



Black Olives

Martha Todd Dudman

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I turn my head and stare up at the roof of the truck cab. He has no idea I'm here, and I don't know where he's going.

Upon a chance sighting of her ex-boyfriend, Virginia does something most of us have only dreamed of. Unseen, she jumps into the back of his Jeep, and remains hidden all day, observing the man she once loved. She's compelled to complete her unfinished portrait of their breakup, and relive the magical thinking of their romance.

I knew him by heart for ten years and he me, Virginia reflects. And now, only nine months later, I know nothing at all.

The novel unfolds over the course of one day, ping-ponging between Virginia's fear of discovery and the illicit thrill of "breaking and entering" into the life of her former lover.

Will she finally confront him, as she's longed to do since they parted? Will she slink away in defeat? Any woman who has ever lived and loved will find herself swept up in Virginia's mesmerizing journey.

Black Olives Details

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From Reader Review Black Olives for online ebook

Andrea says

Odd book. Woman happens to see her ex-boyfriend's Jeep in the grocery parking lot, finds it unlocks, and crawls in – hiding all day while watching the man she once loved. Less a novel than a therapy session wrapped in the thin veneer of a short story, this was still worth reading. As the main character reflects and replays the years she and this man spent together, she questions everything, including her own motivations and failures. The story moves towards confrontation with this man, but along the way her personal insights may sway that course. It was okay, though if anyone ever does this to me, I am braining them with my heaviest skillet and then calling the cops.

Beth says

Yuck. A self obsessed woman going on and on, mostly about herself and some about her ex boyfriend. She sneaks into his vehicle and rides around in the back, eventually arriving at his home where she sneaks in and hangs around ruminating about their past. It was awful. I can't think of a single redeeming thing to say about it. I can't believe it got published.

Kathy McC says

Small book, very short read. As a result of it's brevity the characters are somewhat one-dimensional. Relationship ends after 10 years, woman tries to find answers by hiding in back seat of man's car and seeing how he spends his day. Had potential to be a fun and insightful read, but it wasn't. I found it highly unlikely that David would not have any inkling that she was back there. Second issue was that ending was predictable. Overall, interesting premise but blah read.

Stephanie says

Despite an admonition by a friend that the book seemed a bit "stalkish"... it was enjoyable.

Who hasn't dreamed of being able to reopen a door that may have been slammed on them... in order that they may close it on their own?

The end was as I expected... really, I can't imagine it ending any other way... to keep its message of acceptance.

Dana Opperman says

Depressing story about a woman rehashing her relationship with her ex-lover of ten years. I found the main

character whiny and selfish.

Stephanie says

Very cute book for anyone who has been through a breakup... story takes place all in one day when she runs into her exboyfriend. You get thrown back and forth between her thoughts of the past and the decisions she is about to make. Wasn't a good ending. Just not what I would have done if I was faced with my ex of 10 years who cheated on me. :) lol

Kristin says

So, I thought the title was fun. Read the jacket; hmmm...interesting concept. Began to read - still interested (although slightly disconcerted to know someone might actually hide in the back of an ex's vehicle). Somewhere around the fortieth page the author reveals the main character is pushing sixty years of age! Whoa Nelly! Are you serious - an almost senior citizen (my apologies to the over fifty crowd - but, honestly! would YOU do this?) is crawling into the back of a boyfriend's car, hiding under sweaters and market bags and eating stale pretzels! This plot line suddenly went from charming - albeit a quirky charming - to downright freakish and WRONG... I began to doubt the author's state of mind (I'm certain she's a fine woman of upstanding character, but seriously folks, who in their right mind would conceive of such a thing????) I was so uncomfortable reading this book that it took me days to finish it despite the fact it is less than two hundred pages - I actually developed a nervous twitch reading this thing - felt like I had to immerse my body in Purell afterwards - just a spooky, weird, freaky read.

Jamie says

I was actually at the library to get the latest book by Augusten Burroughs and this title grabbed my attention. After reading the back cover, i knew it was meant to land in my hands. Anyone who has ever been through a bad break up can appreciate the sentiments in the book. It is more like a novella; Only 180 pages and is printed in a smaller size. I have not finished it but will by the end of the day!

Andrienne says

No matter how old you are, Black Olives will resonate. Excellent POV from the woman. Sad, but oh so true.

Susan Liston says

I found this book while sorting through some boxes, where it came from I don't remember, but I know I've read it. Had no memory of it at all, so reread it, it's quite short. And rather strange, a woman sees her ex-boyfriend at the grocery store so goes and hides in his car. He doesn't realize she's there, hardly believable,

but anyway there is no confrontation scene between them at all, which was sort of disappointing, even though she later sneaks into his house. We just get flashbacks of their relationship and breakup. It was the usual sad heartbreak stuff. Not terrible, but not memorable either, obviously, since I couldn't remember anything at all from the first reading.

Indra says

Strange little book, a quick read about a woman trying to figure out what the hell happened after a breakup. It kept me interested, since the narrator hid herself in the back of her former squeeze's car and went to his house when he wasn't home, trying to figure out what happened to a ten-year relationship that she took for granted and wasn't sure she wanted in the first place (she had turned down numerous marriage proposals from the gentleman). The writing is good, with the story told largely in flashbacks by necessity. The major players are at least in their 50s, which is refreshing, but they still suffer from the classic disease of much younger people: when you get what you want, you don't want it anymore, but you aren't entirely at ease with anyone else having it, either. Both the narrator and the ex were portrayed warts and all, so much so that it was hard to see what drew them together in the first place. The most poignant section involved the former lover's granddaughter and the narrator's bond with her that had been ripped away with the demise of the relationship; the narrator has grandchildren of her own, but they are barely acknowledged.

Grief makes people do crazy things, but I still found myself shaking my head often--law enforcement would have become involved PDQ if this were a real story, and I kept waiting for them to show up. Whether they would or not was probably what kept me reading.

Sandy says

Found this in a thrift shop, intrigued by the title and saw that it involved a middle age woman. When I started reading, at first I was dismayed by the main character's apparent weakness in her inability to get over the man who dumped her some 9 months before, but she impulsively decides to jump in and hide in the back of his unattended jeep. The story takes place in one day with lots of flashbacks, but what I liked is that it slowly uncovers (to her and to the readers surprise) the things she really didn't like about him (or being in a relationship) to begin with and the things she did in the relationship that helped to kill it. I found it a very satisfying read.

Mary says

This book is great so far. It actually takes place in only one day, which is very unique and interesting. It is about a woman who hides in her ex-boyfriend's Jeep for a day and sees life through his eyes all the while she is thinking back on their ten year relationship. This book is different from anything I have ever read before, which makes it very memorable. It is a fast read, and it is very true to relationships. Anyone who has experienced a relationship can relate to this woman's feelings, and thoughts. AAAA+ thus far.

Just finished the book and it continued to be a very good book all the way through to the end.

Knotty says

This is definitely an interesting book. It is about an older woman in her 50s who is coping with the break-up of a 10 year relationship with a man who cheats on her. She loves him, misses him, and all that jazz that makes a typical sad story. She sneaks into her ex's car and drives home with him while hiding in the back seat. She stealthily stalks him inside his home, and waits to go inside until he departs. After he leaves, she goes into the house and searches through all of his possessions. This is, in my opinion, every woman's fantasy: to invisibly stalk the old men of your life to see what happened to them and how they are doing without you. I hope I don't become this lady. Well, I know I won't become this lady since I'm not THAT crazy!

Nancy says

Sad. Tedious. Depression in place and omnipresent. Life ticks on and on and stops.
