



Mrs. Somebody Somebody

Tracy Winn

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In this astonishing debut, Tracy Winn poignantly chronicles the souls who inhabit the troubled mill town of Lowell, Massachusetts, playing out their struggles and hopes over the course of the twentieth century. Through a stunning variety of voices, Winn paints a deep and permeating portrait of the town and its people: a young millworker who dreams of marrying rich and becoming “Mrs. Somebody Somebody”; an undercover union organizer whose privileged past shapes her cause; a Korean War veteran who returns to the wife he never really got to know—and the couple’s overindulged children, who grow up to act out against their parents; a town resident who reflects on a long-lost love and the treasure he keeps close to his heart. Winn’s keen insight into class and human nature, combined with her perfect, nuanced prose, make *Mrs. Somebody Somebody* truly shine.

Mrs. Somebody Somebody Details

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Author : Tracy Winn

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From Reader Review Mrs. Somebody Somebody for online ebook

Kerstin Gunia says

Although not described as a collection of short stories, it read as such. What a sad, sad motley crüe, nothing inspiring or noteworthy, depressing at best, disturbing at most. Not my cup of tea.

MaryAnn says

I'm not a big short story fan but this book gets a B grade. The stories are linked by compelling characters who appear through out the collection in featured and minor roles. All about anybody is never revealed; the characters retained some of their mystery as normal human beings do.

The other unifying characteristic is the location, Lowell Massachusetts in the mid 20th century. I never could quite figure out if the time period was before the 2nd world war, after or sometime in the 50's. But what caught my minds eye was the working conditions in the mills which are hulking characters in the shadows of the backdrop. Once again, history, that I slept through in some class or forgot or just never entered my mind, is revealed, to me anyway, anew.

Despite historical shirt factory fires and other industrial mishaps that made the news and shocked the country, working conditions remained bad because people needed to work to eat, pay the rent, etc. Workers asking for better, safer conditions then demanding their rights were never welcomed by the paternalistic hierarchy. Unions did not peacefully evolve because they like potential members were bullied with subtle threats and unbridled physical violence.

Finally though the stories is about the people; how they grow, evolve, deal with life and death. And that is what makes reading worthwhile

Heidi Weaver says

Don't waste your time on this one.

Rebecca Winterer says

Tracy Winn's collection, with its nuanced characters, expanse of time, class and individual struggles, is an ode to Lowell, Massachusetts. This is a place filled with complicated wonderful people, who Winn will make you care about as much as she does. I read this collection years ago yet still many of the scenes and images have stayed with me. The creation of such lasting stories is not easy to do.

Shawna says

I like short stories but this was not up to my taste. I wish that the town wasn't the only constant character and

had I not read it on the back I would not have known. A timeline would have also helped. I was hoping that somehow the stories would interlock in the end but sad to say they didn't. Also, the stories didn't seem to have resolutions just cliff hangers and never were revisited. This was upsetting to me because when you spend the effort to read a story you expect an end, not the middle of a life left behind. Out of all the tales to be told there were only 3 stories that I enjoyed, the rest were painful to get through. I would not recommend this for someone who is looking for a good, short book to read.

Ann says

I gave up on this one about 2/3 of the way through it - after the story about 2 young kids getting abandoned in a bar. Each story seemed more depressing than the last.

I originally put it on my list because it is set in Lowell, Mass. where I live. At first it was fun to recognize place names in the stories, but after a while it got annoying because there were too many details that were wrong. This is fiction so it shouldn't matter, but it still raised skepticism of her understanding of the situations and the people. Also the "stories" were really more just vignettes with no real plot, character or situation development. If I am going to read about depressing events, I'd like to come away with some sympathy for the people or at least an understanding of how it could happen, otherwise the only result is feeling depressed and sad. I don't need that - so I gave up.

Jenny says

A book of short stories set in Lowell, MA (post-WWII through present day), Mrs. Somebody Somebody can be bleak and depressing. But the collection's stories are also beautifully, almost poetically, told. While I was ready to throw it down at times because of the sadness of this dying mill town (one I grew up next door to and yet barely know), I am glad I didn't. The last story was the best of the book and left me wanting--but not quite able--to give this more than three stars. It pulled the characters from the various stories together and offered a unique sort of hope for the future. Lastly, I should mention that this small book is physically beautiful and artistically reflects the stories' tone and content. Kudos to Southern Methodist University Press on this one. Great book title, too--one that's all the more appropriate by the end of the collection.

Jolina Adams says

I did not like this book. Would've liked going in to it that it was sort of a collection of stories, I might have had a different reaction to it. I was disappointed that the stories weren't tied together better. Several of the characters could've been their own novel, and I was curious what happened to some of them.

Robby says

Mrs. Somebody Somebody is a collection of stories. There are ten stories, all linked together so seamlessly that, at times, I didn't even see it until after I'd already finished and moved on to the next one. I had my favorites, of course. Each story had its pros and cons, its central conflict, and they all tied together in the end. To be honest, I loved this book.

The first story, Mrs. Somebody Somebody, is about Stella Lewis and Lucy Mattsen. They are two girls working on the mills in Lowell, Massachusetts in the late 1940s. Stella is shy and honest while Lucy is brave and confrontational. They are opposites yet they are the same and, over the course of this story, they become best friends.

It all begins when a baby falls into the canal.
And, of course, it all goes wrong.

The second story, Blue Tango, is about Charlie and Delia Burroughs. He is finally home from war. But their relationship, after months of separation, has fallen apart.
All he wants to do is put it back together.
Maybe they are two different people now.

The third story, Glass Box, is about that same couple, but this time mostly focusing on Delia. This story focuses on the mistakes she made and how, now, she has to face them. She has to come to terms with the things she has done and all it takes is one night for everything to unravel.

Gumbo Limbo, the fourth story, is about June DeLisle. She is in love with birds, with nature, and she is also in love with her husband. But she can't seem to push together these two worlds. They go on vacation and June finally realizes that they will come together in time, though time may be running out.

Smoke is a simple story about a simple boy, Franklin, Charlie and Delia's son. One morning, the morning after a party, as he waits for his parents to wake up.
This was one of my favorites.

Another Way To Make Cleopatra Cry is about a purse and a family that is torn apart in a matter of hours. Kaylene watches her world fall apart and she wonders if it was ever together. Things come to a head in the bar.

Frankie Floats is about Franklin Burroughs, the same boy who was focused on in Smoke, the same boy whose family lingers throughout this whole collection. Now he is older. Shouldn't he be wiser?
He falls off a roof of a building, locks himself in a convenience store, and tries to figure out where he went wrong.

Copper Leaves Waiting was my favorite story in the collection.
This story centers on Helen Burroughs, Frankie's younger sister. She is beautiful, smart, and she hasn't seen her brother in months. He very slowly distanced himself from his life, her family, and now he is slowly coming back in.
It never lasts.

Cantagallo is the story of Izabel, her mother, and the life that immigrants living in America have. They wait for citizenship and they wait for authorities to take them back to the place they never wanted to go and they wait for solace, closure. It comes and it doesn't.
This story broke my heart.

Luck Be A Lady, the final story in this collection, was another of my favorites. The story is told from the perspective of Robert Dubas, a dying man. He is running out of time and everything seems to lead back to that stone wall and, if I try to explain this story, I will spoil the whole collection for you. But really, everything comes together at the end of this story. Robert Dubas is the glue that holds these pages together.

Mrs. Somebody Somebody was a brilliant collection. Tracy Winn is a phenomenal writer. The descriptions in these stories were frank and sparse but imagery was unbelievably vivid. I read these stories as quickly as I could, though I had to stop quite frequently because certain things just wouldn't leave my mind.

This book raises a lot of questions about life and the things we do, subtle connections we all have with each other, how everything we do overlaps into the present from the past. Consequences and mistakes and honesty. Tracy Winn touches on so many things in 200 pages, in 10 stories, and I would highly recommend this collection.

Superb. One of the greatest things I have read in the recent months. Tracy Winn is the kind of writer that only comes along every so often. I can't wait to read her future collections, or anything she will write. I can't wait for the stories she has yet to tell. I'm already waiting.

8/10

Lauren says

Linked short stories set in Lowell, Ma from post WWII to the present. Somewhat uneven, but the first and last stories are stellar and somehow, the sum of the whole makes even the weaker stories seem stronger.

Dianah says

Mrs. Somebody Somebody by Tracy Winn was not exactly what I expected. Reading the description in the ER listing, it was not clear that the book was a series of short stories set in one small town, rather than a full length novel.

While I'm not normally a fan of short story collections, there is some worth here. The continuity of the setting and some characters included in more than one story, made the book read slightly more like a novel, but not enough to consider it one. Very few of the characters are fleshed out enough to give you the feel of a novel.

Mrs. Somebody Somebody, Frankie Floats, Blue Tango and Gumbo Limbo fall somewhere in the "ok" range - not great; not horrible. Another Way to Make Cleopatra Cry was just bad; unlikeable characters and just plain uninteresting.

The "good" includes Glass Box, Smoke, Cantogallo, Copper Leaves Waving and Luck, Be a Lady. These stories are all poignant with great character development, interesting moods and beautiful writing. I spent the time reading these stories and wishing they were the basis of a novel-length work.

On the whole, I liked this book, but not a lot. Quite telling is the fact that after chapter one, I read two different books before being able to pick this one up again to finish it.

Elise Hamilton says

Happily, I was fortunate enough to have read this book during an almost six-hour plane trip from Palm Springs to Chicago, giving me time to get almost all the way through it in one sitting. I loved this book. Each chapter is a short story and could stand on its own as a little gem. The setting is a northeastern mill town, and

the stories span a period following WW II to present day. We meet the same character in the first and last chapters, which allows us to see her personal growth and how her life progressed---creating a complete story of her life and providing a novel's cohesiveness to the book. In the chapters in between the first and last, we meet a different set of characters, but there is a connection (often loose) between them. Each chapter is narrated by the main character of that story, and Winn is astonishingly adept at speaking in those diverse voices. Winn is also able to paint stunningly well-crafted pictures of the social classes her characters inhabit. Mrs Somebody Somebody made me marvel anew at how a really good writer constructs a story. I'm going to go out on a limb and predict that this book will become a classic. Even if it doesn't, it's going on my list of favorites.

Dani Peloquin says

I heard about this book from a podcast that I listen to and put it on my "to be read" list because I was planning on visiting Lowell over the summer. Growing up in New England, I know a bit about the manufacturing history of Massachusetts and remember reading "Lyddie" when I was in middle school. However, I had shied away from reading any other literature that focused on factory or mill work. Yet, this short story collection blew me away! I would recommend it to any and every one.

The stories begin in the late 1940s with a woman who is working in the mills in Lowell, Massachusetts. Her story is typical of such tales in which one woman desires to find a man and a better life outside of the mills while another woman wants to work for better conditions in the mill. Though this story has been told numerous times before, Tracy Winn does not let the tale grow stale. The rest of the stories span from the 1940s to the present. Each gives a snapshot of the town as it changes over time.

Additionally, Winn expertly weaves all ten stories together. Characters that were briefly mentioned in one story can be the focus of an entire story later in the collection. Of course there were tales that were more interesting than others, but I never felt that the collection was unbalanced. I found that each character showed Lowell through a different lens that was telling about the town during that specific time period. Basically, I couldn't put it down!

I think that it is very safe to say that Tracy Winn is an author to watch. "Mrs. Somebody Somebody" is already being compared to "Olive Kitteridge" in which the town is the true focus of the collection. I agree with this comparison as the reader is able to see the town's growth as well as that of the characters. However, I would even go further and state that it is similar to Sherwood Anderson's "Winesburg, Ohio". Like "Winesburg, Ohio", I believe "Mrs. Somebody Somebody" will become a classic and I greatly look forward to Winn's future writings.

www.iamliteraryaddicted.blogspot.com

Linda Lipko says

This is a series of short stories about the troubled factory town of Lowell, Mass. In pre-union days the worker was grossly misused. There were long hours under terrible working conditions. Desperate for jobs, the poor of Lowell had no option other than to work in a grueling, body and mind numbing environment. Forming a union meant the loss of a job and/or a beating at the hands of goons hired by the owner.

Each short story is connected from the first chapter when we met Stella, an employee of the Hub Hosiery

mill. She is a spunky determined woman who simply dreams of finding and marrying a man to support her, ie to be Mrs. Somebody, Somebody.

The following chapters unfold as the author develops the characters who inhabit the town of Lowell, beginning in 1947 - current. We learn of the workers, the owners and their children.

The chapters contain well written tales of the rich and the poor as they struggle with their hopes, dreams and their demons.

The characters are wonderfully developed and the book is very well written.

Highly recommended.

Kimberley says

Chosen to read by my book group because it was set in Lowell, Massachusetts and supposedly interwoven stories live "Olive Kitteridge." Unfortunately, I found the stories very depressing. The town of Lowell was the constant for these stories and not the characters. Yet, other than the first story which was focused on Mill Girls, these stories could have been set in any town. While there was some connectivity between characters in the stories, the author chose to focus on how a minor character in one story next had a miserable experience. Because these were just snippets of lives and focused on the bitter not the sweet, it was difficult to connect with them.
