



The Fulfillment

LaVyrle Spencer

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New readers will fall in love with *New York Times* bestselling author LaVyrle Spencer's unforgettable novels—and for those who have already read her timeless romances, rediscover the passion and magic . . .

Two brothers work a rich and bountiful land—and one extraordinary woman shares their lives. To Jonathan Gray, Mary is a devoted and giving mate. To Aaron, she is a beloved friend. But seven childless years of marriage have forced Jonathan to ask the unthinkable of his brother and his wife—binding the two people he cares for most with an act of desire born of compassion . . . awakening Mary to the pain of infidelity, and to all the bittersweet joy and heartache that passionate love can bring.

The Fulfillment Details

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Author : LaVyrle Spencer

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From Reader Review The Fulfillment for online ebook

SweetSue says

DNF. This would be much better rewritten as a ménage story.

Mo says

Another nice read from Ms Spencer.

*Together they worked the land.
Together they loved one woman. Mary was little more than a restless, impressionable young girl when she left Chicago for the wheat fields of a Minnesota farm, where she would become the wife of Jonathan's younger brother Aaron, she was a respected, trusted friend. But after seven frustrating childless years, the foundations of a strong and happy union have started to show signs of strain. And Jonathan turns to his brother Aaron, to ask of him what he could ask no other man.*

I really loved Aaron and Mary. Jonathan I could take or leave him.

It really was tough for these farming people to try and survive and live off the land.

The brothers were polar opposites. I kinda saw what was coming. I mean, it had to happen, didn't it?

Kristen says

4 stars

Wow! This book left me feeling emotionally exhausted but satisfied. *The Fulfillment* is a poignant read that transports the reader back to the hardships and struggles the American farmstead faced during the early twentieth century. It also had me experiencing an array of conflicting emotions due to the books storyline. I'm not one for reading infidelity plotlines but this one was unique in it's delivery.

Jonathan, who is sterile due to a childhood illness and is the books *secondary* hero, asks his wife, Mary, the heroine, and his younger brother, Aaron, who is a bachelor and the story's *main* hero, to sleep together in hopes of producing a child he can raise as his own. I guess you could call it rationalization on my part,

because cheating is cheating no matter how you slice it, but, still, I overlooked much when it came to this book—hence the emotional conflict.

I felt the author gave a very realistic and heartbreaking portrayal of the inherent consequences and turmoil this type of unorthodox decision creates for all involved. In addition, I found myself genuinely liking, and rooting for, these imperfect characters—more so for Mary and Aaron than for Jonathan—and hoping somehow they all could achieve their happily-ever-after. I also appreciated that the few love scenes between Mary and Aaron were sensual and passionate, while remaining tastefully done.

That said, there were times I found myself becoming bored and even skimming a few pages during the extensive and tedious details given to the hardships and struggles that running a farm and maintaining the homestead would have entailed.

The Fulfillment is a well written, emotional, and thought-provoking book with a very satisfying, yet somewhat bittersweet ending. How could it not be?!

Su says

I didn't like brothers sharing knowingly a woman even for a cause. Nothing can justify amorality of it. Not romantic at all. It gave me a queasy feeling. And killing the husband brother to give way to H and h a way to be together is kind of cruel of the author. Couldn't she work out something else to make everybody happy? Another thing I really found gross is h using DISH pan to take a bath! I wonder if she used the pan to wash dishes afterwards too.

Mallory says

4 stars

Carrie says

4.5*

I love LaVyrle Spencer's writing and this book didn't disappoint me. Her writing sets the scene as well as any I've read. She immerses you in the place and time. In **The Fulfillment** the prose lulled me into the rhythm of farm life, with all it's hard work, joys and sorrows. I was continually amazed at Mary, and all the hard work she did daily just to keep life going. it makes my small amount of work pale in comparison.

Spencer took on an especially difficult topic with this book. I've seen, and even read books with the same topic, but they ended up mostly feeling tawdry, or, in the case of Sandra Brown's *Play Dirty*, the motives were completely different. Jonathan, sterile from mumps, decides to ask his brother Aaron to sire a child with Jonathan's wife, Mary. Both are appalled at the idea, but the suggestion brings up ideas and feelings

long ignored and held at bay. Here Spencer shines, showing the change in attitudes, the stiffness, the awkwardness and embarrassment as the three try to return to their normal routine with the "elephant" now let loose to live in their house. As the book progresses, I'm amazed at how well Spencer gets the details and changing emotions of each character. It's compelling and bittersweet.

There are no villains or heroes here. There is a plain story told with surprising compassion for all involved. There are many ways the story could have ended, but as a romance I guess only one really works. I both wanted, and didn't want the ending to come.

The book would have been 5-stars if Spencer could have kept the tension and pace going to the end. Unfortunately, the book loses some emotional tension once the ending looks pretty certain, and while I still enjoyed it, the last few chapters felt a little like necessary filler. Still, this is highly recommended.

Duchess Nicole says

I read this book about five years ago, and it's still one of my favorites. I fell in love with all of the characters, which just made it more heartbreaking. Even though its not very explicit, its still a very sensual book.

L A i N E Y says

Feels like a cop-out to me.

And weirdly (to me) focused on the land a lot more than the characters.

rating: ★¹/₂

sraxe says

I was looking forward to reading this because the last, and only, book I read of LaVyrle Spencer's, Morning Glory, I absolutely loved. The premise for this book sounded intriguing, if a little predictable (because, really, there's only one way there could be an HEA). I didn't like it, though.

I didn't find any of the characters particularly likable, though Jonathan wasn't that bad and I actually kind of found him to be okay. I do believe that he wanted Mary to have a child with Aaron because he wanted her to experience motherhood, something she was deprived of because of his inability to sire. He was a little strange with his fascination and connection to Vinnie, but I felt he was genuine and liked him nonetheless. Even though Mary and Aaron thought he was just putting them into this position because he wanted an heir of his own, I choose to believe that wasn't the case. I found him to be rather endearing, actually, with his ability to connect to animals rather than humans. I think that if he only wanted an heir, he could easily have left that up to Aaron and his eventual children.

Aaron and Mary, I didn't like at all. I found them to be incredibly selfish and annoying. I thought I might eventually grow to like Aaron, but it never happened. Right from the beginning I was put-out with him and

his treatment of Priscilla. He did her wrong because he led her on -- he knew what he was doing and he did it anyway because he's selfish. Priscilla thought he wouldn't propose marriage because he thought she was cheap for having slept with him before a proposal or marriage but he tells her that's not that case but she doesn't really believe it. SO, she tells him she won't sleep with him again and if he wants her "favors," she demands marriage in return.

What does he say?

Meaning to hurt her, he backed a step away, bowed slightly, and said with quiet sarcasm, "Ah, yes, if favors they could be called."

What a fucking asshole.

Then, later, he tries to "apologize" but finds that she's gone to the dance without him. He's irked but feels that "maybe he deserved it." Maybe? *Maybe* he deserved it after what he said?

Anyway. So, at the dance he approaches her again but she tells him she's decided not to wait around for him.

"Why should I put all my apples in one basket? Maybe I'll pass a few around."

I completely agree. He's the one who said he wasn't going to propose...so why should she "put all [her] apples in one basket"...? Well, Aaron doesn't agree with this sentiment and says:

"Passing your apples around already?" he couldn't help taunting. "Look out, Priscilla, too many passes and you'll be applesauce."

Aaron was the one that told her he wasn't going to propose because he's "just not ready for it yet," even though they've pretty much been seeing one another exclusively for a year and have slept together. He's an immature asshole who, after being denied, turned into an even bigger ass. He's the one who told her that he's going to step aside and "leave and make way for somebody who'll think of marriage first and haylofts second" and that, "with [him] aside, other fellows might feel more welcome around here." *He's* the one who told her that, although he still wants her, "wanting and marrying are two different things to a man." So, when she decides to pursue other avenues and does what he suggests, he's a bitter asshole.

He's seriously one of those guys who tells you you're pretty but is quick to call you a whore when he doesn't get what he wants.

I didn't like Mary, either. I wasn't feeling her from the start because the author took every opportunity to liken her to a child. She's said to look like a child, act like a child, speak like a child. She's described as being a "childlike woman," having a "child-woman's body," a "schoolgirl." She's "like a child" and that she has a "childlike face"/"child's face" and she's "as enchanting as a schoolgirl."

That is *literally* what is said.

She looked as enchanting as a schoolgirl.

I honestly felt like putting the book down simply for that because I was so disgusted with the constant comparison to a child. This infantilization of her is seriously vomit-inducingly repulsive.

Moving on, I didn't find the relationship between Aaron and Mary to be at all believable. When Jonathan first introduces the idea, they're both understandably against it. They become awkward as a trio but there are no introductions or awakenings of other feelings. Aaron and Mary's resistance towards the idea continues for two months afterwards. However, Aaron then becomes aware of her because she looks pretty after having decided to dress up for the dance. A week later, Jonathan leaves for Minneapolis. They go from this awareness to sleeping together, and then being comfortable with having done it, physical affection and romance way too quickly.

Jonathan leaves on Sunday after Church and they sleep together that night. They're affectionate the next day and then Aaron is wining and dining her with wine and flowers that night. The next day, they're trying on his parent's wedding clothes and he expresses wanting her as his bride and they exchange I Love Yous. And then Jonathan returns that day (Tuesday). It made absolutely no sense and was absolutely unbelievable.

The spent seven years together as in-laws and, other than brotherly/sisterly, they had no other feelings towards one another. Then, abruptly, they're exchanging I Love Yous within two days/nights of sleeping together??? When they first sleep together, there's absolutely no awkwardness between them and they are, instead, bantering and joking about wenches and dragons. I expected there to be some acclimation to their new circumstance because...well, hello!! *You just slept with your brother-/sister-in-law*. Instead, there's an immediate settlement into domestic bliss?? He gets her into his mother's wedding dress and is telling her that "[she] will always be [his] beautiful bride."

When she tells Aaron that she's pregnant, he tries to convince her to run away with him because he thinks that this "changes everything." That, again, makes absolutely no sense because the reason Jonathan asked them to sleep together in the first place was in order to conceive a child. And now he thinks that it "changes everything" and they, him and Mary, should pack up and go elsewhere and leave Jonathan?

Mary is no better in the selfishness department. This is another reason that I didn't like her. She's upset that, upon Jonathan's return, he shows no outward jealousy (the reader is told Jonathan feels a "hollowness" upon realizing that Aaron and Mary have, indeed, slept together). She wants his love in order to get through this pregnancy and I just couldn't help disliking her. She wants him to love her and be jealous that she'd slept with his brother and they conceived a child...even though she loves Aaron. She wants him to show his

jealousy as a sign that he cares, even though it's his brother she loves, it's his brother's child she carries, it's his brother who she wants to sleep with. How selfish can you be to demand that? And then to be angry when you don't get it?

Jacqueline J says

An old favorite of mine. Quite angsty. Don't read this if you have any "cheating" hot buttons. Which really I normally do, but somehow this one didn't push those buttons that hard for me, don't know why. Do know that they made this into the most abysmal TV movie and changed the ending which made the whole thing suck buckets of suck. Book is real good though.

Elizabeth "Liza" says

Bittersweet and endearing

Kindling Micky says

I thoroughly enjoyed this American historical with a forbidden love theme. Aaron was a man I adored; such integrity and selflessness but his passion and love were unending. Mary was likeable and naive in all senses. Aaron awakened her as a woman, a person in a way her husband could not. LaVyrle Spencer is a new to me author but one that has been recommended to me a few times. Her writing has a natural simplicity that aids your escape into her characters worlds. There was an element of predictability to this tale but it didn't diminish the enjoyment. I am really excited to read more from this author.

Beth says

Just as Fulfilling the Second Time Around

I read The Fulfillment by LaVyrle Spencer almost 20 years ago and randomly found it again searching for historical romances. I picked it up again a couple of weeks ago and it was even better than I remembered. I am not one to read a romance with an infidelity plotline at all, but the way Ms. Spencer handles this topic is mastery. She makes it believable and she makes it so hard to judge any character in the book for what occurs. She takes what could have been a contrived and cliché plotline into an extraordinary book with a refreshing feel.

Jonathan and Mary Gray live on a farm in Minnesota in the early 1900s. Aaron, Jonathan's brother, lives with them and works the farm. Both brothers are tied to the land they work. Jonathan and Mary have been trying to have a baby for seven years and haven't been able to conceive. Jonathan suspects he is sterile and asks Aaron to sire the child he cannot. This sets in motion a chain of event which change all of the characters' lives forever. The book is written in third person, but the reader is able to get the POV from all

three main characters. I have to say it is rare for an author to convey so much emotion in a reader for all of her characters. Ms. Spencer executes this flawlessly. You can relate and understand each character's motives. I felt like I was on an emotional rollercoaster and I was so engrossed with the character's themselves that I, too, cried when they did and laughed when they were happy.

One thing I love about Ms. Spencer's historical romances is that they are truly authentic. She makes me feel like I'm there. She adds details to the time period, like the endless and hard work which occurred on a farm, the fellowship enjoyed on Sunday at church, the gossip that occurred when one went to "town" to shop and pick up supplies and the period dress of the time. I always feel like I'm transported back in time in her books.

This is such a wonderful book about love, family, willfulness, and what and how one decision can change the lives of a family forever. I have to say this is one of my favorite historical romances and I'm so glad I reread it. It was so worth the emotions and the healing at the end.

Gigi says

Lavyrle Spencer's historicals never disappoint me. I'm sad to say, that is the last unread LS historical; I'm caught up with all of her historicals : (. Lavyrle tends to write about family and overcoming some sort of adversity. She writes some of the best characters- complex and very real. Her characters can be both strong and vulnerable. If you enjoy HR's, then you should pick up a LS book. I don't understand why her books aren't more popular.

So, The Fulfillment is a complex story and done so well. The story is about a wife and two brothers who live together to work a farm- one sterile and married brother and the other brother a fertile bachelor. The married brother poses an unorthodox solution to his fertility problem which is the catalyst for a very interesting story.

Sue says

An endearingly poignant novel of life in early twentieth century Minnesota.
