



Early from the Dance

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Cary and Adam are best friends from opposite sides of the Killdeer, N.C., tracks. Then Jane McCrae comes into their lives like a hurricane. When Cary falls in love with her, the boy's twosome becomes a tightly knit group of three, and they make plans for their summer after high school graduation. When Cary must remain in Killdeer, Adam and Jane head off to the Outer Banks alone, where they fall under the spell of the Lost Colony Hotel and its mysterious and charming proprietors. In a summer full of bright promise and heartache, Adam's feelings for Jane force him to make a difficult choice. . .

Early from the Dance Details

Date : Published October 28th 2003 by Plume (first published 1989)

ISBN : 9780452282803

Author : David Payne

Format : Paperback 464 pages

Genre : Fiction, Romance

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From Reader Review Early from the Dance for online ebook

Ann says

I thought the writing was excellent. Unfortunately, the book is narrowly focused on the events of one summer, and their repercussions. The actions and reactions of the characters to the events seem unrealistically exaggerated and ultimately tiresome. After a while, I got tired of reading in such exquisite detail about them, and moved on.

James Digate says

I thought this book was excellent. Although I never heard of this author before and picked this book up at a library sale based on Goodreads reviews, I feel lucky that I did not miss this adventure. Great character development and details, some very specific, along with additional adventures among the characters to keep the story interesting all the time. Although basically a love story, there is so much more. I would consider this a late 20th century classic.

Kudos to the author, who is definitely a great writer.

Rick says

First read this book 20 years ago and have returned to it every five or so years.... First picked it up because of the N.C author and connection - but found it hard to put down and read it the first time in only a couple of days. Hard to put a finger on why I liked this one so much - but a great read. I've read a couple of his other books and they are good reads as well - but nothing approaching this one...

jo _ says

Early From the Dance preached a multi-faceted perspective on life, constructed through each character's philosophies, one different from the next, their personalities and beliefs rooted in their past (Faulkneresque, oh my).

Adam/A.

(I would love to find a better quote, but I was lazy with this book and didn't mark in it as much as I usually do, perhaps because I didn't find as much meaning in it as other books, though it still carries a significant message.)

"My love for Cary was a great thing,' he said, 'but my love for you was greater, Jane, and losing him was the price I had to pay for you. And the real hell of it is, I paid. I paid the fucking price, Jane, I just didn't have the strength or courage to own the thing I bought. No, life made me lose Cary, but it didn't make me lose you--that choice was mine. One act, and I've never been right since. ... because what's wrong in my life now, Jane, started then. It all goes straight back to that summer..."

'I still miss him, Jane, I'll miss him till the day I die, but last night something broke for me. I've always felt

guilty about Cary, like I was responsible for his death. I don't feel that anymore. You can't be responsible for that in someone else. Cary has to take that responsibility back. He has to carry his just like I have to carry mine" (492).

Cary

"The only way would be to change [the truth:] but you can't, because there isn't any change, and even if there was you couldn't change the truth or else it wouldn't be the truth, not the real one. But when you know the real one, right that second, time stops and you realize it was always an illusion, just a swirling that you took for change, and then you either live with it or you don't, you either close your eyes or you go down in the basement and you look at it--I have" (483).

Jane

"As I climbed back in my car, my hands caked with dirt, the awful pictures stopped, there were no more questions. Let A. ask the questions, I didn't need them anymore, because I finally understood what Mama had known all along, just like Sadie did, that it takes more strength and courage *not* to ask the questions than to ask them. Now I knew it, too, and every woman does. And what men know isn't worth lug tobacco compared to it, not worth the dust down in the bottom of the bale. It's *not* asking the questions, holding the doubts in abeyance, knowing they're there and can't be put away, not finally, not ever, but choosing to live beyond them and to trust that life is good--that's what real wisdom is, as any tobacco girl will tell you" (488).

I might elaborate later. I still can't figure out why there isn't any material on this novel or David Payne. He wrote an excellent essay titled "Carrying America's Shadow," which appeared in *Oxford American*. He is, undoubtedly, a Southern writer and, as a Southerner, his work appeals to me personally.

Payne, David. *Early From the Dance*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1989. Print.

Camie says

This bittersweet coming of age tale told in masterful prose centers around a love triangle between Adam, Jane, and Cary three naive teenagers from North Carolina who start out as life long friends but who run into big trouble when they become mesmerized by a group of older glamorous people who arrive to run a flashy resort on the Outer Shore. Not much plot here, but plenty of angst, drug use, and sex, in this story of friendship, love, betrayal, and disillusionment. If one summer could be called "the dance" the characters who participate this year will find their lives forever changed when due to their own actions someone they care about deeply is to be called away early. My first read by David Payne, whose writing in the Southern tradition has been compared to Pat Conroy. I liked his writing style more here than his subject matter. 3.5 stars

Pam says

I'm going through my list of read books to attempt to review them and when this one came up, my first thought was I didn't like it. Since I read it in 2004, I went through other people's reviews in order to jog my memory so I could review it. I purchased it in 1998 but didn't read it until 2004 and I don't remember anything about it; usually once I read other's reviews, I remember at least something about the book. The majority of the reviews on Goodreads are great and people seem to love it but I'm giving it 2 stars based on

the fact that I remember nothing about it and I no longer have it on my bookshelves. A few years ago, I decided I needed to make room so I went through and got rid of books I didn't think I would ever read again or didn't care much about. This evidently was one of those.

Adam Golding says

Wouldn't mind reading this little gem again given the chance. Thank ya sis

Ginger says

Wow. Just finished the book. I wasn't able to put it down for the last 50-70 pages....and found myself skimming a lot just to find out what happened in the end. The book started out slow and strange and I didn't know where it was going. Then, it got really interesting, even though the situations were unfamiliar. (i.e. a lot of cocaine usage) But, it was a well-told story and included a lot of soul-searching of the characters. I re-read the first 30-50 pages when I was in about two-thirds of the way through the book and saw it with a different perspective. This book could be read multiple times (especially since I zipped through parts of it) and also bring up good discussions. I would rate the book a 4.5 out of 5 stars, but since that's not an option, it rounds up to 5 stars.

p.s. the funny thing is that my husband picked the book for me randomly, with the only guideline of "get a book from the North Carolina author section"....so, a nice surprise.

Steve Minor says

I got an advance copy of this book when it was new and bought another one later - I like the main two characters, A. and Jane, and Jane's mom, and A's dad, and a few of the lesser characters, but not the weirdness of Cleanth and Morgan. My favorite part these days when I reread it is A's recollection of his dog Pete and crabbing with Pete and his mom, I read this aloud to my wife just the other night.

Kathy Winstead says

This is my all time favorite book. I re-read it every year. The southern heritage, down home easy feeling of the characters, the many lessons learned, the youthful feelings and experiences, as well as the sadness of a suicide and how it affects each person is something you simply need to experience. If you can start the book with the thought that you are going to be reading total conversations between the characters, it will help you to stay on track until you get the feel of it.

Sofiawahaj says

It was good, but I thought it dragged on a bit. It could have been condensed. The characters were well portrayed, but I couldn't really relate to any of them. I guess that is why I didn't really LOVE the book because I thought the characters all made stupid mistakes or choices. Overall though, it was very well written and captivating.

Jenny says

I really liked this book. Sometimes it gets a bit too "deep", almost comically so...but over all I enjoyed the read.

Fred Forbes says

I expected to like this book more than I did since it deals with topics I usually enjoy - coming of age, great location, interesting protagonists. But while I enjoyed the descriptive power of the writing, much of the prose is dense, turgid and way overdone. If I analyzed everything I did to the extent these folks do I would never get anything done. Not only do they analyze something before they do it, they beat it to death again afterward. Reminds me of an Anne Rice novel where she once took 10 pages to describe someone walking across a room. The complexity of these thoughts goes far beyond any adolescent I ever met. Great beach read for those into "romance" and "meaning" and "endless love" but I need things to move along a bit more quickly.

Virginia says

My husband told me to read this book, as it was one of his favorites. I was dubious. I'm not a big fan of "literature" and these types of books usually bore me or make me gag or both.

I freakin LOVED this book. Loved loved loved it. I love it so much that I refused to let my husband get rid of my personal copy when we were consolidating our massive book collection to fit it into our tiny little NYC apartment.

It's beautifully written, gorgeously characterized... Just a gorgeous book. I need to re-read it.

Aimee says

This is one of my all time favorite books. I re-read it about every 3 to 4 years. It was assigned for a Psychology of Relationships class in college, and I just really enjoyed the style of writing from three different perspectives. The love triangle of best friends is a common theme, but I love the way David Payne takes it to a different level by spanning different chronological perspectives and allowing you a full understanding of each character's psychological state throughout the story. I still have my 15 year old copy if anyone wants to borrow it!

