



The Olive Tree

Lucinda Riley

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It is said that anyone who comes to stay at 'Pandora' for the first time will fall in love . . .

It has been twenty-four years since a young Helena spent a magical holiday in Cyprus, where she fell in love for the first time. When the now crumbling house, 'Pandora', is left to her by her godfather, she returns to spend the summer there with her family.

Yet Helena knows that the idyllic beauty of Pandora masks a web of secrets she has kept from William, her husband, and Alex, her son. At the difficult age of thirteen, Alex is torn between protecting his beloved mother, and growing up. And equally, he is desperate to learn the truth about his real father . . .

When Helena meets her childhood sweetheart by chance, a chain of events is set in motion that threatens to make her past and present collide. Both Helena and Alex know that life will never be the same, once Pandora's secrets have been revealed.

The number one international bestseller

The Olive Tree Details

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From Reader Review The Olive Tree for online ebook

Steffi says

3.5

Zu Beginn hatte ich ein paar Probleme in die Geschichte reinzufinden, aber irgendwann konnte es mich ziemlich gut unterhalten.

Die Geschichte war für mich anders als die bisherigen Bücher, die ich bisher von Lucinda Riley gelesen habe, denn die Geschichte spielt vorrangig auf einer Zeitebene mit nur kurzen Ausflügen in andere Zeiten.

Helenas Geheimnis war eine interessante, unterhaltsame und spannende Familiengeschichte, bei der ich die ganze Zeit wissen wollte was es mit dem Geheimnis auf sich hat. Dadurch lag immer eine gewisse Spannung über der Geschichte, so dass es nicht langweilig wurde.

Ein Highlight war für mich auch die Tagebucheinträge des 13-jährigen Alex. Einige seiner Sprüche und Theorien haben mich wirklich zum lachen gebracht.

Das Setting auf der Insel Zypern war ebenfalls richtig klasse eingegangen und man konnte die sommerliche Atmosphäre regelrecht spüren.

Die letzten 50 Seiten wären für meinen Geschmack nicht unbedingt notwendig gewesen, da hätte auch ein kurzer Epilog gereicht.

Negativ aufgefallen sind mir auch einige Formulierungen, die für mich sprachlich gar nicht passten und ziemlich altbacken bzw. weit entfernt vom Hochdeutschen klangen.

Nicigirl85 says

Titel: Anders als gewohnt, aber dennoch überzeugend...

Seitdem ich "Das Orchideenhaus" gelesen habe, bin ich ein Liebhaber von Lucinda Riley Romanen. Daher kam ich nicht umhin, mir auch ihr neustes Buch zuzulegen, welches allein schon durch die Optik auffällt.

In der Geschichte geht es um Helena, die seit ihrer Jugend nicht mehr auf Zypern war. Einst verliebte sie sich hier. Nun ist sie nach Jahren mit ihrer Familie dort, um Urlaub zu machen. Doch dann ziehen dunkle Wolken auf und die Vergangenheit holt sie ein. Wird ihr Geheimnis ans Licht kommen und ihr Leben auf den Kopf stellen?

Die Handlung spielt zum Großteil im Jahr 2006 und wird aus der Sicht von Sohn Alex erzählt. Dadurch wirkt der Roman völlig anders als alles, was ich bisher von der Autorin gelesen habe, da Alex eine sehr ungewöhnliche Art hat die Dinge zu betrachten, was sicher auch an seinem jugendlichen Alter liegt.

Gut gefallen haben mir die Schilderungen von Zypern. Ich war zwar noch nie dort, konnte mir aber durch die Darstellungen der Autorin alles gut vorstellen. Man hat dabei wirklich Lust selbst Urlaub zu machen.

Etwas anstrengend fand ich, dass wirklich zahlreiche Personen agieren, die man nicht immer alle auf dem

Schirm hat. Dadurch hatte ich auch das Gefühl, dass Frau Riley nicht jedem Charakter gerecht werden konnte, diesen bildhaft zu beschreiben. Zumindest nach meinem Empfinden, da mir eigentlich nur die Hauptakteure wie Alex, Helena und ihr Mann im Gedächtnis geblieben sind.

Das Geheimnis wird am Ende natürlich gelüftet. Für mich war es eine wirkliche Überraschung, denn auf diese Auflösung wäre ich nie gekommen. Ich bin mir allerdings nicht sicher, ob so etwas wirklich realistisch oder doch eher an den Haaren herbei gezogen ist.

Fazit: In meinen Augen die perfekte Urlaubslektüre. Mal ein anderer Stil der Schriftstellerin, der dennoch zu überzeugen weiß. Ich empfehle das Buch gern weiter.

Zoe says

Lighthearted, mesmerizing, and genuinely heartfelt!

The Olive Tree is an engrossing tale that reminds us that life is often a messy journey complete with smiles, tears, happiness, and heartbreak.

It is set on the idyllic island of Cyprus and takes us into the lives of two main families who on the surface seem to have it all, great relationships, beautiful houses, and good kids, but over the course of one hot summer marriages will be tested, secrets will be revealed, love will be found, love will be lost, and lives will be changed forever.

The prose is expressive, sincere, and smooth. The characters are charming, multi-layered, and alluring. And the plot is a wonderful, contemporary mix of life, love, coming-of-age, humour, family dynamics, deception, and mystery that starts in the present, takes you back 10-years in the past, and finishes when the past and present collides.

There are only a few authors that no matter the theme or size of the book their stories are always filled with magical characters I can't get enough of and stories that are so atmospheric and vivid I'm entertained, enthralled and swept away and Lucinda Riley is one of them. She has the incredible ability to take her innate knowledge of all the psychological and emotional entanglements found in nuclear families and weave them into a story you can't put down. I absolutely loved this book and will now try my hardest to patiently await her next release.

Thank you to PGC Books for providing me with a copy in exchange for an honest review.

All my reviews can be found on my blog at <http://what's better than books>.

Clara Rosell says

Bailing on page 462 of 575 in my edition.

I'm a big big big fan of Riley's The Seven Sisters series, so I'm extremely disappointed that this is my first experience with one of her standalones. I've read mixed reviews and some note that this might be one of

Riley's weakest, so I do very hope that's the case.

I really could've done without another book full of toxic masculinity and stereotypical characters. Apart from the fact that this story is predictable on every level and shouldn't be almost 600 pages long, I just couldn't take the characters anymore. I didn't need a 40 something year-old man being absurdly obsessed with and jealous about the relationship his current wife had when she was 15 (!!!), making her feel obliged to justify herself to him in the process. Every man in this book feels authorized to comment on the actions of women as if these only concern them. I didn't need the men in this book defining their wives' worth first as *wives*, then as *mothers*, and last of all, as *women*. I also didn't need female characters like Jules blaming themselves for not having been good enough wives after episodes of insanely immature and irresponsible behavior on behalf of their husbands. I didn't need an insufferable 13 year-old narrator displaying misogynistic traits who felt compelled to imagine a future in which he fully controls his current love interest's actions. *God forbid she look at another man*. A narrator who later, by the way, enters the very delicate territory of homophobia. I also didn't need so many men apologizing to each other for having stepped on their territory, and by territory, I mean their wives.

For the record, this novel does not seem to intend to denounce these types of behaviors, which are **not OK** at all.

The fact that all the men and all the women abide by these dynamics throughout the whole novel makes the characters feel flat and therefore, extremely uninteresting. A good story about past love and secrets can work just as well without the need to incorporate such toxic masculine discourses. I just couldn't finish getting through this one.

Kirsty says

Over long for what it was

Sara Bow says

War für mich bisher das schwächste Buch von Lucinda. Konnte mich leider nicht begeistern :-/

Patrizia says

Mmmhhh für mich der schwächste Roman von Riley

Als erstes muss ich sagen, dass ich ein riesen Riley Fan bin und bis jetzt jedes Buch gelesen, nein sogar verschlungen habe. Leider war es bei diesem Buch nicht so. An was es lag !??

Diese Story ist extrem kinderlastig, die Tagebucheinträge von Alex sind zwar süß und eine nette Idee aber ich vermisste die Geschichte in der Geschichte. Es ging mir zu viel um Pommes, Mami hier und Mami da ...Die bekannte Riley-Tragik fehlte irgendwie. Die Geschichte itself konnte mich nicht richtig faszinieren aber ich bin überzeugt, dass das nächste Buch wieder sehr gut wird ... es kann ja nicht jedes Buch ein Knaller sein, daher trotzdem 3 Sterne.

Meowpoff Moony says

1/5 stars

I don't know how to review this, some places it catches me and some places it just felt like...a long text of blah. I did not feel as much as i did in those other Lucinda Riley books i have read and i got the vibe that i had read this before somewhere. Somethings in the books was alike a book I've read before, and it annoyed me to the bone. It took time to finish this and well, i'm glad i finished it but i hopes it was more to the story than...well, what it showed me. Sadly it was not much happening and i do like a real kind of book, but it was boring - when the story raised itself it came down too quickly and it didn't work to save itself for me.

Emma Crowley says

Lucinda Riley is my absolute favourite author alongside Lesley Pearse. I have loved everything she has written since her first book Hothouse Flower and each subsequent book has been brilliant and has showcased the incredible writing talents that Lucinda has. I've never reviewed a book by Lucinda before I don't know why but given the opportunity to do so I jumped at the chance with this new book The Olive Tree. Lucinda is in the middle of writing her Seven Sisters series so for a second book within a year to be published is a real treat for her legions of fans and keeps us going while we await publication of The Shadow Sister in November.

This is the first time that Lucinda has stepped away from books with a big sweeping historical background or one hundred year time span (I adore these kind of books even more so when they are written by Lucinda) and instead focuses on a family holiday over one ho , long summer in Cyprus staying in a house our main female protagonist Helena has inherited from her godfather Angus. Lucinda mentions in the acknowledgements that this was a book that she first started writing 10 years ago while on a family holiday and then she left it but last year discovered a draft in her desk and decided to rework it. This was a brave step for the author to do as she has become synonymous for her historical fiction and the current series she is working on. When I pick up a book by Lucinda Riley I normally know what to expect and get swept away in the world and the cast of characters she has created. I'll be honest I was apprehensive that I wouldn't enjoy this book as much simply because it didn't have the historical element and I wasn't sure how she would approach a more modern story. Admittedly it took me a while to settle into the story as I kept looking for the flashbacks to the past entwined with solving the mystery in the present but then I began to ease into the story and really this is just as good as anything Lucinda has written before.

The Olive Tree is quite hefty at nearly 600 pages but I did read it in two sittings so absorbed did I become in the story. For once I really did feel as if I was transported from windswept Ireland to the warm, humid, languid, restless days on the island of Cyprus in the house called Pandora clearly named after the Greek legend. As Helena and her family arrive for their extended summer holiday will Pandora's box open and spill forth secrets that Helena has kept to herself for so many years for fear of causing so much upset and upheaval or will the box remain closed? Well it wouldn't have been much of a story if the lies and secrets didn't come to the surface but it is the manner in which they do so that makes this book a deeply satisfying read. Tantalising hints are dropped throughout, nothing is ever rushed as Lucinda gives her readers an overall view of the holiday and background to the characters and thoughts and actions. There are numerous

characters to introduce and initially I felt there were too many for the reader to focus on but really they soon all become important players with something to add no matter how major or minor.

The book opens in the present day as Alex returns to the Pandora after last visiting over ten years ago for what proved to be an eventful life changing summer. Alex is alone at the house but more people are due to arrive. The author sets up the story nicely describing the house itself and the surrounding countryside and gives us time to get to know Alex. You feel another momentous event is about to happen but you have no idea as to what it could be. As Alex spends the night alone he retreats to the broom cupboard sized room that he called his own during that fateful summer and here he discovers the diary he kept during that time. The diary may have languished on a shelf for ten years but once Alex starts reading it is like the years slipped away and he is back there present in that fateful summer when revelations changed everything he believed to be true.

Lucinda then takes us back to the summer of 2006 as Helena and her family arrive on the island. Helena had spent some time there with her godfather Angus but has not returned for many years. She begins to wonder despite inheriting the house is there a reason why now at this point in time everyone is gathering? Will things she has kept to herself come to light, things that will devastate those who hear what Helena has kept close to her chest for so many years? Helena was a likeable character and I thought she was a wonderful mother to Alex (who is on the cusp of becoming a teenager) as well as her two children by husband William – Immy (5) and Fred (3). She did everything for everybody else, no didn't ever enter into her vocabulary and she welcomed the many visitors to the house maybe not with open arms but with some acceptance. I wouldn't have wanted my husbands best friends family foisted on me when I am on my own personal family holiday. Sacha, Julie and their children Rupes and Viola weren't the nicest of people and I wondered were they token characters we were supposed to dislike from the outset but as I have mentioned every character needs to be kept an eye on. Even though outside appearances suggest Helena is happy with her life there was something eating away at her on the inside and the reappearance of old flame Alexis sets her mind racing even more. I have to say that Immy simply stole every scene she was in and even though she was five she had a wise yet very funny side to her that had me chuckling away to myself throughout the book. I couldn't wait to read what she would come out with next. As for Alex he seemed mysterious and I wondered what he could be hiding?

What really sets this book apart from anything else out there at the moment is Alex's diary. Entries are slotted throughout almost after each chapter and my god the writing was just amazing. I even got my phone out and took a picture of a few lines that really struck a chord with me. Even though Alex is only just entering the teenage stage of his life he has been assessed as gifted and it comes across in the writing. Everything he was witnessing, observing, feeling and partaking in was written down in such a sharp way. We really got inside Alex's head and understood his views on everything that was unfolding and it gave a really different slant to the entire story. One of the main questions Alex has amongst all the confusion flashing through his brain not to mention having to deal with the intolerable Rupes or the fact that his step sister Chloe is making an appearance is the fact that he has never known who is biological dad is. Alex feels he is inching ever closer to the truth and now is the time when Helena can't keep things secret any more. I thought this was going to be all run of the mill and turn into a bit of a cliché but Lucinda proved she is the master of suspense and twists and turns and not revealing things immediately as I thought I had it all sussed out early on. I was afraid the reveal would come to soon and where could the book possibly go then but no I couldn't have been more wrong and the truth left me open mouthed but then annoyed at the repercussions for others. I have to say Alex was my favourite character and usually it's more the female characters I identify more easily with so it's testament to the fantastic, skilful writing of the author that she made me feel every bit of Alex's pain and the unjustness of what he was discovering.

I was worried *The Olive Tree* was simply going to be the usual story of what happens when a family goes on holiday similar to that of books I had read last year by Fanny Blake and Catherine Alliott. They were only OK reads but Lucinda Riley wrote a book with such depth and substance tackling so many issues and dealing with them in a sensitive yet enthralling way so much so that towards the end I couldn't turn the pages quick enough in order to discover the final outcome. This story goes beyond a family holiday merely it is the trigger which brings characters and situations together and presents them with no other option but to confront what they have been internally battling and somehow deal with the repercussions. Past and present do collide but at some stage this needed to happen as keeping things locked away inside will just cause more hurt and pain for all involved.

This book proved to be a real treasure and I took so much from it and I am glad that I did as I would have been bitterly disappointed if this didn't live up to the remarkable back catalogue of books that I have always loved and which made Lucinda a favourite author of mine. Lucinda had already proven she can do historical fiction to an excellent standard but now she has shown more contemporary novels are quite clearly her forte too. I wouldn't hesitate to recommend *The Olive Tree* to buy and read this summer. Roll on November for the next installment in the *Seven Sisters* as I just can't get enough of the writing from Lucinda.

Laura von Eden says

Ein eher untypisches Buch für mich, aber erstens hat mich das Cover total angesprochen und ich wollte endlich mal ein Buch von Lucinda Riley lesen. Die Geschichte wird aus verschiedenen Perspektiven erzählt, man liest viel aus der Sicht des Sohnes, der zwar manchmal recht altklug erscheint, aber eben doch viele kindliche Züge hat. Anfangs hatte ich Schwierigkeiten die vielen Personen auseinander zu halten, das wurde im Laufe der Story ein wenig besser. Das Geheimnis, das im Buchtitel versprochen wird, wird tatsächlich aufgelöst, wobei ich anfangs auf einer total falschen Spur war. Das Buch ist insgesamt recht gut, ich würde es aber eher als leichte Strand- und Sommerlektüre empfehlen.

Linda K. Melzer says

A beautiful, brilliant novel.

A very satisfying read. Beautifully written with wonderful fully fleshed out characters. There are several storylines: love, sadness, deceit, suspense. All characters were woven into very satisfying conclusions. No loose ends, although I would have loved for the story to have gone on and on. I highly recommend this novel!

Helena Wildsmith says

This was a proper family saga and I really enjoyed it, even though the plot took a few tangents that are arguably pointless. The story kept me guessing and there were times, especially at the end, when I struggled to put it down. A few of the characters seemed a bit too good to be true but overall I enjoyed it and will look for more books by this author.

Debra says

For my written review, please check out the link below:
Debra's Book Cafe

Debs :-)

Monica says

An excellent contemporary fiction novel set in Cyprus. The setting was amazing and I felt like I could feel the heat and see the amazing views. What was interesting was the book was told from two different view points. One was from Helena, the ex ballet dancer who has brought her family to her childhood vacation home in Cyprus that she has just inherited from her god father. The other point of view is her son Alex who desperately wants to know who is biological dad is even though he has a step father and two step siblings. To complicate matters their family friends are coming to stay with them and Alex can't stand their son who is only 4 months older than him. An excellent, heart touching novel.

Mareli Thalwitzer says

3.5 Stars. One reader described this book as fluff, but decent fluff. LOL!! That is exactly what The Olive Tree was.

I have a couple of friends who absolutely love Lucinda Riley. I have never tried any of her books and at our last Book Club, they convinced me to take one. I picked this one. Finished it in 3 days (yes I do work and have a life, it just reads soooooo easy)

Nothing memorable here, it was just another fluffy story. But the characters were well developed, especially Alex and I do love Lucinda Riley's writing style. She's got a beautiful play with words. Roughly everything can be summed up on page 570 (Yes! You can use this one as a doorstop as well!):

"My ten years' worth of diary is merely a snapshot of small lives lived in a vast universe. But they are our lives, and our problems are big to us. And if they weren't then I doubt humanity would still be around, because, as my mother so wisely said to me - we have been granted the innate gift of hope."
