



The Lost Husband

Katherine Center

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This tender and heartwarming novel explores the trials of losing what matters most—and how there's always more than we can imagine left to find.

Dear Libby, It occurs to me that you and your two children have been living with your mother for—Dear Lord!—two whole years, and I'm writing to see if you'd like to be rescued.

The letter comes out of the blue, and just in time for Libby Moran, who—after the sudden death of her husband, Danny—went to stay with her hypercritical mother. Now her crazy Aunt Jean has offered Libby an escape: a job and a place to live on her farm in the Texas Hill Country. Before she can talk herself out of it, Libby is packing the minivan, grabbing the kids, and hitting the road.

Life on Aunt Jean's goat farm is both more wonderful and more mysterious than Libby could have imagined. Beyond the animals and the strenuous work, there is quiet—deep, country quiet. But there is also a shaggy, gruff (though purportedly handsome, under all that hair) farm manager with a tragic home life, a formerly famous feed-store clerk who claims she can contact Danny “on the other side,” and the eccentric aunt Libby never really knew but who turns out to be exactly what she's been looking for. And despite everything she's lost, Libby soon realizes how much more she's found. She hasn't just traded one kind of crazy for another: She may actually have found the place to bring her little family—and herself—back to life.

The Lost Husband Details

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From Reader Review The Lost Husband for online ebook

Mary Gramlich says

It is not really what happens to you that matters as much as who you become in response to those things

Starting over is never easy and when you are forced to make a change in your life you never wanted the stress is doubled. For Libby and her children it is time to move on and when her eccentric Aunt Jean makes her an offer she should probably refuse, Libby does not. It has been a long, tough time since her husband died but Libby wants to prove it is not really what happens to you that matters as much as who you become in response to those things.

Libby was not sure what she expected from her aunts offer but a goat farm with an unruly host of town occupants surrounding it was not ever one of her thoughts. But as she learns the chores, her children start to survive without a television, and O'Connor, the wilderness man she works alongside becomes more human. Libby learns to worry less and release the pent up anger she carried for so long. It might be the overalls that are a staple in her wardrobe or the time she gets to spend enjoying her children that is bringing Libby such peace but it might just be the strength she has inside her that was never released. While not sure why life brought her to this place Libby does know, even a long held secret cannot steal her newly found joy.

Her children may stumble at school but the one discovery Libby makes is that the perfect mothers are the ones that keep trying after every mistake and never stop loving regardless of how the day rolls out.

Katherine Center has written a story that will invoke every positive emotion and reaction possible from the reader. It is impossible to find anything wrong with this book it is that well written.

Jocelyn says

I loved this book! So inspiring and heartwarming. I received a galley of this title and filed it away with my massively growing To-Be-Read pile. I remember reading Center's earlier books, *The Bright Side of Disaster*, *Get Lucky* and *Everyone is Beautiful* and having really enjoyed both of those books, decided to give her latest a try. In her earlier works, Center wrote about the themes of female empowerment, confidence, taking chances, starting over and personal strength. Her upcoming release, *The Lost Husband*, focuses on similarly inspiring themes.

Libby Moran is a widow. Her husband, Danny, died three years ago in a car accident and she has been living with her two young children at her mother's house. Her mother is a difficult person, to say the least. She's controlling and condescending and Libby has had it with her antics. After receiving a letter from her Aunt Jean, her mother's free-spirited sister, inviting her to come live with her on her farm, Libby jumps at the chance for change.

Packing up her two small children, she makes the brave move to a new life. But what Libby doesn't expect is how much this new life is going to change her, for the better. Surrounded by a wild cast of characters including the lovable O'Connor and her take charge Aunt Jean, Libby begins to learn things about herself, about her life and about parenting. There are so many inspiring gems in the dialogue and characters thoughts that I found myself highlighting at least one line per page. It was uplifting without sugar-coating the

complexities of life. Essentially, *The Lost Husband* teaches the reader that life is hard, but if it wasn't hard we would never become the strong, resilient, optimistic people we are meant to be.

I am so glad I picked up *The Lost Husband* and I hope that Katherine gets all the accolades she deserves for this sweet, smart, and inspiring novel.

Sandie says

Katherine Center, the author of **THE LOST HUSBAND**, could easily have cut her title down to two words and called her book **THE LOST**. Everyone in this book seems to be stumbling along, mourning some aspect of their lives, with little true direction (except, perhaps for Aunt Jean).

Three years after the death of her husband Danny, Libby still cannot seem to let go. To add insult to injury she is obsessive/compulsive about her children always imagining that the worst things possible will befall them. I realize it is a mother's prerogative to worry, but this woman is ridiculous. Her self-involved mother Marsha must have been the poster child for that country song "Looking for love in all the wrong places" and Sunshine, the goth girl she meets in town, is lost in her own world trying to escape her past. O'Conner, part "country hunk" part Grizzly Adams and part cheesemaker, is the predictable love interest and has suffered a few losses of his own. Aunt Jean's losses have been many but she has managed to adjust to her lot in life while acting as the town's resident shrink and repository of secrets. And then there are the children. Tank and Abby, whose vocabulary and thought processes certainly are far above what their six and eight year old minds should be capable of.....or perhaps my children and their friends were just developmentally stunted because they never acted like these kids.

If your preference tends toward thoughtful narratives with some substance, you might want to pass on this one. If, on the other hand, you are looking for something that won't put any strain on your grey matter and will help you pass a few hours, this is your book.

I am not sure of the genre in which this book is being marketed but, if asked, I would suggest fantasy.

Linda says

I hesitated when I first saw the premise of the book, thinking it might be a tad depressing since the main character was a recent widow. Since I have loved all of Katherine's previous books, I decided to give it a go and wasn't disappointed since her books truly seem to keep getting better and better. I was quickly immersed into the lives of Libby and her family in this small Texas town. Katherine's characters are extremely relatable and feel like old friends after just a few chapters. I was curious to see how Libby would reinvent herself in a new town, new job and surrounded by new people (including a hunky ex-firefighter, her eccentric aunt, and a former Hollywood it-girl trying to escape her previous life. I won't give away the story, but trust me, you won't be able to put this book down.

Anne Bogel says

If Brené Brown wrote fiction, this would be it. In fact, I seriously considered whether Brené could possibly

be writing under the pseudonym "Katherine Center." (No way, both these ladies are far too busy! And ... real.)

But the comparison is a good thing. *The Lost Husband* reads like chick lit--easy, breezy--but has a surprising depth. I'm now adding the rest of Center's books to my to-read list.

Meg says

Katherine Center is awesome. I've read every one of her books, and they suck me in like nobody's gull-darn business. *The Lost Husband* was no different, ending my somewhat hum-drum streak of starting and promptly abandoning books, and I was all up in this novel from start to finish.

Despite the heavy subject matter of Center's latest, this is not a serious story. It has serious elements, absolutely, and I may have teared up a few times, but like every story penned by this author? Well, at its core is a capable, loving heroine who doesn't take herself too seriously . . . and the humor is what carries us through. The playful dynamic between Libby and O'Connor kept us from ever wading into misery, and the kids! Oh, the kids. Second-grader Abby stole every scene, and her little brother Tank also provided much-needed levity.

At its heart, *The Lost Husband* is about family — and carrying on in the face of tragedy. Three years after her husband's sudden death, Libby is trying her best to keep her crew happy, healthy and together . . . and if that results in some helicopter parenting, I completely understood. When Abby is being bullied for a slight limp that lingers from a car accident, I wanted to swoop in there and read nasty PeePants Gavinski the riot act myself. Center's great talent is creating families that feel like your family — and we're with them every step of the way.

The plot's quick pace had me glued to my e-reader, sneaking passages whenever possible, and I loved the introduction of Sunshine, a formerly-famous actress hiding out with her grandfather in Atwater. After Libby nearly runs her over on her first day in town, the two become unlikely friends — especially given Sunshine's ability to "talk" to those on the other side. Informing Libby she can "find" Danny, the titular lost husband, the duo begin a series of "seances" that actually give them a chance to talk, unwind and vent.

More than anything, what Libby needs is a friend.

I was just . . . so pleased with this book. From its rural Texas setting to its vibrant, interesting characters to its descriptions of tough but bucolic country life, Center has created a winner of a tale in her latest work. The budding love story was well-balanced with depictions of family life (and all its complications), and I inhaled this book in just a few days. Fans of Center's have another gem for their collection — and I expect *The Lost Husband* to win over new readers, too.

Nancy says

I liked it more than I thought I would. Certainly, I like a cute story of finding love. Nothing too cheesy or easy, though. There's the attraction portion of the story but more poignant is the life lessons about doing what's right because it's the right thing to do. Even though it's hard. And not fun. The book is about human

resiliency and knowing when it's time to move on. There's a time to mourn, a time to cry but there always comes a time to pick yourself up, dust yourself off, reflect on how you have grown, count your blessings, and turn your face toward the sunshine again.

The story centers around a woman who loses her husband in an accident that her daughter barely survived. She finds her savings depleted, broke and tired of her mother's company and victimized personality when she receives the invitation to stay with her aunt. It is here that a childhood is revealed, duty is fulfilled, forgiveness is granted, and new friendships forged.

Julie Valerie says

What a great, curl up under a blanket with a warm cup of tea this read was! Aunt Jean's goat farm is the setting for this heartwarming tale of a young widow and her struggles to reclaim her life after the loss of her husband, Danny.

Libby, the mother of two adorable little kids, a son, Theodore, a.k.a. Tank, and a little girl, Abby, heads to Aunt Jean's goat farm on Broken Tree Road in Atwater, Texas for what turns out to be a time for realigning what is important and examining what has been lost and ultimately, what has been found.

Aunt Jean is a very memorable character that gives sound, quirky advice to Libby in small doses – just enough and only when necessary. I enjoyed watching the character development of both Libby and Aunt Jean as changes in their relationship with one another unfold in surprising ways throughout the story. Aunt Jean is a loving guide and creative spirit that brings joy to the lives of Libby's children and readers will thoroughly enjoy watching her interact with Libby's kids.

Libby's daughter, Abby, has her own interesting backstory and must face a bully at school in what promises to be a heart-wrenching experience for the reader. Likewise, the love interest in Katherine Pannill Center's book is refreshing in its flawed and tragic circumstances. There's no spoilers in this book review on either of those story lines. You'll have to read the book to find out what happens.

In an interesting parallel to Libby's need to reinvent herself is a character in the novel named Sunshine, who is hiding out in Atwater after blowing herself up in the tabloids Lindsay-Lohan-style during her once famous life. Sunshine offers to help Libby connect with her husband on the other side in the one teeny tiny thing I'd change about the novel. I wished for a different conclusion in that storyline because it held so much promise – but sort of fell flat. On the other hand, the conclusion to 'that certain house' (readers will know what I'm talking about) is super cool.

I thoroughly enjoyed *The Lost Husband* by Katherine Pannill Center and recommend it to readers who love what I call 'a cozy great book'.

Disclaimer: I received an Advance Reader Copy of this book in exchange for an honest review. To read the complete book review, visit my book blog at julievalerie.com

Kristy says

This book will have you laughing & crying all in one sitting & hoping you could pack up to a seemingly easier life on a farm.

Laurel-Rain says

Dear Libby, It occurs to me that you and your two children have been living with your mother for--Dear Lord!--two whole years, and I'm writing to see if you'd like to be rescued.

The letter comes out of the blue, and just in time for Libby Moran, who--after the sudden death of her husband, Danny--went to stay with her hypercritical mother. Now her crazy Aunt Jean has offered Libby an escape: a job and a place to live on her farm in the Texas Hill Country. Before she can talk herself out of it, Libby is packing the minivan, grabbing the kids, and hitting the road.

Life on Aunt Jean's goat farm is both more wonderful and more mysterious than Libby could have imagined. Beyond the animals and the strenuous work, there is quiet--deep, country quiet. But there is also a shaggy, gruff (though purportedly handsome, under all that hair) farm manager with a tragic home life, a formerly famous feed-store clerk who claims she can contact Danny "on the other side," and the eccentric aunt Libby never really knew but who turns out to be exactly what she's been looking for. And despite everything she's lost, Libby soon realizes how much more she's found. She hasn't just traded one kind of crazy for another: She may actually have found the place to bring her little family--and herself--back to life.

And so begins the wonderful tale of how losing one kind of life can lead to finding something unexpectedly wonderful. Narrated in Libby's first person voice, the reader is gifted with wonderful word pictures of the country setting and the simple folks who take nothing for granted. Who knew that the quiet country life would hold such sweetness, mixed in with all the hard work? And even though Aunt Jean's house doesn't even have a TV, and the smallness of the community takes some adjusting, Libby is finally carving out some wonderful connections here.

But what is the root of the antagonism between Aunt Jean and Libby's mother Marsha? What daunting secret can explain a decades-long rift that has carved a groove into Aunt Jean's normally-serene persona? And what about O'Connor, that shaggy man who seems attracted to Libby, but does nothing about it?

"The Lost Husband: A Novel" reminds us that losing people and one kind of life doesn't mean that you can't find something else. And that accepting that loss isn't a betrayal, but, in a way, a tribute to the lost one.

I like this excerpt (in Libby's voice):

"And then I realized something: I would always miss Danny. No matter how full my life became, there would always be a hole where his living presence had been. But the truth was, I was already better. And not despite that hole--but because of it. His loss was now a part of the story of my life...."

I enjoyed this story, despite it's predictability at times, and maybe because of it, too. Who doesn't love a feel-good ending to a beautifully wrought story? Four stars.

Heather says

I wanted to read something a little lighter as the last several books I've read have been pretty intense for me. This book did not disappoint. It was a sweet, heartwarming story about a woman who's husband passed away a couple years ago. Her and her two kids were staying with her mother and she was offered the opportunity to go stay on her Aunt's farm and help with running the farm. The characters were likeable and it was a nice, feel good story, and when I finished I hugged the book to me, smiled and thought 'ah that was so sweet'. Just what I needed!

Linda says

I received an uncorrected advanced copy of *The Lost Husband* by Katherine Center from Netgalley.com in return for my honest review.

From the minute I first started reading *The Lost Husband*, I loved it. It was just my kind of novel, charming and quirky with heartwarming characters. However, as the story progressed, although I enjoyed the book, very much in fact, I felt there were several problems that were hard to get past.

When the book opened, the reader learned that Danny, the husband of the main character, Libby, was killed in a car accident 3 years prior. Due to Danny's mistakes, and his desire to keep things a secret, upon his death, Libby and her two young children, Abby and Theo, discovered that they were in a desperate situation; they were financially unstable, forced to sell their home and moved in with Libby's controlling mother. These facts were covered within, what seemed like, a very few pages. Libby's Aunt Jean, an amazing, lovable character, invited Libby and her children to come live and work her goat farm. Libby was only two relieved to leave her mother's home. Unfortunately, the reader didn't really experience the relationship between Libby and her mother first-hand. Clearly Libby's mother was difficult and overbearing, but fleshing out their relationship a little more thoroughly while they were all living together would have presented a more complete picture. Because the move progressed so quickly, the reader had to essentially take Libby's word for it, although there were a few indications of the mother's disposition and selfishness. It might have been better to have slowed the story down a bit.

Additionally, Libby appeared to have no animosity towards her late husband despite their circumstances. This didn't seem realistic. In fact, I was expecting more to be revealed about Danny and what happened to all of their money, but that story-line never developed. It would have been interesting if it had.

That being said, there were certain parts of the book that were wonderful, Jean's interaction with Libby and the kids as well as the depiction of small-town living. Sunshine and Russ rounded out the cast of characters. The goats turned out to be a fun bonus. There was even a slow-moving romance. There was something for everyone.

This book is definitely worth reading, and I would like to read more by this author. It is not quite a four star rating, but I definitely would have given 3 1/2 stars if the option was given.

Gail says

Abby has been living with her hyper-critical mother for two years after an accident killed her husband and hurt her small daughter. After his death, there were many discoveries and surgeries for her daughter. Abby was left without a home so she moved into her mother's condo.

Out of the blue came a message from her mother's reviled sister, her Aunt Joan, offering her rescue. The rescue came in the form of a job on her goat farm, a way to look after her kids, and a new start in life. Without knowing much about her aunt, Abby and the kids go.

And thus begins a journey of discovery, rediscovery, and a reimaging of family. A very nice, well written book with lots of goats, dogs, school bullies, eccentric people and the warmth of love & forgiveness in family, however you define it.

I liked this book a lot and read it in one lazy, hot, humid day.

archdandy says

The Lost Husband starts out with Libby living at her mother's house with her two children. They've been there for the past two years because three years previous her husband was tragically killed in a car accident. Libby and her mother don't exactly see eye to eye, so when her estranged aunt sends her a letter inviting her to come live with her on her goat farm Libby jumps at the opportunity. The transition of her old life to her new life as a cheese farmer is not easy but it does provide some good laughs, heart warming moments and the realization that she has already been through the worst thing imaginable and has survived!

I was very pleasantly surprised at how much I actually enjoyed this book. It caught my attention and held it for the entire book and I wanted to keep reading every time I put it down. The characters were full of life and I felt myself wanting to get to know more of each and every one of them. Each character had a compelling story that you really needed to know to understand why a character had the personality they did. The author did a really great job of revealing their backgrounds at just the right times in the story. O'Connor was a definite favorite of mine, his oddball view of the world made me laugh on more than one occasion.

From the description of this book you might think it's a heartbreak story of a recent widow who has lost a lot but it's not. It's a wonderful story about a woman who has the strength to keep going and to make a new life for herself with her two children! I'm so glad I decided to give this one a try and I look forward to reading more from this author.

**ARC kindly provided by Ballantine Books through Edelweiss in return for an honest review*

Lorelei's says

Definitely one of the sweetest, heartwarming love stories out there! It's about learning to start a new chapter for 2 lonely hearts. It's different, filled with many important lessons and hope, that not only heals Libby, the heroines heart, but other characters in the story too, specially O'Connors.

Libby is a widow and a very protective mom of 2 young kids. She portrays her role with genuine emotion. I

loved the chemistry between Libby and O'Connor. The author creates great anticipation to their kissing scenes which made me swoon. I loved Jean, the "crazy hippie" aunt, she'll be your favorite, too. There's small town charm and current issues are touched, such as bullying. I laughed and cried, and could really feel the emotions of sorrow, delight and I even wanted to cheer- Yes! - in certain scenes.

The story is written in 1st person, great voice. There's drama, a secret and many surprises that will keep you turning page after page till the end.

I received a free copy of this book for my honest opinion, and the only thing I regret is not having read it sooner! 5 happily ever after stars for this one!
