



Nan's Story

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How can you possibly win when you are your own worst enemy? Nancy Elaine Bower (Nan to those who know her well) weathers a childhood overshadowed by her father's alcoholism and mother's martyrdom only to be thrust into an adulthood littered with landmines of self destruction. Each erratic decision she makes twists and contorts her life in unthinkable ways, until finally she's left in a crumpled heap on her mother's doorstep. It's 1960, two years later, and Nan still meets each day as if a stranger intent on doing her harm. Hiding in plain sight from the world outside, she spends most of her time trying to win back the affections of her young son while thwarting her mother's ceaseless interference. As she begins to fantasize of a life more normal, the serendipitous return of an old friend breathes a spark of hope into this possibility. Before she can allow herself to consider walking away from her past though, Nan must escape the unyielding bars of circumstance that surround her, and while she'll be required to relive her greatest nightmare in order to do so, there is no guarantee of her release.

Nan's Story Details

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From Reader Review Nan's Story for online ebook

Josephine says

Thank you First-Reads giveaways for giving me the chance to read this book! I enjoyed every pages of it and put it away wanting more. The story is captivating and the characters are credible and attaching. The story unfolds with fluidity, revealing just a little more at a time, layer after layer, keeping the reader's interest until the (moving) end. Although there is quite some back and forth through four decades, it never feels confusing. I would have liked to dig into other characters histories, such as Elsie and Charlie, and just found out the author is working on a prequel to Nan's story based on Elsie. Can't wait!

Tom Pintong says

I received this book as an advance reading copy from Goodreads. Ms. Farmer was also kind enough to include a short note in the copy I received, and autographed the copy. Some spoilers ahead, so please don't continue reading if you want to go into the book with an open mind.

Nan's Story is about the difficult life of one Nancy Elaine Bower, or Nan, from her childhood in the 1950's to the early years of adulthood. While some of the themes may be familiar (an alcoholic father, bad marriages), it's the way that they are presented and the message the book ultimately conveys that made the book so enjoyable to read. There were plot twists that I did not expect, which kept me on my toes as I raced through the book. I found myself in tears by the end, but was heartened by the thought that "you deserve to be happy." I rooted for Charlie and Nan to act on their love for one another, and hoped I could find "the one" like they did.

For me, this book was one I was glad I had read. I'm sure that anyone that likes a good story will find Nan's Story a fulfilling and thoughtful read.

Susan says

This is a lovely story. I received it just 2 days ago, and literally could not put it down. By the end of the story I was crying, learning the story of this woman's life and the things she had endured, and gained. Very well written, it reads quickly and draws you into the character's life. All I wanted to do was find out more, to read just one more page, to have just one more minute in the story. Admittedly, I'm more into sci-fi, however I was pleasantly surprised to find myself so drawn in.

Agnes (BeaderBubbe) says

Nan's Story was a long one. It jumped back and forth between what she did and what she was doing. Her entanglements in other's lives and her relationship with her family. It was slow in the beginning but something made me hang on. Was it the mixed up life Nan had? or just the fact that there was a secret somewhere in the story that I had to find out.

Will her life ever be a "happily ever after" story? Or was she doomed to be forever lost. Read this story, you wont be disappointed.....

Joanne says

I really enjoyed this book except for the cussing in a few places. If it wasn't for those sections I would have rated this a 5 star. The cussing just makes me very uncomfortable but the story was very good. It would have been even better with the cussing.

Katie Kenig says

Sometimes you read a book where the main character reaches out and grabs your heart. You think, "This person could be my friend. This person could be me." The character is real in a way that some people in books are not. They are real in a way that makes you think of your neighbour or your grandparent or your teacher at school. That's who Nan was to me.

Nan is a product of an unstable home in a stable time in history. During the idyllic fifties, she is living in a home with an angry, critical mother and an unstable, alcoholic father as well as older brothers that seem to alternately bully and caretake her. Is it any wonder that she becomes her own worst enemy? Nan sabotages much in her life, partly from entropy. It seems easier for her to just go along with the world, with what others want, rather than take a stand for her own life. And so, slowly, her world begins to crumble around her. Mistake after mistake seems to create a compound effect, until she is a shell of herself, living in her mother and stepfather's home, sometimes almost nonfunctional, and ignoring her child, CJ, who needs a mother so desperately that he has turned to his grandmother for nearly all of his emotional wants.

The first couple of chapters of this book are a little shaky, but it's very clear that the author refined her craft as she wrote, as her style evolved through the book to become much more polished. She's a good storyteller with a tale that catches hold and won't let go - unfortunately it waits til past the halfway point to give that real catch. It's worth the wait, though, as eventually it reaches the "can't put it down" stage and at that point, you're really in for an interesting ride.

I found myself really caught up in Nan's emotional traumas and turmoils. I felt for her, which is unique - to have created a character that people relate to in such an intimate way is a gift. I'm kind of surprised that a big publishing house hasn't picked this up, but since it's really "novella" size - which isn't super popular right now - I guess I shouldn't be. A nice read, touching and emotional in all the right places.

*Book received through Goodreads First Reads program

Kate says

Meh- not great. I found a lot of the language to be trite and the author had some issues with editing, spelling and syntax. The story takes place primarily in the mid-1950s, but the author seems to use a lot of language

and expressions more in keeping with current culture.

I didn't find the story to be a page-turner, but it was written in such a way that I was interested enough to finish it.

I think it's a mediocre first-time novel from a self-published author who could use a good editor and some more interesting prose.

Amanda says

[My other big issue was that I think I was supposed to sympathize with Nan. And I didn't, not at all. It irritated me that you knew in the beginning of the book that she was damaged but you didn't find out why until the end of the book. But then I realized when I finished it that it wouldn't have matte

Terri says

This book was recommended by a friend. Once I started it, I couldn't put it down. I loved the story, the characters, and familiar places being a New Englander and having visited some of the places in the book. I can't wait to read more from this author Paige Farmer as she continues with her writing. Be sure to have Kleenex nearby when you read Nan's Story! And enjoy!!!

Angie says

Such a great story and hard to put down . Loved the story being told in alternating time periods , beginning at the end of Nan's life then back and forth between her childhood and adulthood .

Theresa says

I tried to win this book on Goodreads with no luck but was fortunate enough to get it when it was free on Amazon. It took me a little bit to get the characters straight in my mind when I first started reading it but I enjoyed it. It was a quick and easy read and I became engrossed in Nan and her story.

Rosary says

It took me a little while to get into this book and I wasn't sure what I thought until halfway into it. Then, it seemed to really consume me. I would look forward to reading it and couldn't wait to see what happened next. It's a sad story about a girl who suffers a lot of hardship through her early years but in the end, I think it's a sweet story. Her family really seems to love her despite what she believes at first. Many girls find themselves undeserving of good when they think they have messed up in life but Nan takes this to the

extreme. What I enjoyed about it is how much she is actually surrounded by support and comes to realize it in the end.

Irene says

Book club choice -- author went to high school with the hostess. Interesting to meet Paige and learn the back story -- it is a work of fiction, but some of the incidents did happen to her grandmother, including finding out that the man you married/father of child was in fact still married to someone else so you have no standing.

The story is told in layers of flashbacks, starting in a hospital room at the end of life, looking back on when Nan and Charlie reconnected at her brother's wedding, and even more flashbacks to them recalling their childhood -- sounds complicated, but it was easy to follow and each recollection is well set up. Can't say this was the most exciting book I've read or that it's wonderfully well-written, but it was fun to hear everyone else's comments and hear about the author's creative process and what she might write next.

Sarah says

I received an autographed copy of Nan's Story through a Goodreads give away. Thanks for this wonderful book.

I really enjoyed this novel. Nan's life was heart breaking to read about and you can certainly see why she had such trouble getting her life together. Elsie was a great character and I truly enjoyed that the author gave us the insight into Elsie's life and let us see why she had the personality she had.

This novel show's you the many things that Nan has gone through, the various people it affected in small and major ways and that a woman can overcome so much with the love of her family.

I enjoyed the way the novel went back and forth from the present to the past to even further into the past. It showed you the circle of Nan's life, holding nothing back.

I won't give anything away about the plot but I highly recommend that you pick up a copy of this book and read it.

Susan says

Fantastic book, could NOT put it down
