well, I hardly noticed the jaunts from past to present. Jackson also knows her way around imagery and metaphor ["walking into air so thick with cat-fight tension that to me it tasted just like estrogen"] saturating the prose with a style I can only think of as deliciously Southern.

The novel is short—a scant 300 or so pages—and while I was dying to know how certain storylines would play in the future (which I can't mention due to spoilers), I admire her restraint in just letting the ending be. Good things must come to an end.

This review first appeared on kerryannmorgan.com

Elyse says

Update love this book..\$1.99 kindle special today. From start to the wonderful ending ... it's just great! Perfect for summer!!

Update: Several great deals this holiday season: This book is \$1.99 today on Kindle!!!
I thought it was sooo much fun...all the way to the ending!

I could not put this book down!! This book kept me company while not feeling too well ---
PERFECT CHOICE --GREAT SURPRISE DISCOVERY!

Of course I don't want to give anything away --
I've not read 'other' reviews on Goodreads or Amazon (yet) --
And since I don't want to share about the story itself --
I'm going to 'AIR-DROP' tidbits:

A Catholic Woman is divorced from a Jewish Man
They have One adult daughters
The daughter has a genius 3 year old boy
Daughter has a male best friend (her wingman), who has two mothers.
The Jewish Man is re-married with kids
The Catholic Woman is single

A Drop-dead-hunky-stud has Asperger's Syndrome --is a brilliant scientist
He has a Wingman (wingfemale) best friend
He lost his wife and child in an accident

Now?? Have I told you anything about this story yet? Even character's names?

I HAVE NOT....
but aren't you a 'little' curious?

This book is 'not' what you think it is!

Its wonderful!
Read it when sick in bed, when healthy, when you want several -wonderful little stories within a 300 page book --(all of which you'll remember: including all the character's names) --
You'll feel the 'punch' of a powerful life message!

Greatest book to end 2013 --and being 2014!!

Ionia says

This is a tough one! I enjoyed parts of this book immensely and other parts I simply thought were okay. I am trying to come down off of my ivory tower of feminist idealism to write this review in the most non-judgmental way that I can. While I do see that Joshilyn Jackson is exploring the grey area between black and white thinking in this novel, there were some things that I just didn't get. The questionable decisions of the main character at times made me dislike her enough that I rolled my eyes or shook my head. Still, there were some things that I loved.

Here is what I really liked:

I did not love the main character, but her son was wonderful. I developed an attachment to Natty early on and wanted to ensure his safety, happiness and well-being as if he were my own child. The confused feelings his mother expressed over him that cleared up when she realised he was in danger was major for me. This made the characters feel more human and their relationship to me as the reader much more solid. I could imagine being in her situation thanks to the clearly expressed ideas the author put forth throughout the first half of the story.

The way that William was portrayed as a strong character from the beginning through memories of his previous life made him very solid as well and the type of hero that the reader knows they can count on. I loved that things did not go exactly as I would have predicted within the first few chapters and that the author chose not to follow the traditional boy meets girl and sweeps her into the sunset formula. That was a nice change.

Here's what I didn't love as much:

The portrayal of spectrum disorders in this book felt somehow lacking. I did not see that the characters behaved quite as I would have expected for people that are dealing with this disorder. I do understand that there is a reason it is called "spectrum" and there is a broad array of behaviours, personalities, etc. associated

with the disorders, but I just didn't feel it come through in the story as I would have expected.

The part that I just don't get. I am going to attempt this without a spoiler. There are some things a woman can forgive, and others that I just can't see any rational person being able to "get over." The main plot point in this story revolves around one of those things that try as I might, I just can't see happening in the real world. Perhaps some people are more forgiving than others and I am just not one of them, but again, may I reiterate: I just didn't get it.

There were quite a few plot lines running here and there in this book that involved the main character's family and other situations that I thought could have been further developed in order to make the story more interesting, but they were neglected somewhat. It was like carrying around a pair of shoes when you are already wearing some. I didn't really feel that mentioning them and then not going anywhere with it added much to the story as a whole.

If you are the type of person who is well in touch with your feelings and can forgive a main character for questionable decisions, this might be a book that you will thoroughly enjoy. If you are expecting a light and easy read with no thinking involved, this is not going to be the best book to choose.

This author is very good at writing books that make you think about situations that lie beneath the surface, as well as offering up characters that are hard to forget once you have come to know them. Although this was not my favourite book by Joshilyn Jackson, it does once again reinforce that she thinks outside the box and can come up with new and interesting plots that have not been done before.

I enjoyed the ending of this novel, and applaud the way she decided to go with the future of her main character.

This review is based on a digital review copy from the publisher as part of the Shereads blogging network. My opinions are my own.

Jan says

Someone once said, when asked why she was still single, "I've met the man I'd marry and the man who'd marry me and the two are not the same" and this story reminded me of that old quote. There are several overlapping love stories, some of which are a surprise, not only to the reader but to the people involved in this story as well. I loved the characters and their quirkiness, haunted William, brilliant little Nathan, Shandi and Walcott. Jackson writes addictive words which are intense, smart and funny.

Diane Barnes says

This is such a beautiful book it's hard to know how to review it. Maybe by starting with what it isn't. It is NOT a romance. A love story, sure, but not just one. Many, many kinds of love come into play in this story, as many kinds of love as there are people. The characters are real and flawed and kind and stupid, but Joshilyn Jackson manages to find the "possibility of good" in all of them. The book starts out with a robbery

gone wrong, then goes in many different directions, all of which bring us to the central theme that love can be a very dangerous thing, but without it we are lost.

This book gets the award for having the 2 best friends in literary history: Paula the bitch, who loves and protects William, and Walcott, who watches over Shandi and keeps her going. With friends like these, anything is possible.

Maybe Jackson has friends like these, who make it possible for her to write so brilliantly. I can't wait for her next novel, but in the meantime, I've got several of her earlier novels to catch up on. Maybe you couldn't tell, but I loved this book.

Jana says

I love Joshilyn Jackson. I'll read anything she writes. This one however, while I thoroughly enjoyed her description, left me cold. There was way too much stuff going on that got brushed aside or explained away in an effort to make some kind of point that all life is a miracle, that coincidences are not coincidences. For example, the heroine Shandi's 3-yr-old is the result of date rape. Shandi doesn't seem to have had a life up until the point she takes the pregnancy test. She's not concerned by this occurrence, doesn't even bat an eye at quitting school and preparing for this miracle of life. It's mind boggling. To be fair, it's mentioned that she had hopes to be a designer one day and her rich-and-remarried father allows her to play with her talents on his second house. But then she is too busy, of course, being a teenage mom. During the course of the story, Shandi goes from being teenage mom to seeking a father to complete the circle. The man she falls for however is already attached. Despite her naivete in all other matters of life, she can see this with amazing clarity, and she helps him to stay true to his love. All in all it was a dizzying ride and I ended up feeling sick to my stomach. That all said, I still love Joshilyn Jackson.
