



This Proud Heart

Pearl S. Buck

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As her second marriage approaches, a brilliant and independent sculptor faces tensions between her art and everyday life

This Proud Heart narrates the experience of a gifted sculptor and her struggle to reconcile her absorbing career with society's domestic expectations. Susan Gaylord is talented, loving, equipped with a strong moral sense, and adept at anything she puts her hand to, from housework to playing the piano to working with marble and clay. But the intensity of her artistic calling comes at a price, isolating her from other people—at times, even from her own family. When her husband dies and she remarries, she finds herself once again comparing the sacrifice of solitude to that of commitment. With a heroine who is naturalistic yet compellingly larger than life, This Proud Heart is incomparable in its sympathetic study of character.

This ebook features an illustrated biography of Pearl S. Buck including rare images from the author's estate.

This Proud Heart Details

Date : Published 1938 by John Day Co.

ISBN :

Author : Pearl S. Buck

Format : 371 pages

Genre : Fiction, Historical, Historical Fiction, Classics

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From Reader Review This Proud Heart for online ebook

Marcia S says

Solid read about an independent woman during the 50's who wants to have it all and searches for what's right for her amidst the people who come in and out of her life.

Richard Crowe says

Unusual

This Proud Heart is unlike many of Buck's novels. The characters are European, not Asian. The characters are rich and interesting. But the plot seems heavy, labored; as if Buck is trying to know them in greater depth than one usually discerns. Because it is unique, I recommend it to other lovers of Buck's work. But if you do not know her other works, I suggest one read The Good Earth as well.

Noel says

I absolutely Loved this book with a capital L. It's the story of Susan, an up and coming sculptor in the 1930s, who struggles with her love of art, her love of family - children, parents, sister and husband, and her need to be herself. As I read it, I could imagine the setting, in the 30s and how tremendously difficult it would be for a girl to do anything other than teach or nurse or be a secretary, or marry and have children. Pearl Buck delivers with this book, especially in the ending which brings the whole thing full term.

At some point in the middle of the book, I had to read Pearl Buck's biography on wikipedia because I had a suspicion that the entire book was somewhat autobiographical, an allegory for her own life. I found out that David Barnes, the name of the sculptor in the book who mentors Susan Gaylord, was the pen name with which she submitted her master's thesis at Cornell. At that time, Pearl Buck afraid that if she submitted her thesis as a woman, it would automatically be graded down?

The sculpting seemed to pinch hit for writing, being lost in the marble and just feeling it, seemed so similar to getting lost in the writing. I couldn't find any definitive interview or study on the author and this book in particular, but I did find someone else who thought as I did.

So many of the themes in the book will still resonate with women 70 years later. It is still hard to juggle family, passion, responsibilities; it's hard to fit in, to figure out when to have children during our careers - all themes which she explores brilliantly in the book.

Katie says

I really enjoyed this book, as I found that the main theme resonated with me deeply - women continued to be

judged for wanting to both have fulfillment from a professional career and be a mother (though admittedly it was less common during the era that the novel is set). Aside from the judgment, the protagonist struggles with the guilt and self-doubt that she is making the right decisions for both her and her family. Recommended.

Alex Ronk says

La edición que tengo es precisamente la de la portada y es bastante viejita, de hecho me la regalaron y curiosamente no trae una sinopsis que haga que quieras leer la historia luego luego, así que por eso lo incluí en el desafío de desempolvando libros.

Y la verdad es que no me gusto mucho, por momentos parecía que estaba viendo una novela de televisa, toda llena de drama sin sentido y con una protagonista que a veces me daban ganas de golpearla, pero agradezco que no hubiesen muchos momentos así, porque la gran parte de la historia Susan quiere aprender, ser mejor y salir adelante y no quedarse en su casa sin nada más que hacer que esperar a su marido para atenderlo y sentirse importante solo por eso.

Porque de hecho de todos los personajes femeninos en el libro, Susan es de las más fuertes, su madre es del tipo de no adaptarse bien al cambio ya que así la educaron y su labor consiste en estar en casa, atender a sus hijas y esposo y no desear algo más porque no se ve bien. Y así son el resto de los personajes femeninos, supongo que la autora quería darle más fuerza a Susan y que las demás no resaltarán demasiado.

En cuanto a los personajes masculinos, la verdad es que a mi ninguno se me quedó grabado, al menos no lo suficiente como para recordarlo como agradable y/o desagradable. Y no es que no los haya, pero personalmente no hubo uno que me pareciera más rescatable que el resto.

Hubo situaciones que no me esperaba, como mencione más arriba la sinopsis que viene en la edición que tengo no es la misma de ésta reseña, así que la situación de los dos matrimonios fue algo que no esperaba, pero tampoco voy a contar el porque de dos matrimonios :D

El final me pareció un poco injusto pero considero que para la forma de ser de Susan era algo predecible, quería tener éxito en su matrimonio y en ser una artista reconocida, pero sin duda no logra juntar ambas cosas para salir adelante y de ahí se da todas las situaciones complicadas, agradables e inesperadas en la historia.

Como mencione más arriba, me esperaba más de la historia y me quedó a deber bastante. Así que no la recomiendo tan ampliamente, al menos que quieran leer un poco de romance con la pasión de una persona por salir adelante y tener éxito en lo que más le gusta (?)

Peggy says

This book was published in 1938 but the theme itself is so contemporary. Susan Gaylord is a brilliant woman of many talents; she unintentionally intimidates everyone (including her husband) because she does so many things so well. This makes her sound insufferable but she is not.

I liked the insight into the mind of an artistic, creative person (Susan was a sculptor) and how difficult it was for women in the 1930's to be taken seriously in any field outside the home. I could see shadows of the criticism that Buck herself received for winning the Nobel prize.

Having read Bucks' *My Several Worlds*, I can see many links to *This Proud Heart*--I have to feel it was partly autobiographical. I wish it was possible for there to be a sequel!

Kanika Sood says

I see that *This Proud Heart*'s reviewers belong to the same demographic as Michael Bolton concert attenders. Well, I am 20 and I happened to read this book and I will say my two paisa worth about it. I picked this book from the detritus of a second-hand bookstore. It came without a cover and hence without the perfunctory blurb on the back. The title looked interesting and I had read and liked Pearl Buck's short story, *The Enemy* in school. And so I jumped into the book without the slightest idea of what it was about.

What struck me the most was that *The Proud Heart* is written very differently from contemporary fiction. Even though it is a story about one character, a Susan Gaylord, it flows like water from a tap. The book doesn't brood about Susan's difficulties to fit in a simple society as a prodigious child, choosing instead to build her character line by line. A novelist of recent years would have begun with at least a few pages of the character analysis, may be even an introspective monologue. *Proud Heart* uses events to build its characters. It is linear and no page drops hints of anything to come.

I found the first hundred pages ridiculous. Readable but ridiculous. Why does she keep begging her husband for kids? Why won't she move to Paris? Why must she ask her husband to attend an art class? Why must she be ashamed of bringing money home? I flipped back pages to the publishing year which turned out to be 1930. I was tolerant thereafter; sexual revolution was decades in future and women has not held suffrage for too long.

None of the characters are cliched. Not the country folks, not the artists nor the subjects they sculpt. Susan turns into a wilted flower each time she falls in love but both times, she pulls herself out of it to return to her work. Susan is discovered by a famous sculptor, David Barnes who keeps persuading her to come to Paris but she keeps dallying. After her husband dies, she visits their small old house and a ravine next to it. The sight and the implicit emotions persuade her to leave for Paris; it is a powerfully written scene. In Paris, she meets and marries a modern sculptor Blake and neglects her work once again. This time a visit to her poet father who has let himself vegetate in his family house stirs her to action. Buck hasn't been wishy-washy with Susan's character. All of her rites of passage are preambled by perceptible incidents and a change in emotions.

The book crosses the intellectual landmarks of New York and Paris. It however, refuses to be pulled inside the night clubs and couture shows. All artists pictured in the book are all-work-little-hype and don't light joints or snort lines which is refreshing to modern readers who have witnessed the narcotic saturation of creative professions.

I was a little put off by the lack of a timeline in the plot. Buck only mentions that Susan marries at 20, has been married for four years at a point, John is six and in Paris when he starts school, but no more than that. I guess she is 34-38 at the time the novel finishes.

This Proud Heart is not very well remembered, perhaps because its writing style is too smooth, too conflict-free to have drawn critical attention. But the book is an achievement. I am glad to have come across it. In modern context This Proud Heart corroborates Zadie Smith's statement that a woman need not sacrifice childbirth in her pursuit of creative realization. It also bashes what Zadie said because Susan, although a dutiful mother is always emotionally immiscible from her children.

Peggy says

It was a little strange but I persevered and finally got through it. An interesting story overall but still rather odd.

Amina says

"Mais le bonheur d'une vie compte et on ne l'obtient qu'en sachant ce qu'on veut faire et si on en est capables."

J'ai toujours appréhendé ce livre t je ne sais toujours pas pourquoi... Ce n'est qu'au cours du 2015 reading challenge "a book that your mum loves" que j'ai enfin décidé de le lire et pour être honnête, je ne le regrette pas..

Susan Gaylord, jeune, belle mais surtout talentueuse, fait partie de ces rares sculpteurs qui travaille à l'instinct.. Pour se retrouver, elle va passer par maintes épreuves dans sa vie, son don, la façon dont tout le monde la traite parce qu'elle est trop différente des autres femmes, elle perd son mari, quitte son pays pour Paris avec deux enfants et une nounou qui dépendent totalement d'elle, sans aucune assurance que sa confiance en ses capacités, elle rencontre Blake, un amour passionnel, le marbre, sa raison de vivre, son développement, ses hauts et bas, la mort de son père, son exposition, la tournure que prendra sa vie... Un très beau roman, riche en expériences et en sentiments, à ne pas rater..

Emily says

The book started out slow but then I totally got into it and it got a little personal and made me think about my life and the choices I've made to get where I am today. And what if I'd done something different? I'm happy to be where I am by the way. It is a detailed story of a strong woman, making choices for herself along the way.

Jeannie says

Another good book

I've read so many of Pearl S Bucks books, and the only commonality is the depth to which she is capable of seeing into the souls of the character she creates. She can describe a man's feelings and viewpoint as well as a woman's, which I think is her long lived appeal. "This Proud Heart" is about a young woman trying to fulfill her artistic desires and still be what society expects of her. That's not so hard to do in this day and age, but In

the 30's and 40's it was. It also makes a good story, which I enjoyed reading.

Kieraanne says

A rather abrupt ending to a frantic book. Sue, the main character, lived her life at a breakneck pace with plans to have and do everything, and the book certainly reflected that almost manic storyline. As such, it was somewhat exhausting to read as you would begin only to look up and find hours had passed by as there were never any "natural" stopping spots. Sue made me remember all the things I've ever wanted to do with my life and ponder if having kids really was a "waste" as people kept telling her. This wasn't a feeling I particularly enjoyed having, so it will be nice to get back to my real life and remember the conscious decisions I have made to get to this point. I really disliked her second husband and who she became while she was with him. I think her dismissal of her children during this time probably leant itself to permanently damaging her relationship with her daughter, who will no doubt hate and blame her for years following the ending of the story. Although, in a lot of ways, Marcia was a lot like Mary in personality, so maybe it was inevitable. While I enjoyed the story, this was not what I would call a "comfortable" book by any means, though I did enjoy and relate to it more than Buck's more well known novel, The Good Earth.

Medea says

Not a book for everyone. I stumbled onto it while reading through all of Buck's works. It starts out a little bland, but as an entity...it became the story of my life. It's character made choices for the same reasons as I had and it provided insight that I was not alone.

Pamela Geroni says

Link alla video recensione♥?: <https://youtu.be/jzU9qgxDQu4>

Juli Hoffman says

A Timeless Story of an Artist

I had a difficult time deciding on a review. The story flows strangely, from scene to scene, without pause. The style of writing was hard to follow until I became accustomed to it.

On the one hand, I felt as though this story was told in an honest way, showing character flaws and all. On the other hand, the characters in this book were seldom very likeable. Most of the characters were rather selfish, and yet I suppose that is where the story's honesty stemmed from. For the most part, the women in this book are strong, cold, like the marble carved by the protagonist. And yet...there is a powerful message that flows throughout this book, a message that says in actions, be true to yourself and your dreams. I didn't always agree with the protagonist's actions. Sometimes she seemed a little too perfect, a Martha Stewart type. However, she put herself fully in everything she did until she moved on to something else, the next project. No whiny angst. No regret. If her project was to be wife and mother, she played her role to perfection, almost

to the point of performance art. But through it all, her actions are calculated. She never seems to act through her heart. Her motivation comes from somewhere else. The protagonist is her own person. In retrospect, the men in her life seem to want to conquer this independent spirit, but our protagonist is rarely changed and remains herself. She is mostly oblivious to the petty games people play. She has no time for them, too busy living her life while it is here. This is not a book about a woman setting out to conquer the artistic world. No, this is story about a woman being true to the way she was created. She is hard and cold, but her personality is steady, and, kind, and often misunderstood.
