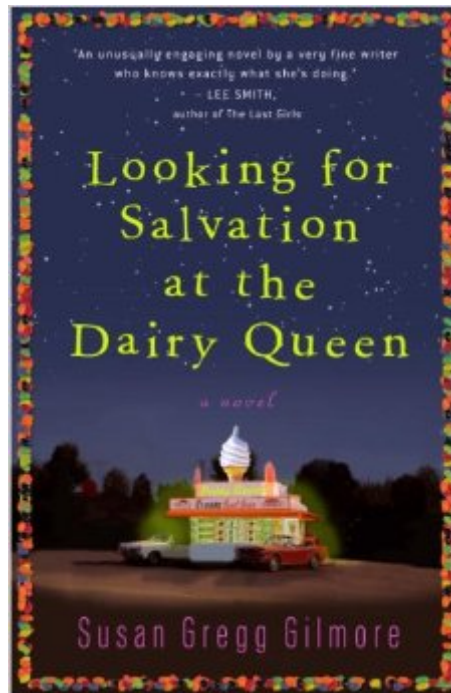


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Looking For Salvation At The Dairy Queen: A Novel



Synopsis

Sometimes you have to return to the place where you began, to arrive at the place where you belong. It's the early 1970s. The town of Ringgold, Georgia, has a population of 1,923, one traffic light, one Dairy Queen, and one Catherine Grace Cline. The daughter of Ringgold's third-generation Baptist preacher, Catherine Grace is quick-witted, more than a little stubborn, and dying to escape her small-town life. Every Saturday afternoon, she sits at the Dairy Queen, eating Dilly Bars and plotting her getaway to the big city of Atlanta. And when, with the help of a family friend, the dream becomes a reality, Catherine Grace immediately packs her bags, leaving her family and the boy she loves to claim the life she's always imagined. But before things have even begun to get off the ground in Atlanta, tragedy brings her back home. As a series of extraordinary events alters her perspective—and sweeping changes come to Ringgold itself—Catherine Grace begins to wonder if her place in the world may actually be, against all odds, right where she began.

Book Information

Paperback: 304 pages

Publisher: Broadway Books; 37253rd edition (June 9, 2009)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0307395022

ISBN-13: 978-0307395023

Product Dimensions: 5.3 x 0.7 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 8.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars See all reviews (562 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #32,215 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #16 in Books > Literature & Fiction > Genre Fiction > Small Town & Rural #306 in Books > Literature & Fiction > United States > Humor #750 in Books > Literature & Fiction > Women's Fiction > Domestic Life

Customer Reviews

Catherine Grace Cline was six years old, and her sister Martha Ann was four, when their mother drowned. Their daddy is the preacher at the Baptist church in their small Georgia town. When their father is busy, Gloria Jean, a neighbor and old friend of their mother's watches the girls. Catherine Grace loves Gloria Jean because she's the only person who will talk about her mother. Catherine Grace and Martha Ann head down to the Dairy Queen every Saturday for a Dilly Bar. That's when Catherine Grace does her dreaming and planning. She longs to get out of their small town and head

to Atlanta and can't understand why Eddie Franklin is content with his life - working at Dairy Queen in a small town. When Catherine Grace causes a commotion at a church function, her father punishes her by forbidding her to go to Dairy Queen for the rest of the summer. Gloria Jean comes up with a plan to keep the girls busy and help Catherine Grace earn money for her get-away all at the same time. After she graduates from high school and turns eighteen, Catherine Grace heads to Atlanta with her savings. She finds a job and a place to live and things are going pretty well for her when she's called home because of a family emergency. She gets some shocking news when she gets home and finds out that she may have been looking for happiness in the wrong place all along. *Looking for Salvation at the Dairy Queen* is the wonderful debut novel of Susan Gregg Gilmore. (It's hard for me to believe this is her first book!) There is so much more to this book than appears on the surface. It's about love and acceptance of friends and family. It's about having a dream and having the guts to follow it. Mostly it's about forgiveness, though.

I am a huge sucker for good Southern fiction! Even though I now live in Central, PA, I did spend the majority of my childhood living in the South; and maybe that's one of the reasons that I enjoy these types of books so much. When I read the praise for *LOOKING FOR SALVATION AT THE DAIRY QUEEN* by Susan Gregg Gilmore and saw that this novel was being compared to Fannie Flagg's books, I just knew I had to read it. I absolutely love some of Ms. Flagg's novels and especially her characters, and I can definitely say that *LOOKING FOR SALVATION AT THE DAIRY QUEEN* did not disappoint me (even given that big build-up). I treasured each and every page of this book! I read this book in almost one sitting (which you know is hard if you are a stay-at-home mother of two.) There are just so many things that I loved about this novel, but I think what I appreciated the most were the characters -- and especially Catherine Grace. This book is really a coming-of age novel about Catherine Grace growing up in the South in the 1970s, and she is just one of those characters that you can't help but fall in love with. She was smart, sassy, stubborn and even a little vulnerable; and reading about her actions both as a child and an adult were just so much fun. I loved seeing how Catherine Grace handled the various challenges in her life, and I enjoyed seeing her mature into an amazing young woman as a result of them. The supporting characters in this book were wonderful too from Catherine Grace's sister, father, and even the various citizens of Ringgold. I especially loved Catherine Grace's colorful neighbor Gloria Jean who provided the much-needed woman's touch in Catherine Grace's life.

Catherine Grace Cline wants to get the heck outta Dodge... or better said, the heck outta Ringgold,

Georgia. There is just something about this town that just makes her restless - maybe it's that it's too quiet, or too small, or that it has a very small population - where everyone is your neighbor and they all know every little thing about your life. She and her sister spend every Saturday eating Dilly Bars at the Dairy Queen and plotting their big escape. Catherine Grace lives with her father, the town's Baptist Minister, as well as her younger sister. It's been tough living without her momma, who accidentally drowned when she was young. And although she still misses her mother and has always been haunted by her passing, she has luckily found a mother figure in her mother's best friend, Gloria Jean. Gloria Jean is an inspiration to Catherine Grace. For no one in town looks, dresses or acts like Gloria Jean - with her pretty nails, always done-up hair and fancy clothes. So when the chance arrives for Catherine Grace to move out of town and live in the big city, Atlanta - working in a department store and leading the life she has always dreamed about, she has no qualms with saying good-bye to her family, friends and boyfriend. But when tragedy strikes and Catherine Grace has to make her way back home - not just is she surprised when she realizes that nothing she believed was as she thought, but she will also question whether leaving her hometown was the best thing for her, or was she where she belonged from the start. Catherine Grace's voice is so unique and innocent that you become immediately immersed in her life and that of the citizens of Ringgold from the first sentence. As you read, you almost feel as if you are reading with a Southern drawl...

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