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From the acclaimed writer of *Private Altars*, comes a story of driving lyrical force set in Manhattan in the 1950s. When he is expelled from boarding school, Gabriel Gibbs is sent to live with his older brother Spencer in New York. Rather than a punishment, this becomes an exhilarating invitation to a dazzling world, from smoking cigars at the Plaza Hotel to weekend house parties filled with tennis and cocktails. It is in this heady atmosphere -- from white-gloved Park Avenue to literary Greenwich Village -- that Gabriel first glimpses the elusive Lillian Dawes. Free-spirited and mysterious, Lillian captures the imaginations of those in "all the best circles," including both brothers. As their lives entwine, so begins the powerful and poignant unraveling of innocence.

The Season of Lillian Dawes: A Novel Details

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From Reader Review The Season of Lillian Dawes: A Novel for online ebook

Richie says

I kept reading this book thinking it may get better but it never did. I initially became interested because I read on a blog that the language was similar to Fitzgerald, but nothing could be further. "The Great Gatsby" uses lyrical language that is very well selected; this is much longer and over uses adjectives. You should not use so many adjectives and similes that tell me absolutely nothing. It's indulgent writing and it's sloppy. The story also had a "Breakfast at Tiffany's" feel but with a character that lacks motivation. Lillian isn't even in a good chunk of the book. A quote from this book that sums it up, "I was just waiting; as if on a journey with no particular destination, there was no anticipated event which would signal arrival." Indeed, this book just putters out.

Drusie's Biblio says

You can translate this review on: <http://labibliotecadidrusie.blogspot.it/>

Eccomi alle prese con un libro che ne ricorda tanti altri, senza avermi dato l'idea del 'già sentito'.

Aprire questo romanzo è stato come aprirne uno di Fitzgerald, con i personaggi di Capote e l'intervento della zia Mame di Dennis travestita da zia Lavinia.

E' innegabile che il racconto di Gabriel (voce narrante) e Spencer evochi in maniera piuttosto netta le atmosfere del grande Gatsby. Non tanto per le feste e il lusso, quanto per quel modo di vivere annoiato, decadente, sofisticato e dedito a riflessioni profonde sui grandi argomenti della vita. L'autrice in questo caso supera addirittura il maestro, con una più accurata caratterizzazione dei personaggi, una più alta definizione della trama e un maggior approfondimento dei pensieri e dei sentimenti dei protagonisti.

La storia non è particolarmente originale. Gabriel viene ospitato dal fratello Spencer durante un'estate e, lentamente, nella loro vita si affaccia, e intromette, Lillian Dawes. Per lentamente, intendo davvero lentamente. Gabriel rimane affascinato da Lillian vedendola all'inizio, soltanto in immagini sui giornali. Poi la incontra di persona sporadicamente qua e là, fino a vederla quasi tutti i giorni. Di Spencer non sappiamo le vicende, ma appare chiaro che la conosce.

Ho trovato che l'autrice sia stata molto brava a mantenere l'immagine della ragazza sui toni misteriosi e fumosi. A fine libro si scopre chi è (Gabriel lo dice apertamente), ma i suoi pensieri, il suo carattere, il suo modo di vivere la fanno sembrare sempre una bellissima farfalla inafferrabile.

Ottima anche l'esposizione dei sentimenti di Gabriel, dalla mera curiosità, all'interesse, alla gelosia anche se mascherata da indifferenza.

Personaggi: La storia ci viene narrata da Gabriel, diciassettenne espulso da scuola e ospitato dal fratello scrittore Spencer. Nonostante sia lui stesso a dire di aver commesso molte infrazioni, ho fatto fatica ad identificare questo ragazzo con uno scapestrato da espulsione. Vero che la storia è ambientata negli anni '50 e i metri erano diversi, ma ciò che ho visto io, è stato più che altro un ragazzo che cerca di trovare i suoi spazi e il suo modo di essere, e lo fa con i sistemi tipici dei giovani, con quei dispetti e moti di ribellione in uso ancora oggi. Talvolta è buffo, spesso insofferente, a tratti irriverente. Molti dei suoi atteggiamenti sembrano imitazione di quelli adulti, perché il suo pensiero sembra essere (pur non esprimendolo mai) 'se faccio questo, sembro più grande e mi tratteranno da adulto'. Spencer rimane piuttosto indefinito. Sembra un bravo fratello e forse si sforza di esserlo, ma non si lascia travolgere da quelle che oggi chiameremmo

responsabilità. Continua a fare la sua vita decadente e annoiata e a scrivere i suoi racconti. Devo ammettere però, che un paio di perle di saggezza del libro, vengono proprio da lui.

Per finire con i personaggi principali c'è lei: Lillian. Una ragazza strana che sembra legata alla bella vita eppure non ha un soldo. Ha un carattere dolce e un modo di vedere piuttosto originale. E' uno spirito libero che ha sofferto molto. Non so decidere se mi è piaciuta o no. Dice un paio di cose belle, ma in generale penso che risulti piuttosto antipatica.

Tra i personaggi secondari una menzione speciale a zia Lavinia, che si oppone alle usanze e al bigottismo di famiglia, che vede la vita in maniera lucida e libera, che compie gesti totalmente spiazzanti e inaspettati che divertono moltissimo.

Stile: Ricercato e raffinato. Leggere questo libro è una passeggiata quieta e rilassante tra le parole. Scrittura perfetta, descrizioni deliziose, interessanti e stimolanti riflessioni suscitate dagli stessi personaggi. Pur somigliando molto agli scrittori degli anni '20, lo stile della Mosby è molto più approfondita ed elegante. Il registro è medio ma tende verso l'alto. Vocabolario ampio, altro elemento che rende la lettura stimolante e piacevole. Ottima gestione dei tempi.

Giudizio finale complessivo: Mi ha colpito e l'ho adorato, molto più degli autori da cui ha tratto ispirazione. Alle cinque al Plaza è stato un libro da momenti di pausa che la pausa me l'ha regalata davvero, facendo sentire un po' decadente pure me, ma non annoiata. Questo mai. Ho desiderato anche io ascoltare la musica citata nel testo, fumando annoiata una sigaretta (anche se non ho mai fumato). Mi sono sentita partecipe della festa e del week end che i protagonisti passano ad un certo momento dell'estate. Ho riso delle battute pungenti fatte a discapito di qualche personaggio un po' tonto. E' stato uno di quei rarissimi libri che, non appena finito, avrei avuto voglia di rileggere di nuovo.

Voto: 9/10

Marian Deegan says

Every so often, an author emerges from the library stacks in a chance slide fueled by magic. Katherine Mosby falls into this category in **my** book. With a depth and breadth of literate knowledge which would make Garrison Keillor smile, Mosby paints memorable characters, beauty-infused moments, dazzling dialogue and captivating stories in language rivaling Ondaatje and Robertson and Michaels. Her *Season of Lillian Dawes* is a perfect example of my idea of a jewel of a book.

When sullen Gabriel Gibbs is expelled from boarding school {again}, he is sent to live with his older brother Spencer in postwar New York City. Spencer's collection of eclectic friends includes communists, artists, and an heir to a cockroach poison fortune. Gabriel is delighted; which of us wouldn't be delighted to be placed in the care of a charming sly-witted and fair-minded sibling? Spencer's mild amusement with the posturing of his blue-blooded family irritates everyone except Aunt Lavinia, herself an outcast with her wheezing waddling bulldog of a companion, Mr. Phipps.

Aunt Lavinia: "I've never made a fetish of the truth, my dear. I mean, let's face it, the truth is overrated. It's the refuge of the dull and unimaginative, and most of the time it's a big disappointment, while a lie worth telling or well told is, well, a kind of gift. I know most people don't see it that way. But then, most people are idiots."

Spencer's affinity with Aunt Lavinia is revealed through Gabriel's captivating narrative:

"As was so often the case with stories that Spencer told, it was hard for me to know how much his version

had been shaped by the subtle demands of narrative, to which Spencer readily conceded the authority of fact."

Spencer's "cavalier attitude about meals", as reported by Gabriel, is a joy to read whether your idea of a well-equipped kitchen runs to AllClad or a George Forman grill:

"If Spencer was caught up in work, dinner could easily be several bowls of cornflakes, or baloney sandwiches...

On the other hand, when Spencer was miserable he would go to the market and spend hours palpating fruit and sifting spices from the wooden barrels in the Middle Eastern shop. Then the small kitchen would be filled with the scent of ground lamb or wine sauce, or glazed plums, tangy and sweet duets of flavor, the counter space dazzled by still lifes, a striking palette of succulents and savories, from the sweet oozing gold of imported pears to the inky, purple eggplant skins. Spencer would concoct wildly ambitious meals, exotic and delicate couplings of taste, offerings appropriate for the most capricious emperor. In these efforts, I was galley slave and sous-chef, but I didn't mind. Helping Spencer in the kitchen was like being in an alchemist's lab. He liked to listen to Dixieland Jazz or ragtime while he cooked, and we bowed before the kitchen gods after every meal; the cardboard likenesses of Aunt Jemima and Uncle Ben that Spenser had cut from their boxes and set in a silver frame whose double ovals had formerly held photographs of our mother and father."

As a lover of wildly ambitious meals cooked to New Orleans Blues, after reading that paragraph I could barely contain my sudden urge to storm Kowalskis for pears and eggplants and sinful sauces in which to steep them. But could you tear yourself away from such prose, no matter how seductively the kitchen beckoned? I didn't think so.

And I haven't even touched on Lillian Dawes, the namesake of the story. Beautiful, mysterious, and witty as we can long to be only in dreams, Lillian slips into this glittering Gatsby-of-New-York world to captivate both brothers.

A critic observes that Mosby seems to come from a completely different, and much richer, place. I agree, and I would add that the power of Mosby's charm is in her ability to entice us to transform our own places, too, into something...richer. Richer, kinder, and more generous of soul.

I read this book clear through before tending to an emotionally painful task which I'd been dreading. Mosby's words pulled the best of me to the fore, and sent me to my task with more grace than I'd have been able to otherwise muster.

If that's not a reason to read a book, I don't know what is.

Sandra says

Pretty good book although slow at first and was hard to keep the interest.

Nancy says

I have nothing to say about this book. I think I read it wrong. I'm not even sure what the story was and I think

I may have missed something big waiting for something big to happen.

Lizz says

a great addition to Twilight, I am loving it so far...

Gina says

This is a very Igby Goes Down/Catcher in the Rye sort of book, featuring disillusioned but frequently hysterical first person narration by a teenage boy who was..wait for it...kicked out of private school. I am quite enjoying it.

Kelly says

Slow at first, and prone to a wandering style of writing that takes some getting used to, but which is lyrical and self-conscious and poetic. The story is worth pursuing, and towards the end it becomes very engaging.

Laurie Notaro says

Three and a half. or three and three quarters. Writing was nice, lyrical in parts, but the ending was lovely and perfect for the book. If you loved Rules of Civility, this was a similar book, but better.

Karen says

Excellent retro romance.

Aaron Jacobs says

3.5 stars

Audra says

3.5 Star review. Mosby's erudite writing style is fluid and poetic, but at times a bit heavy. The first half of the book set the scene, but it didn't really pick up until the second half, which wrapped up the novel nicely. So, first half: 3 stars (I had to keep at it, despite a small urge to give up); second half: 4 stars (worth the trudge).

Neyda Gilman says

I enjoyed this book. It took some time to get use to the writing, and it was a bit predictable, but it was an enjoyable and quick read.

Rosie says

what a disappointment. I wanted to like this book but it was just too much.
Run on sentences containing too many thoughts. You need a dictionary to read this book.
Fifty pages in and nothing to give one an idea of what the book is about.

I stopped reading on page 58.

Would not recommend.

Abby Perkins says

At first it seems like simply a good story, but I find the characters and their ideas coming backto me regularly.
