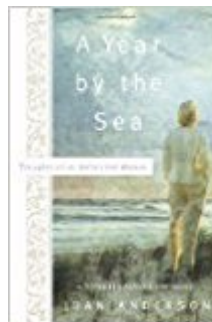




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Year By The Sea - Thoughts Of An Unfinished Woman (99) By Anderson, Joan [Paperback (2000)]



Synopsis

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Book Information

Paperback

Publisher: Broadway, Paperback(2000); 17th edition (2000)

Language: English

ASIN: B002DKI3HC

Package Dimensions: 10 x 6 x 1 inches

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars 383 customer reviews

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Customer Reviews

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I was fully prepared not to like this book. Wrapped in my own grief and pain, I have read many light and trivial books in an attempt to escape. This book grew on me. Weaving its way into my mind and soul, asking me to step outside myself and look around. In some intangible ways I was sad when I finished the story. What happened next? Did life continue to open and change for her? Were they able to relax together at last? Then I was struck by the thought that the next part of the story is about me, not them. How will I live into the moment and what will I surrender so that something may die and something may be born in me? Thank you, Joan, for opening the door.

I can see me where she was looking for the answers of my life .looking to feel free and happy . The beach and the ocean is where I feel the most relaxed I want that little cottage and everything that goes with it. I felt like I was with her in her journey. I'm on to read her next book this was my first.

I bought this book because it was made into a movie (which I've not seen). While it was easy to read, it was NOT a compelling story. The main character JOAN is a wife & mother of grown children. When her husband takes a job in another city, Joan decides to move to their cottage in Cape Cod. The story is about her journey in re-discovering herself. The book was OK but I would NOT recommend.

I would not say that I didn't enjoy reading this book, only that I came away from it with thoughts almost the opposite of what I would have expected. I am nearing 50 myself, and having raised a large family, I am interested in books that offer ideas for what happens next. I also find the idea of some time away from the busyness of my household very appealing. I am completely on board with the idea that a woman (or a man for that matter) needs to re-evaluate and even re-invent themselves at this point in life. The author has a ridiculously overwrought style- several other reviewers have mentioned that nearly every paragraph contains a metaphor meant to be extremely deep, but which is in reality an attempt to imbue the most mundane of thoughts with cosmic metaphysical import. I found upsetting the complete lack of respect and compassion that she has for her husband of many years- and while she keeps claiming that she has been a devoted and self sacrificing wife and mother, it is her obsession with her own thoughts and feelings that comes across most clearly. You get a more than a glimpse of her true character, and I pity her daughters-in-law- her desire to control and know the details of her sons' lives is disturbing. Most disturbing to me was the older woman- Joan Erickson- who miraculously appears in her life in this semi- deserted seaside town. The woman may be another metaphor, this time for a wiser and more mature Joan Anderson, but I believe she is supposed to be a tangible person, and as such is very unbelievable. Pearls of wisdom fairly drip every time she opens her mouth- most of them as shallow and forced as the rest of the dialogue in the book. As a fiber artist I have to say that the dialogue between them when she teaches Joan to weave is ludicrous- another overused metaphor of the threads being the threads of one's life. Please. Sometimes thread is just... thread. I came away from the book still longing for my own year (or month) by the sea, with a few insights, but mostly the feeling that I'm glad I'm nothing like the author, and very thankful for my husband, who, like the author's husband, is a really decent guy.

This was a compelling, thought provoking read. I found myself relating to the author's emotional responses and wishing I had a cottage by the sea that I could retreat to, I look forward to reading and absorbing more of Joan Anderson.

I wonder if a year was enough time for all the need of change she encountered? It was presented as so in her conclusions; yet, I wondered if more time on her own might have helped both her and her husband. :) There were several stirring moments, though, and her experiences with the seals, in the fish market, on the beach in the snow, and as a clam digger were described evocatively. Thank you, Ms. Anderson, for inviting in, the reader :). Sharing intimate thoughts seems like a challenging thing to have accomplished..

Ms. Anderson writes well, capturing phrases that remain with the reader. In any book that seems to bring personal moments public, one would perhaps do more than quibble about revelations that aren't necessarily praise worthy. A sense of estrangement between author and children in particular brings thoughts of ego fulfillment that haven't anything to do with knitting together the needs of a family. The portrayal of the husband at the end doesn't bring cheers from this reader; he seems weak and in need of some firm control. Was this what author sought through the year? Granted, writer learns of physical deprivation to a great extent; and tenuous relationships exist with the locals, but somehow at the end, one wonders if the year answered all of her questions.

This was a book I had read "every woman over 50 should read" so I was drawn to read it...especially when I found out that it was a memoir...which I love to read. It is a short read...that I didn't want to put down and related to throughout the book. Joan Anderson has a way of writing her thoughts and experiences in a way that is easy to relate to and visualize. Her writing gives thought provoking questions about our own lives...our view of self and marriage. I felt like I knew her...and wished that I had.

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