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Sharlene MacLaren

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A spark ignites between the "scandalous" divorcee and the upright pastor, but Joy's rocky past has made her wary of male attention, and her feelings of failure, not to mention her disbelief in a God of love, drives an even deeper wedge between them. Moreover, Lucas puts the brakes on their budding friendship when his congregants begin to question his intentions. When an unforeseen danger threatens Joy and her daughter, will the tight-knit town stand by and watch? Or will they open their hearts to the God of mercy and allow Him to do an unexpected work?

Threads of Joy Details

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Author : Sharlene MacLaren

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From Reader Review Threads of Joy for online ebook

Andrea (Catsos Person) is a Compulsive eBook Hoarder says

I won this book in a GR drawing and I thought that I was signing up to win an Historical romance. This is in fact, Christian fiction historical romance. But I think since this fact was not obvious when I entered the drawing, the author's team wanted to expand this author's exposure beyond her Christian readership of Christian Fiction/Romance. Since I won this book and read it, they were successful, because I am not a member of the target audience for Christian fiction.

The author is a good writer and the plot was compelling. The religious element was not heavy-handed or burdensome to the story.

This book, however, was not effective as an Historical romance. The scant period detail was poor. I also saw errors in little bit of period detail that the author did attempt to include. As a discerning reader of mainstream Historical romance, I would like the author to know that there is a lot more to crafting historical romance than the clothing the characters wear and the riding of horses/drawn vehicles.

Also there is the tricky issue of accurate portrayal of how the southern community in this story would have treated and viewed African Americans in the 19 C. There was a Black man, though a small role, had a key role here that I find unbelievable. Undoubtedly, the author did not want to offend her Southern US bible-belt readership.

But, the plot itself was a good and compelling read, but I think this author should stick to contemporary romance. Historical romance is more than clothes and horses.

Terri says

My mother and I have read both of the series of this books. Sharlene have written very clearly telling a story and true inspirations & scriptures in it. I am looking forward to read third book!

Kathy says

I was given this book with the hope I would read it and review it.

This is the first book by Sharlene MacLaren I have read. It is a Historical Christian Romance set in Tennessee and is second in a series. Joy is raising her little girl on her own, supporting them by being a seamstress. She feels that people look down on her because of her status as a divorced woman. They live next door to a church and it's young bachelor minister. It is nice to see the attraction unfolding between them and interaction of the local people around them.

This book had enough of all elements that I look for in a book for me to give it 5 stars for it's genre. If you like Historical Christian Romance I would recommend this book. I think I am going to have to get another of Ms MacLaren's books.

Rebecca says

A thoroughly enjoyable read! Sharlene MacLaren is one of my favorites and this book is no exception. Joy Westfall is an easy character to love and "Mr. Churchman", Lucas Jennings is equally as admirable. The work of the Holy Spirit in Joy's life is whisper-soft and divinely-strong as God uses some of the most likely and unlikely people in Joy's life to draw her to Himself.

Ironically, un-churched Joy Westfall lives next door to a Paris, Tennessee church with her daughter, Annie. Tagged as "divorced", Joy often feels the stigma of an outcast among her neighbors; even though she earns her own living as a proficient seamstress. Imagine her discomfort when the handsome pastor, Lucas Jennings, begins to befriend Joy and her daughter. Their friendship grows strong roots and when Joy's past collides with her ever-changing-present, Lucas' faith is challenged beyond his imagination.

A great continuation of the "Tennessee Dreams" series.

Trinity Rose says

Threads of Joy by Sharlene MacLaren is a wonderful, uplifting book full of love and surprises. Joy felt no one liked her or cared for her, and rightly so she thought, because of her past. Joy felt her life was on the right track when she married the man whom she thought was the answer to her dreams. He turned out a swindler and already married, but now Joy has a little girl whom she loves more than life. Living next to a preacher and his church is bad enough, but when he is so kind to them Joy can't stand it. How can she repay her debt to him and get him to leave them alone. Many, many adventures happen in Threads of Joy, much soul searching and hardships. You will be amazed at the way this book turns out. You will see how God directs both of these people and how when things turn bad that you can always depend on God to see you through. I just love the cover picture and the title. They really fit the book. I have never read a book by Sharlene MacLaren that I haven't liked. Her books always are full of love, forgiveness and deep. She doesn't write books that are fluff as I call them. You come away from her books uplifted and know she puts a lot of thought and knowledge in them. Highly recommended.

Thank you to Whitaker House for providing this book for review. I was not required to write a positive review. The opinions I have expressed are my own. I am disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255

Victor Gentile says

Sharlene MacLaren in her new book, "Threads Of Joy" Book Two in the Tennessee Dreams series published by Whitaker House takes us into the life of Joy Westfall.

From the back cover: Joy Westfall seems too young to be jaded, but the twenty-eight-year-old has already weathered more hardship and sorrow than most people twice her age. She moves home to Paris, Tennessee, with her three-year-old daughter, the only good thing to have come from her mistake of a marriage and sets up housekeeping, as well as her tailoring business, in a tiny abode she inherited from her aunt. She doesn't much mind living on the outskirts of town, especially since the residents of Paris seem disinclined to welcome a divorcee. The same is true of the congregants of the church next door. Just as well. Joy doesn't need their sympathy.

Lucas Jennings feels blessed to be shepherding his own flock so early in life. Since his arrival, the congregation of Paris Evangelical Church has swelled, of course, it can't hurt that he's an eligible bachelor. Single women flock to the church from all over Henry County, yet none of them, not even the most pious manages to capture his attention quite like the newcomer next door, who is hungry for the gospel but unwilling to admit it.

A spark ignites between the "scandalous" divorcee and the upright pastor, but Joy's rocky past has made her wary of male attention, and her feelings of failure, not to mention her disbelief in a God of love, drives an even deeper wedge between them. Moreover, Lucas puts the brakes on their budding friendship when his congregants begin to question his intentions. When an unforeseen danger threatens Joy and her daughter, will the tight-knit town stand by and watch? Or will they open their hearts to the God of mercy and allow Him to do an unexpected work?

You would think a person named Joy would be, at least, somewhat happy. Joy really has nothing to be happy about. She married, had a daughter, then found out the man was already married and cheating on her. So she is now divorced and living outside of town because the townspeople are shunning her because she is a divorcee. However she lives right next to the church and likes what she hears. Pastor Lucas is single and likes both Joy and her daughter but has to be careful to not cause a scandal. This is all about forgiveness and forgiveness and many levels; forgiveness of self, of others, from God. And then on top of that there is the romance—not just any kind of romance but a real, gentle romance that only springs from God. Ms. MacLaren does an outstanding job with all the characters especially Lucas and Joy and we really get behind them to succeed. I am so looking forward to the next book in this series.

Disclosure of Material Connection: I received this book free from Whitaker House. I was not required to write a positive review. The opinions I have expressed are my own. I am disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255: "Guides Concerning the Use of Endorsements and Testimonials in Advertising."

Edward Arrington says

I really appreciate how Sharlene MacLaren weaves the Gospel message into her books. The book is classified as Fiction/Christian/Romance. There is also an undercurrent of Suspense involved. It was a very interesting read.

Caitlin Buchanan says

loved it....

Susan Snodgrass says

I just love Sharlene MacLaren! Her books are just wonderful, too. She is definitely not afraid to proclaim the Gospel message. Sometimes I read Christian fiction with barely a mention of the name of God. In fact, I have read CF with nary a mention of the name of God! Sad, in my opinion.

However, Sharlene is not afraid to mention God's name and to point the way to His Son, Jesus, as being the only way to God! For that, I am most thankful. If a nonbeliever happened to pick up one of her books to read, they'd surely be convicted in their hearts.

Sharlene takes us back to Paris, Tennessee in book two of this series. Joy Westfall is a tailor/seamstress who lives next door to the church. She is divorced and that makes her a pariah in this age to nearly everyone. She only has one friend in the enter town. But her house sits next to the church and she sometimes sits on her porch and listens to the folks singing in church and the minister preaching. A minister, who, is quite attractive, but Joy will not allow herself to ever feel anything for another man.

Lucas Jennings, minister of the small church, is quite intrigued by the widow Westfall, and soon makes friends with her precious little girl. He longs to win Joy to Christ, but sees instinctively that she has been hurt badly.

But...there is danger brewing from another quarter that will threaten both Joy, her little girl and Lucas. Will they be able to overcome?

God always has a plan and His plans are always working out for the good of those who love Him and are called according to His purpose. I cried during the last few chapters of this book. I can't wait for the next one in the series, but it's not coming till winter 2015!

Andrea (Catsos Person) is a Compulsive eBook Hoarder says

I won this book in a GR first reader drawing.

This is my first experience with xn fiction and this author, but the story was compelling and the two MCs were likable.

The author did a an excellent job of taking the reader through the process of the h/H going from uneasy acquaintances, to tentative friendship to friendship to love/HEA. I enjoyed the journey. I don't know about xn historical romances, but too many mainstream HR authors play the "insta-love" card. It's one of my pet peeves, but there is none of that here.

As a hardcore HR romance reader, the "historical" element was not well done as I would have liked. The historical setting was "wall paper" instead of being an integral part of the story. In other words, this story was not dependent on period detail and could have been written at a CR (contemporary romance/xn). This is not good if the novel is supposed to be an HR.

I would recommend this title to readers who want a compelling story and enjoy the buildup of a strong connection between the h/H. The historical setting /period did not add anything to the story.

Stephanie says

It has been a few years since I have read any novels by Sharlene MacLaren. I remember I enjoyed the series I read, so I was excited to read this one. I liked this one even more than the others I read! :)

This is the second in the series, however as I read everything made sense. I knew a couple of the other characters mentioned were from the first book. Their story wasn't continued in this one leaving me to wonder what was happening. They were just mentioned from time to time. It can very easily be read as a stand-alone.

Something that took me a wee bit to get used to was way the dialogue was written. It wasn't a big thing, just took a little getting used to at first.

I really loved the characters! I loved how Joy was independent, strong but softened and was able to accept love. I loved Lucas' was a wonderful blend of laid back and caring with a good sense of humor.

It was a very sweet story with lovable characters and a great message! I really look forward to reading more by Sharlene MacLaren.

*I received this book free from Goodreads as part of their first-reads program.

Cathy Caffas kowalkowski says

Another great read from Shar Maclaren. I love Lucas and Joy. Probably in my top 7 by Maclaren. =]

"...she'd had a difficult time accepting herself and believing God could love her after all the flubs she'd made. The truth was, the idea still baffled her; but Jesus' directive to come to Him and find rest for her soul was pretty clear. In her mind, finding His rest meant that she would have to put away her insecurities and set down her heavy burdens - and Lord knew they weighted a ton - and allow God to give her a brand new identity in Him." page 191

Sharlene MacLaren has real characters. People who need redemption, and she presents the gospel right. We are all sinners and need a Savior- whatever we've done, no matter where we come from, or how much money we have...He's there, waiting for us to come.

Pamela Leinenweaver says

Loved this book love all of Shar's books an amazing writer

Sarah Grace says

Sharlene MacLaren never disappoints. Now if only she could write as fast as I read! Lol! ;) Received the book today and read the whole thing today! I could not put it down. An excellent book of love, and a good reminder to never judge another person. I would highly recommend this author, and all of her books, to anyone.

Lynne Young says

This is book 2 in the Tennessee Dreams series. I loved Book 1 - Heart Of Mercy and didn't think any other book in the series could be as good. I was wrong. The story of Joy Westfall just grabbed my heart. I loved her innocence, her strength, her determination, but the one thing that really grabbed me was her feeling that she wasn't worthy of anyone's love - including God. Her spiritual awakening and realization that others didn't think of her the way she did was a beautiful thing to watch unfold through the pages of this book.

Ms. MacLaren did a wonderful job of telling Joy's story and that of the preacher Lucas Jennings. I could put myself in the story and came away feeling like these characters have been friends of mine for years. The characters are well rounded and approachable. Are there tense moments? Yes. Is there a person in the book you would love to hate? Yes. Is there a child everyone will fall in love with? You bet!

I did not want this book to end but it came to it's natural conclusion beautifully. I look forward to book 3 and can't wait to see how the author has matured Mercy from book 1 and Joy from book 2. I highly recommend this book. You will not be disappointed!
