



Chasing Lilacs

Carla Stewart

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It is the summer of 1958, and life in the small Texas community of Graham Camp should be simple and carefree. But not for twelve-year-old Sammie Tucker. Sammie has plenty of questions about her mother's "nerve" problems. About shock treatments. About whether her mother loves her.

When her mother commits suicide and a not-so-favorite aunt arrives, Sammie has to choose who to trust with her deepest fears: Her best friend who has an opinion about everything, the mysterious kid from California whose own troubles plague him, or her round-faced neighbor with gentle advice and strong shoulders to cry on. Then there's the elderly widower who seems nice but has his own dark past.

Trusting is one thing, but accepting the truth may be the hardest thing Sammie has ever done.

Chasing Lilacs Details

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Author : Carla Stewart

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From Reader Review Chasing Lilacs for online ebook

Rel says

Take note of the name of debut author Carla Stewart, you are certain to be seeing it often in the future. Chasing Lilacs is a beautifully wrought story about Sammie, a young girl dealing with more than her fair share of pain as her mother's mental health deteriorates, her father withdraws and she becomes intrigued by troubled teen, Cly MacLemore. The story is told through Sammie's eyes, as she wrestles with confusion, guilt and fledgling love in a poignant and believable way. As Sammie tries to make sense of her mother's depression, the personality altering treatment and her eventual death you will feel her shattering pain. As she takes tentative steps towards healing, you will know real joy. A complex look at family, friendship and faith, written with simplicity and tender emotion, Chasing Lilacs is an exceptional debut novel.

Carly says

When I first started reading Chasing Lilacs it sounded like it was going to be a depressing book, and I really was not in the mood for a book like that. I honestly was not sure I could get through it. But, it is a debut novel and if you are a regular reader of my reviews you will know how I tend to prefer debut novels, so I kept reading. What kept me reading was Carla's amazing writing style, but the story just kept getting better and better and I kept getting more and more emotionally involved until I could no longer put the book down. What I found was that Chasing Lilacs is not a depressing book. Yes, there is some sadness involved in the story, but in the end there is tremendous hope that makes this a truly uplifting Christian story.

When I look back on this book, I can't help but think about what an amazing young woman Sammie is. I loved her character and I just could not wait to read more about her. I really did have a very strong emotional reaction to her character, more so than with characters in other books I have read. Sammie is going to stay with me for a while. This entire book is going to stay with me for a while. I am so thankful I did not give up on this book because I thought it was going to be depressing. I would have missed out on an amazing story that I truly fell in love with. I would have missed out on Sammie, a character I loved. Congratulations to Carla Stewart for a terrific debut novel. Chasing Lilacs is going on my all-time favorite books list and Carla will be an author I will be very anxious to read again and again and again.

Barbara Shelton says

Chasing Lilacs was the first book I won on a giveaway. I was thrilled with the story. Lilacs are my favorite flower, that stems from childhood where we had a large tall lilac tree in our yard. I also began singing when I was a child and one of the songs I sang was about a little boy and a little girl. The little boy asked the little girl for a kiss and she said she would never let him kiss her unless apples grew upon the lilac tree. By the end of the song....the last line was about the little girl tying apples on a lilac tree. Cute and very appropriate.

Carla's story was well written and I enjoyed it very much. Perhaps it's time for me to read it again!

Kerstin Gunia says

Not my cup of tea. Did not resonate with me, nor was it memorable.

Myra Johnson says

What a treat to read an advance copy of Carla Stewart's debut novel, due for release in June 2010! Carla has beautifully captured the heart of a young girl coming of age in a close-knit 1950s Texas Panhandle community. Sammie Tucker's poignant journey begins as she realizes her mother is struggling with depression. Deprived of her mother's love and attention at such a vulnerable age leaves Sammie confused and heartbroken. Her search for answers and her ultimate return to hope and faith give testimony to her courage.

Chasing Lilacs will take you back in time to the days of Edsels, penny loafers, hat boxes, and front-porch visits. Filled with evocative description, memorable characters, and depth of emotion, this is a novel not to be missed. I'll be watching for more good things to come from this outstanding author.

Janie R. says

While reading this novel I experienced many feelings and emotions. I felt very connected to the characters, so much that they seem so real to me! One minute, I was sad with one of them, the next I was mad, and then glad. I really liked Sammie's character—she had lots of ups and downs, but she dealt with them. I think the fact that she hung on to her faith in God, helped her to deal with all the trauma coming into her life—she never gave up on herself, and she never gave up on the Lord.

I liked that this novel took place during the 50's. It brought back memories of past times.

I enjoyed reading this book so much, that now I am going to have to read other books by Carla Stewart!

Sarah Sundin says

Breathe in the scent of *Chasing Lilacs*—nostalgic, yet fresh and real. Carla Stewart has a delicious way with words, and her characters and story are gripping and touching. This is a book to share with friends over coffee and dessert. But your friends will have to buy their own copies because you won't want to let go of yours.

Gina Holmes says

Lovely, heart warming, thoughtful coming of age story. Highly recommend it.

Maureen Mullis says

A beautiful book. Carla Stewart is an amazing, sensitive writer with a pitch perfect voice. Her protagonist, Sammie, is a 12-year-old girl in 1958 Texas. She evocatively brings you into her world and you learn to care, really care about these characters. I finished this book with a lump in my throat and a desire to know what there were up to now. Highly recommend!

Catherine Richmond says

Were the '50s a simpler time? There is no simple time to go through adolescence, Sammie learns. Her mother struggles with mental illness. Her best friend is trying out for cheerleading and going boy-crazy. The new kid in town ignites strange feelings in her. Carla Stewart brings factory town, Graham Camp, and the summer of 1958, to life with an excellent balance of humor and drama.

LORI CASWELL says

Set in 1958, in Graham Camp, Texas, a small "town" set up for the workers of the local petroleum company. Life should be good but young Sammie Tucker doesn't understand her mother's "nerve problems" or why her mother rarely gets out of bed or lives in her housecoat. When her mother is sent away for shock treatments this twelve year old life changes forever.

She doesn't know who she can trust, who she can talk to or how to deal with all the feelings she is having. Her best friend "knows" and has an opinion on everything. A new boy moves to town from California but has a lot of his own baggage. The woman next door is always there for Sammie with a hug and there is an older man that is very understanding but he has some secrets of his own. One of Sammie's teachers tries to get her to open up but Sammie doesn't know much she can really share. She does know that her aunt is up to no good and Sammie doesn't not trust her at all.

She questions her mother's love and while dealing with all the normal adolescent growing issues she has to face some very adult things that no child should have to deal with.

When I first started reading this book I thought it was a young adult coming-of age story. Well before the end of the first chapter I knew I was wrong about that. This is a story with a real adult issue, depression, seen through the eyes of a wonderful twelve year old. Back in the 50's it was called "nerve problems" and shock treatments with horrendous side effects were the treatment.

Carla Stewart has written a heart breaking and heart warming novel that will stick with you long past the final word. It is so well written you feel invested in Sammie's life immediately and find yourself wishing you could climb into the pages and help her through the rocky journey she is taking.

This is marketed as Christian Fiction but it has a very subtle Christian references so if that type of fiction is not your genre don't let it keep you from reading this wonderful story. Take some time to stop and smell the lilacs.

This is definitely an author to watch, she has a voice that tells tough stories with passion. I can't wait to read her next novel Broken Wings. Find out more at Carla's web page.

Disclosure of Material Connection: I received this book free from Faith Words, Hachette Book Group, in

exchange for an honest review. The opinions stated are entirely my own. I am stating this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission 16 CFR part 255. "Guides Concerning Use of Endorsement and Testimonials in Advertising"

Michelle says

I read this book from cover to cover in one day. Chasing Lilacs is a wonderful coming of age story about a girl learning to cope with so many things in life that she didn't understand...one being why her mother would take her own life, and the other wondering if her mother ever really loved her at all. As Sammie explores the issues her mother struggled with, she starts working through emotional challenges of her own. To make matters worse, her mother's sister moves in and tries to take over their home, which Sammie obviously resents. The endearing relationship Sammie had with Slim and with her boyfriend Cly were delightful to read about and were some of my favorite scenes.

I enjoyed the setting and the many things that were classic to that time period, like the kids drinking Ovaltine. The way treatment for depression was described totally fit the time period they were in, too. Because of the details that gave the story an authentic 50s feel, I found myself totally engrossed in Sammie's world. The characters' troubles and heartache seemed real, as did their self-discovery and growth resulting from their pain. The characters were complex, making this novel a delightful read for me. I really felt bad for Sammie's father, and worried that he would make some wrong choices, too. In many ways this story reminded me of Mary DeMuth's *Watching the Tree Limbs* because it had similar themes and depth to it. Great debut novel!

Michelle says

Carla Stewart has written an excellent debut novel! Carla writes in such a way that the characters and setting come to life, making you feel like you've been transported to Texas in 1958. Her writing is exceptional, so much so, that I could not put the book down. I finished it in two days!

There were moments when I laughed, moments when I cried, and moments when my heart felt like it was being torn in two right along with Sammie.

I'm not the most eloquent book reviewer, but I can tell you that I give this book my highest recommendations! It's beautifully written, and a story that will stick with me for a very long time.

I certainly look forward to reading future works by Carla Stewart!

Annie Riley says

The simplicity of life in the 1950s really wasn't as simple as it may seem to those of us who didn't live during that time. That generation didn't have many of the distractions we deal with now, but people were the same as they are now, each with his own secret that adds to the person that he is. And despite a person's secrets, God is still in control. This is what I learned from seeing Sammie's story unfold through her own eyes.

Written in a voice that spoke to my heart, this novel pulled me in straight away. I so enjoyed learning about what life was like in the 1950s, and the characters instantly became alive in my mind--so much so, in fact, that I wish I could meet them. I felt their smiles, their tears, their frustrations... They became friends that I will definitely revisit. (And I want a sequel so I can find out what happens next in their lives!)

Well done, Miss Carla! May God continue to bless your writing!

Rachel says

This was a delightful book. I love literary with a young protagonist. Stewart does a great job of drawing us into Samantha's world and setting. If you like "A Tree Grows In Brooklyn" or "Welcome to Fred" by Brad Whittington, you'll enjoy Chasing Lilacs.

I recommend!
