



Title: A Simple Thing

Author: Kathleen McCleary

Description:

When Susannah Delaney decides her over-scheduled East Coast kids have had enough, she takes them to remote and rustic Sounder Island to live for a year. She hopes their perfect, simple life on the island with no electricity, no internet, and a one-room schoolhouse will show her children the truth about what is really important. There she meets Betty Pavalak, who has come to Sounder for her own reasons. Betty and Susannah both harbor secrets that have haunted their lives. Susannah soon discovers that a simpler life doesn't mean love and family are any simpler. But she can't begin to imagine how Sounder and Betty will change her forever.

Reviews

Booklist:

A SIMPLE THING is a careful examination of friendship, marriage, and parenting; the choices we all face; and the battle so often waged between love and responsibility.

San Francisco Book Review (five stars):

I genuinely enjoyed this novel, in no small part because of the fantastic characters that McCleary created. In fact, one character in particular, Barefoot Jacobsen, will stay with me long after other details of the story have faded. I also enjoyed the fact that, although the story of the thirty-something woman facing her past has been told before, I could not predict how this novel would end. *A Simple Thing* is an engaging read which is sure to please.

Examiner.com:

An intricate and moving novel that will instill readers with hope, courage, and faith.

Marisa de los Santos, author of *Falling Together*:

There is so much to love about A SIMPLE THING: the way it transports you to another world; its delicate explorations of guilt and forgiveness; its lovely prose. But what I treasure most are its characters, especially Susannah, a wife, mother, and friend I recognized, with all of her bravery and fear, her deep confusion and clear, fierce love.

Sara's Organized Chaos:

First off, you can tell a lot of heart went into this book. I really love reading a book that obviously had a lot of love, care, and thought put into it because it just makes it that much better.

I will have to say--I really loved the ending. I felt like every character got the closure that they needed, story lines were wrapped up nicely and everything comes full circle. I have to say though that my favorite part of the book is Betty's story and Barefoot, another islander. What a great story with an ending that I have my own take on. But it's a really good book that is a fast read and it might make you think about what would you do if you were in Susannah's shoes.

BookLoons:

Written with insight and compassion, A SIMPLE THING by Kathleen McCleary is a good read, great for summer beach reading.

BookNAround:

This is a novel of not just survival but of coming through hardships stronger than before. It is about learning to let go when necessary and to let love and trust carry the day, even if doing so is one of the hardest things ever. This novel of two women trying to make the right and best life they can for those they love is a quick and pleasing read.

Jenn's Bookshelves (Pick of the Month):

A SIMPLE THING is an incredibly endearing and heartwarming story not only about a mother's love but coming to terms with one's own past.

I guarantee that readers of all types -- single or married, with children or without -- will form a connection with this novel. Highly recommended.

Litstack:

McCleary is an adept writer who handles a number of tricky literary hurdles. Flashbacks can be treacherous for writers, as they require the reader to change gears, often disrupting the novel's flow. However, McCleary's writing style is straight forward and fluid and by creating a past for her characters which is as substantial as their current circumstances, the novel traverses the time changes seamlessly.

A SIMPLE THING is a great read for anyone who has questioned their ability and sanity in raising children, or anyone looking for a well written story. Be sure to block a generous amount of time for yourself, as McCleary's latest is one that is tough to put down.

librarycrystal:

If you love women's fiction or anything about motherhood, you will not want to miss this novel. It's also a GREAT vacation read, especially if you are "roughing" it.

S. Krishna's Books:

A SIMPLE THING is a novel that has many facets and a simple and clear main truth: it's important to forgive and to let go.

This is a character driven novel, and McCleary does a wonderful job making her characters three-dimensional. They aren't perfect, but they're very realistic.

McCleary's novel has a lot going on in it (though it never feels cramped or jumbled), but it's still an easy, enjoyable read. Book clubs should definitely consider this book, as it has a lot of issues jam-packed into its small package.

The Review Broads:

If you are looking for a sweet and sanguine novel, with in depth characters that sneak into your heart while you are not looking, take a peek at A SIMPLE THING. A SIMPLE THING rocks you gently as it spins its tale of Susannah Delaney and Betty Pavalak, two very different but caring mothers as they seek a safe sanctuary for themselves and their children. Beautifully written, great plot, and just one of those feel happy after reading I wish it lasted longer good books!

A novel profound in its connections to marriage, children, love, parenting and forgiveness, McCleary never becomes pedantic or boring. This is a lovely novel, full of depth in its characters and the problems we all face as parents, and how we deal with teenage angst. A SIMPLE THING is a simple novel with a big bang. A SIMPLE THING swings with the tide as musical and harmonic as the ocean. A very good read.

A Worn Path:

McCleary has written two wonderful, woman-centered novels. A *SIMPLE THING* will transport you to a different way of American life, delight you with its setting, and engage you in the trials of its well-rounded characters.

Chaotic Compendiums:

A *Simple Thing* did not disappoint. A good read with issues of anxiety, mourning, death, learning to trust, marriages ending or renewing, a new awareness of self threaded throughout. I loved that there were two stories here -- that of Susannah and of Betty. The friendship that develops between the two women in the book and the ways their stories intertwined really works for the reader. They both gave me some things to think about. Highly recommended.

Mommy Uncensored:

It really puts your own thoughts in parenthood into perspective and the limits you're willing to go to protect your family. This was a great book.

Book Worm:

This was a 5 star book. The characters drew me in, and taught me a great deal in the process. The book is beautifully written and deals with loss, guilt, forgiveness while raising children and trying to hold on to a marriage. When I came to the end, I was left wanting more. Really, wanting more!

my convertible life:

I read the book in about a 24-hour period, thanks to some free time during a visit to my parents' house with the kids -- but also because it's a very readable, engaging story.

Kritters Ramblings:

Two stories build at the same time and overlap in the most interesting ways in this book that takes the reader from suburbia Northern VA to an island with no amenities off the coast of the state of Washington. Susannah is trying to save her children and herself from the past and possible future mistakes, so she grabs her two children and flees to this remote island, while Betty is nearing the end of her life and still trying to heal from the tragedies that have taken over her life.

The author blended these two stories without any confusion and gave these two women distinct characteristics that made me want to find out how they were going to overcome their personal issues. For awhile the reader was kept in the dark as to the whole story of each of these women's past, but they were revealed at just the right time.

I wanted to know where these women would end up and more importantly how they were going to get to that spot. I think this is a great book for women to read to hear how different relationships and struggles can impact a lifetime.

Rating: absolutely loved it and want a sequel

Motherfog:

Ms. McCleary is a master painter of words. She interweaves the stories of her two protagonists (a generation apart) seamlessly. Flip-flopping back and forth across the decades, we travel right along with them as they journey through self discovery, healing and forgiveness.