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On The Fifth Night Details

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From Reader Review On The Fifth Night for online ebook

Vicki says

I enjoyed the mysticism and the beauty of the tale. I may not have been enlightened enough to gain everything that was offered to me. It was a touching story that caused me to fluctuate in my emotions.

It certainly brought questions to my mind. Questions that I am still puzzling over even after finishing the book. It took me on quite the journey.

Patricia says

Lessons of Love

This is a book about spiritual growth and redemption. Michael Howard, the author, takes you on a spiritual quest for the meaning of life and love as seen through the eyes of the main character Mark.

Mark is married to Greta who has Hutchinson's Disease. When Greta gives birth to their daughter her disease is already quite advanced. She can't care for their child so Mark becomes a hands on dad. Within a few years Mark has to put Greta in a long term care facility.

Anne arrives for a visit with her sister. Her sister is married to Mark's brother and they live in a cottage on the same property. Anne and Mark spend time together, fall in love and begin a relationship even though he's still married. When Greta died they get married.

Mark and Anne have a mutually abusive relationship that eventually culminates in serious physical abuse. Through flashbacks we learn about the good and bad in their relationship. When things go horribly wrong Mark begins a search for redemption and the meaning of life and love.

Although I couldn't sympathize or emphasize with any of the characters I enjoyed the book. It explores a lot of facets of spirituality, especially the question of what love is. There are strong Christian themes to the book but it is not religious.

As I read I found similarities in theme to Richard Bach's Jonathan Livingston Seagull. The reader is forced to look at their life and question if they are the best person they can be. Ultimately Mark's redemption shows that through love everyone can be redeemed.

I recommend this book. It's positive message and encouragement is uplifting. It has a beautiful description of what real love is in all it's shapes and forms. On The Fifth Day will teach you not to settle for, or give, love that is less than the best.

Candy Robosky says

Can loved ones lead us to live better

This was an interesting book though it was not what I was expecting. I knew it was about the metaphysical but was not prepared for the full on explanation and journey of Mark's life and self realization. I found it difficult at times to understand some of the events that happened in the book. I did like the conclusion that love is essential and that one act should not determine who you are. I was not sure and still am not positive how I feel about Mark as a person. I do believe our loved ones are still able to communicate with us after they have left this world so I really enjoyed that aspect of the story.

I received a free copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

Rissa says

On the fifth night. 2.5??

The descriptive writing drew me but lost me almost instantly. We follow a man that loses his wife to Huntington's disease and his grief over takes him and he goes a bit crazy.

He is dealing with real life, his sanity, or lack of sanity, and it got a bit confusing.

Since we are dealing with what he believes is real and what really is the lines blur and it got confusing.

Thank you so much to Mindmark via netgalley for sending me an ARC copy of On the Fifth Night by Michael Howard. This will be released on May 30, 2016.

All opinions are my own.

Veronica Parker says

Did not finish.

Thank you Netgalley for letting me read this novel in exchange for an honest review.

Even if I stopped reading it halfway through.

I'm not reviewing in the organized format that I have picked up because I can't figure out how that organization would do this book justice. Or, at least, the first part of the book justice.

I kept some running notes from the first half of my experience reading this novel. I did this because I was so overwhelmed by the beauty of the writing, the unrelatable but oh SO relatable characters, and how intricately those characters interacted with each other. Here are some of my running thoughts throughout the first half of the book:

"The explanation of the relationships between the characters is so precise in a poetic way. It seems also autobiographical in that it is written so believably. I deeply resonate with each character written, even though I don't have the life experience to match any of them. I feel wholly connected to their experience. The author did a phenomenal job of portraying the three major characters – Anne, Greta and the narrator – through the perspective OF the narrator, and this is blowing my mind."

“This novel has a slight sense of grit lit, but it isn’t written in a southern atmosphere at all. The language and sentence structure is so darkly poetic I want to reread certain paragraphs just to get chills again. It’s reminding me to give random novels a try instead of judging them by their cover.”

“I love each character, despite their glaring personality defects. Each of the three main characters has no sense of perfection or even of likability. In most cases, Anne appears unkind and egotistical, Greta appears to be cruel and delusional, and the narrator appears to be too good at self-justification and too bad at maintaining realistic expectations. However, these are also the very traits that make me feel for each of them, because they are so, so terribly human.”

All of this fell away as soon as the main plot was made the focus, as opposed to the relationships between the characters. Which is so weird, right? But truly, I just wanted to read more and more and more about the interrelationships between the characters. As soon as the main plot came into play, about 40% through, and the focus was taken off the relationships, I got totally lost. It went from 5 stars to 1 star shortly thereafter. It got harder and harder for me to sit down and read through part two. My mind kept going elsewhere and I’d have to reread paragraphs not out of pleasure, but because I wasn’t paying enough attention the first time about.

I stopped reading at 60% because I would go three days without picking up my kindle just because I didn’t want to read this book any more. I might like to try a different book written by the author, but I can’t finish this book.

Andrew says

“On the Fifth Night” is a perfect balance between Fiction and Fable. And by this I simply mean that Howard has written a book that can be read as a breathtaking novel or as a spellbinding collection of insights into who we are as people.

The power behind “On the Fifth Night” lies in Howard’s simple and straightforward prose which forms a narrative that is starkly beautiful and compelling. His characters are so inherently believable that the book reads like a memoir. Be they flawed or magical or both, Howard’s characters leap off the page and into the reader’s mind, transporting them effortlessly between a reality, where life lessons are needed, and a sort of hyper-reality, where life lessons are learnt.

I’m making “On the Fifth Night” sound much more mystical than it is, probably because I am trying to express how powerfully this book affected me, how much it has stuck in my mind since turning the last page. The reality is that this is the story of Everyman who experiences good and bad, does good and bad, lives an Everyman life that somehow makes for a gripping story that, while dramatic, is not a particularly powerful story. But it is testimony to Howard that this book, this apparently simple fable, becomes so much more than a story. It becomes a thrilling drama, a painful past, an enlightened redemption when given life by Howard’s consummate skill as a storyteller.

This is an unusual book, but one that demands to be read and insists on being finished. Reading it is something that you owe yourself.

Annette Kinnear says

An everyday shopping centre scene that rivets you to your chair as you read... Yes I mean it! Why? Because in the book's simple little opening scenes your insides are screaming: "Yes, exactly! That's so true! Haha, that could be me!" I saw myself in many of the author's so superbly crafted scenes. Superbly crafted because they are gently written, you go there with him, start smiling at yourself, take yourself less seriously because he takes you by the hand and says, "see... do you see?" In other words, the characters are so human and believable!

On the Fifth Night is a story about an ordinary man mastering an ordinary family situation and ordinary problems. And then... life happens.

Suddenly the protagonist finds his structures of interpretation challenged. Circumstances force him to become aware of not only the seen but also the unseen, the audible and the inaudible – to become open to more of what there is!

If this makes no sense, it will when you read the book. I dare you to!

Four stars well deserved. Why not five? In the latter third the book lost my attention a little, when the author's personal philosophy came through too strongly for me. Every book has a premise and every author a message, of course, but personally I prefer more subtlety. It has a very active narrator, here and there I thought the book could have given me more show and less tell. Having said that, it is all the more remarkable and testifies to the author's writing skill that it was hard to put down. I am glad I bought it and read it and recommend it.

Julia says

Received book for free through Goodreads Giveaways - my sincere thanks to the author.

I'm not usually one for reading spiritual books, but I did enjoy On the Fifth Night.

Whilst sad at times, it was uplifting reading how Mark got through the dark times and saw the light. Turning negatives into positives and giving an insight into other forms and methods of help and treatment, also bringing attention to a disease many may not be aware of.

The characters and situations are vividly real. And the twists certainly take you by surprise.

As much as it was a spiritual journey for Mark, I believe Michael takes readers on a journey as well. Whether the reader is open or closed minded, I still found this book to be thought provoking and a touching read.

Michael, I wish you all the best for your book launch next month and thank you again for my copy. I'd like to think I have a little more colour around me now.

Robyn Gaye-Murphy says

On The Fifth Night by Michael Howard

This was an amazingly well written book filled with indepth and meaningful conversations with the great loves in his life as well as those placed there to help him reach where he needed to be. Mark also shared a wonderful closeness with son Tim and through the telling of his dreams to Mark, great insights were shared, which unwound for Mark at a later time during meditation.

Mark truly loved first wife Greta and very lovingly cared for her even when she was in a home extremely debilitated with Huntingdon's illness. Mark took Anne, his new partner to meet Greta, who then shared in a friendship only those in this situation can possibly comprehend the meaning of. Thus Mark's hardships in life were made easier by all the members of his family being closely entwined and wanting only the best for all involved.

It is a very good story of how life can become the absolute worst you could ever imagine, but can then be turned around by giving oneself permission to think outside the norm, let your thoughts flow out and come back to you in a different pattern you'd never before have thought you'd be possible of achieving. Listening to other's opinions may have you surprising yourself at the way your own ideas may change and become open to new paths or different ways of achieving your goals which you'd never before considered.

This story has been like reading a man's journal with his many daily struggles and yet the happiness he has found from them, all laid bare to be read by us the reader. Don't judge him until you have read past his misdeeds and how they came into being. There is a saying about walking a mile in another's shoes before judging that I find very fitting here. We can't know the hardships faced by others without all the facts, and maybe not even then.

This is a book that stays with you when you put it down, it was a gift to me but the review is entirely my own. Please do read it when you have a quiet time to fill. It is well worth reading.

Sian B. Claven says

The Fifth Night By Michael Howard

On the Fifth Night is the extraordinary story of a man named Mark Hanson who loses his first wife to Huntington's Disease ... and then, on a fateful day, many years later, punches his second wife in the face in a moment of madness. That moment of madness is the start of Mark's transformative journey along a path of mystical presences, unhinged reflections and surreal travels through space and time. Mark's story blurs the lines between sanity and insanity, and between life and death. It stands as an eternal testament to the glorious mystery and uncharted depths of human consciousness.

I devoured this book. Quite literally. I started it approximately 3 hours ago (from time of writing this review) and have just licked the last words off of my lips. The book had me so mesmerized that I knew; subconsciously; as I read my lips were silently forming the words that they would forever be imprinted onto my soul. This book. This amazingly; too short but powerful book. Michael brings to us the story of Mark Hanson whose experience through life does not lead to some superficial material happy ending but a deeper more resounding peace that my soul now cries for. The story, so beautiful written, flowed like the gentlest stream. Every word on every page seemed so carefully chosen to enhance my experience of this book.

Michael has given more than just a great story or a good lesson to be heeded; he has given me a piece of love that I will forever treasure.

There was not a single part of this book that I did not enjoy and I wholeheartedly recommend this book. Michael is a gifted writer who does not need to make use of typical writing techniques; plot devices or other such strategies to keep the reader hooked. If he does; it is untraceable on the pages of this beautiful tale. The Fifth night is complete - there is not a thing I would change or add or take away. I had a feeling when I first read the synopsis that this is a book I would enjoy - I did more than that.

Reviewers Note: I do not think there are words that could do this book justice! I look forward to more works by Michael Howard.

Colette Samimi says

Inspiring story of love and emotion

An inspiring love story that truly encouraged me to believe in what's possible! This was a great tale that I thoroughly enjoyed reading and highly recommend! Very intriguing!

Misfits farm says

This is the (short)story of a man's journey from the moment he hits his wife. Not the journey you might think. He starts to see the world in a different light and it changes his life in how he sees what has happened to him in the past and well as the present. This reminded me of "Jonathan Livingston Seagull" in that there is a philosophy in the tale. Nothing too deep (unless you make it so) but about how we all know that an incident can change our perspective on things and how we chose to think and act. It has times of sadness and happiness, along with Mark's "mystical" journey. Perhaps not a book for everyone, but one that makes you think and stays with you for a while afterwards. A thought provoking enjoyable read.

I voluntarily chose to read this ARC and all opinions in this review are my own and completely unbiased.

Phoenixwrising says

"On the Fifth Night" is an alluring tale of yearning and transcendence. It has the power to entice one to think long after turning the last page.

I didn't realize how well this book was written until I got one-third into it. I found the backstory in part one was a scattering of images and reflections that I could not piece together. I thought perhaps the author intended to show an accounting of an otherworldly experience that could quickly be labeled a worldly psychotic episode. Perhaps Howard is offering insights on who's to say what is real and what is not?

It was so much more! It took just one particular sentence in part two when the WOW! hit me. At that point, I couldn't put the book down. Many have posted reviews with spoilers that I need not reiterate them here.

Howard has composed a beautiful story about compassion and absolution. I was mesmerized by the realness of his characters, the situations he chose, and his straightforward way of telling this story. I walked away with a profound feeling of hope. I highly recommended this book for anyone seeking a portrayal of spiritual passage.

Shawna says

Wow. This was not what I expected. Realistic, “aha” moments, self realization...this book had it all. I love the connection between Tim and Mark. Tim retelling his dreams gave a great in-depth look to insights otherwise unknown that would later be revealed to Mark. Tim and Mark became very close from the retelling of these dreams. I found the relationship with Anna very disheartening, when Mark was already married to Greta. It was not expected. What was even equally unexpected was the friendship Anne and Greta formed. Even though Anna was in a home, their friendship bloomed.

The hardships shown in this book, from Greta’s battle with Huntingdon’s, to Mark’s daily hardships, his abuse with Anna and vice versa, dealing with his loved wife’s illness and the struggles it entailed, were real and idealized the fact that you can achieve attainable goals, if you want to achieve them. It also showed redemption and the road to new spirituality, as well as revealing life lessons.

This book was an interesting, if not mesmerizing read. It was intriguing with the life lessons, new spirituality and realistic moments of realization as to who you can be. I struggled to put it down, even to go take care of necessities. I give this book five stars because it was a book that I did not want to put down. Even though it wasn’t what was expected, it captivated me and held my attention.

I was given a copy of this book as a gift and my review is completely voluntary.

Robyn says

The Book (Kindle description)

“On The Fifth Night is the extraordinary story of a man named Mark Hanson who loses his first wife to Huntington’s disease...and then, on a fateful day, many years later, punches his second wife in the face in a moment of madness. That moment of madness is the start of Mark’s transformative journey along a path of mystical presences, unhinged reflections and surreal travels through space and time. Mark’s story blurs the lines between sanity and insanity, and between life and death. It stands as an eternal testament to the glorious mystery and uncharted depths of human consciousness”

My Thoughts

I am still unsure about how to best summarise my feelings on this book. I knew it would be a thought provoking read, but never in my wildest dreams did I expect the book-hangover that it has induced in me. I generally try to avoid spiritually themed books as often times they carry an almost preaching tone to them which gets boring and result in me feeling ineffectual as an individual. This book may be the reason I change that approach. If I am repetitive, forgive me, I’m just really excited.

I find I battle with the wishy-washy of spirituality (you know the whole schlep of everything being magically connected through love and honour) and while at times, especially towards the end, I felt that there was a real risk of Michael following suit, he didn't. While keeping characters relatable and realistic, the situations he puts them in are honest, hurtful and delightfully enlightening.

I found myself swinging between an intense dislike, then pity, then respect for each of the main characters, none of them every really become the hero or victim of the book and I appreciate that. Mark is the leading character and as his spiritual journey progressed I found myself understanding aspects of his reactions and more and more, never mind my own personal awakenings that occurred.

The tone left me forgetting this was a work of fiction. Honest to god I may as well have been sitting next to Mark as a real, living, breathing individual as he spoke about his experiences. It's engaging, its pace is fast enough to keep your attention with sufficient attention to detail which doesn't leave you feeling as though you missed out on a hint somewhere.

And as for the plot twists which were so subtly laced into the story! If you're an exclaimer-aloud when shocked or surprised, warn your loved ones and pets before picking this book up because you're gonna make a noise or two.

It's a stunning tale of love and loss, of rebirth and death, of reconnecting with oneself when it seems as though all semblance of "you" are gone.

If you're looking for a book which allows a gentle push into the direction of understanding the fine line between life and death, and how closely we align ourselves to one another without ever realizing it, read this.

"You should try just to be open, and not do anything. Just be open to anyone or anything, but don't worry when there is no connection. Some will connect and some won't. Sometimes you'll make a difference and sometimes you won't. It doesn't matter. Each life has a path, and at the end we all meet at the crossroads." -On the Fifth Night, Michael Howard
