



Last Light over Carolina

Mary Alice Monroe

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Every woman in the sultry South Carolina low country knows the unspoken fear that clutches the heart every time her man sets out to sea. Now, that fear has become a terrible reality for Carolina Morrison. Her husband, shrimp boat captain Bud Morrison, is lost and alone somewhere in the vast Atlantic fishing grounds, with a storm gathering and last light falling. Over the course of one terrifying, illuminating day, Carolina looks back across thirty years of love and loss, joy and sorrow: How she rejected a well-to-do upbringing to marry Bud and embrace his extraordinary lifestyle by the sea . . . how hard times and loneliness have driven them apart . . . and how, with one mistake, she may have shattered their once-unbreakable bond forever. While their the close-knit community rallies together to search for one of its own, Carolina knows their love must somehow call him home, across miles of rough water and unspeakable memories.

New York Times bestselling author Mary Alice Monroe explores a vanishing feature of the southern coastline, the mysterious yet time-honored shrimping culture, in a compelling tale of a strong woman struggling to prove that love is a light that never dies.

Last Light over Carolina Details

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From Reader Review Last Light over Carolina for online ebook

Allison says

I couldn't get in to this book at all, and I came to really dislike the character of Bud. He seemed like such an ass in this book, I couldn't even feel sorry for him. It takes place in one day, with Bud and Carolina going back and forth between the present day and their memories from the past, it was all really boring.

Nely says

Bud and Carolina Morrison have been married for well over 30 years. They reside in the small coastal town of McClellanville, South Carolina where Bud captains the Miss Carolina - his shrimping boat. Although being a shrimper is not the easiest of lives (long, hard-working days) - it is something that he would not give up for the world. Like any marriage - Bud and Carolina's has not been an easy one they have definitely had their share of bumpy roads, but they have found a way to overcome these obstacles and have held strong to their lives together.

The story takes place in the course and scope of one day. Bud wakes up that morning well before dawn and heads out for the day's catch. Once his ship is ready to sail out and after waiting for his deckhand, who is late, he decides to head out on his own - not an easy thing for one man to do (and definitely not for one well into his sixties now). Due to bad weather and an accident at sea Bud is missing causing Carolina's nightmares to become a reality. Most of the day Carolina has had a dreadful feeling in her stomach... she feels as if something is wrong but just can't pinpoint what it is.

While Bud is at sea and Carolina runs around doing her daily errands, we slip back and forth between flashbacks of their lives together. The realities of being a shrimper and a shrimper's wife, how they first met, making a home, having a baby, the destruction of Hurricane Hugo, long separations (if the shrimp don't come to you, you must go to where the shrimp is), and how the local shrimping market is being affected by foreign shrimp being used at much lower rates. Prepare to be taken on a roller coaster journey through the lives of two people as they come to realize how precious life really is and how important they really are to one another.

I really enjoy character driven novels like this. The flashbacks are told in a way where you get both sides of the story which give these characters a depth that you feel as if you know them and you can't help but fall in love with them (flaws and all). I love that you learn so much about shrimping... and I could even relate somewhat to Carolina's feelings - since my grandfather was a fisherman (back in the day). I remember the nights that my grandmother stayed up waiting for him or the days that went by while she waited by the phone for that call from a dock somewhere just to let her know that he was okay. The writing is superb - you can almost feel the Southern twang while reading it. This was a beautiful and poignant story about life, love and hope that I honestly loved and highly recommend.

Jennifer Defoy says

After reading the description I thought this book would be a lot like The Perfect Storm. I was wrong. It was a great story and a truly touching and emotional book.

While the story's main plot revolves around Bud and the perilous situation he is in there is so much more to this one. As Bud and Carolina go through their day they recall memories from their past. Not all of them are good, but they all show how life can take it's toll on a marriage. How just loving someone may not always be enough and how the heart works in mysterious ways.

The writing was great. Mary Alice Monroe did a great job capturing the dialect and portraying it in her writing. The two main characters are very well developed and the secondary characters aren't just two dimensional. The flashbacks were done perfectly and they didn't make the story feel choppy.

Even at almost 400 pages it didn't really take me that long to read. The story keeps you connected and wanting to know more. This one was really good, I'm adding her last one to my To Read list!

Cheryl says

I really, really loved this book. Maybe it was because I read it shortly after finishing "The Angel's Game", which I found to be difficult and tedious, but this quick and easy read appealed to me. I felt a close kinship with the 50-something main characters, and truly appreciated the perspective on what it takes to keep a marriage of over 30 years going strong. More than anything, I appreciated the thought that marriages can take some pretty hard knocks and still survive. Add to all of this a fascinating look into the modern-day shrimping business, and you have a great book. Highly recommend it for married folks, and for people interested in the heart of true low-country living in South Carolina.

Mary Thomas says

Fast, easy read. Interesting was the focus of lives of the two main people, perspectives were from each of them, reviewing current as well as past events in thier lives.

The book moved from current to past and was an interesting perspective of long married people and how lives come together, drift apart and sometimes, what it takes to "put it back together".

Low country, as usual is interesting and evokes sights, sounds and smells of the area. A good summer read!

Barry Bridges says

Well done, solid storytelling. The reader can feel the weight of history in each of the character's actions. I doubt the shrimping industry is as glamorous as Bud makes it out to be, but it is an honorable profession of hard working people, dedicated to feeding us pleasurable meals. It is nice to see a glimpse into the life and better appreciate the sacrifice made for us consumers.

Susannah Carleton says

3 1/2 stars. Good book about an older couple in their fifties, with flashbacks remembering key points, both good and bad, in their married lives. They have overcome difficulties before. Now, with his life possibly on the line, will they be able to do so again?

Pamela says

There are night-and-day differences between love stories and romance novels. A Love story may stem from physical attraction, but it builds upon relational foundations of faith, hope, trust, integrity, commitment, and communication with ever increasing maturity and depth. Whereas a romance novel sparks hot-and-heavy with physical attraction (its primary focus: physical conquest coupling) and pays little attention to character depth or foundational import or believability.

To each their own. There's a book out there for everyone's tastes. As for me, I prefer the depth and complexities of a morally attuned relationship novel over illicit sexcapades or fairy-tale romances. In today's world, however, where morals and ethics aren't highly regarded, an upright love story, sans saccharine and fluff, is hard to find.

"Even the best marriages have bad patches . . . The difference comes in whether or not you can forgive and move on. No matter if it's his fault or yours. Because at the root of forgiveness is love. Pure and simple. You either love him or you don't."

Mary Alice Monroe totally wowed me! "The Last Light Over Carolina" was everything I hoped it would be: A story of a tenured marriage wrought with highs and lows, joys and sorrows, economic struggles, communication breakdowns, commitment challenges.... Somehow through it all, the Morrison's are one of the few "shrimping" couples who have survived. Then one fateful day at sea, a storm threatens to rip apart their marital vows like never before. Is this the crisis that will sink them, or save them?

"The skies answered in a low, grumbling thunder. He squinted and saw a fleet of clouds the color of gunmetal moving closer. The wind was picking up, too, whistling through the rigging. White tips crested the choppy waves. It was a fast moving front and would be here soon . . ."

Well-developed characters; unique regional environment and culture; believability; creative liberty integrity; moral/ethical emphases; an undercurrent of suspense; smooth simplistic delivery; "Last Light Over Carolina" is a morally-sound relationship story to live, love, and savor. Wonderful! And having spent quite a bit of vacation time on South Carolina's coast it added bonus delight. I'm looking forward to reading more Mary Alice Monroe novels when I'm in the mood for something soft and fulfilling.

Four - shrimp-trawling, marital-mending - lovely stars.

Tattered Cover Book Store says

Jackie says:

This new novel by the author of Time Is A River takes us to the coast of South Carolina and into the world of the shrimping industry, hit hard by the current economy and imports of foreign shrimp to American markets. It's the story of Bud and Carolina, whose decades of marriage is on shaky ground. It's also the story of a down on its luck town who, when emergency strikes, pulls together and takes care of its own while

forgetting all the rivalries and resentments and worries that generally plague them. The story moves back and forth between the present and scenes from Bud and Carolina's past, giving depth and background to the characters to this well told story.

Unchain Yourself! Please look for this great book at your local independent book store. There is a store finder at indiebound.org.

Margaret says

I have loved all of this author's book. Her characters are so well developed and her skill in bringing the South to life lets you smell the saltwater. The book takes in one day of the life of Bud and Carolina a couple whose 30 year marriage is floundering. Flashbacks tell how they got to this sad state. A story of love and forgiveness.

Gail says

This was my introduction to MAM and I say WOW! I love the Low Country of SC and want to move there. This story took me there with sound and smell and everything! I felt like I knew the characters as well as the place. Ms. Monroe is a master storyteller. I can't wait for more.

Chris says

Wow! That was a great book and so different from others I have read. I learned a lot about "Shrimpers" and the shrimping culture. What a rough life, but I appreciate, praise & applaud them for all their hard work that produces such a delicious delicacy for the rest of us.

In addition to the shrimping lesson I learned...I loved the relationship story Mary Alice told in this novel about Bud and Carolina...amazing!

Jackie says

This new novel by the author of Time Is A River takes us to the coast of South Carolina and into the world of the shrimping industry, hit hard by the current economy and imports of foreign shrimp to American markets. It's the story of Bud and Carolina, whose decades of marriage is on shaky ground. It's also the story of a down on its luck town who, when emergency strikes, pulls together and takes care of its own while forgetting all the rivalries and resentments and worries that generally plague them. The story moves back and forth between the present and scenes from Bud and Carolina's past, giving depth and background to the characters to this well told story.

Peggy says

I really liked this book about the Morrison family and their tiny town, McClellan, South Carolina. Progress is coming to the town, things are changing. Not many years ago, there were many shrimp boats tied up to the dock, but now only the diehard, traditional families still shrimp.

The Morrisons, Bud and Carolina, their daughter, Lizzie and her son live together and struggle to make a living. Bud has his shrimp boat, their daughter works at a local diner and Carolina runs the house. Bud works hard to keep the family's heads above water but it seems the shrimp are not nearly as plentiful as in the past.

One day, when Bud's helper, Pee Dee is a no show, he takes the boat out by himself. As he starts the winch up, his hand slips in and he is caught and can not free himself. As he struggles to keep a tourniquit tight, the memories of days past flash by.

Can his family figure out where he is and can they come to his rescue in time?

Sandy says

Mary Alice Monroe succeeded in plopping me down right in the middle of the South Carolina Low Country and its shrimpers. The structure of the story hangs on one fateful day in the life of shrimper Bud Morrison. He makes the decision to head out on his own after his friend and deckhand doesn't show up in the morning. As resulting events progress, the story of a marriage, a town and an industry in trouble emerges.

It took a while for the characters to work their way into my literary heart but as their stories revealed their complexity and human frailties, I became more and more involved in their lives and what would happen to them as they faced their guilt, their jealousies, and what it means to forgive.
