



Chasing the Sun

Natalia Sylvester

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Andres suspects his wife has left him—again. Then he learns that the unthinkable has happened: she's been kidnapped. Too much time and too many secrets have come between Andres and Marabela, but now that she's gone, he'll do anything to get her back. Or will he?

As Marabela slips farther away, Andres must decide whether they still have something worth fighting for, and exactly what he'll give up to bring her home. And unfortunately, the decision isn't entirely up to him, or up to the private mediator who moves into the family home to negotiate with the terrorists holding Marabela. Andres struggles to maintain the illusion of control while simultaneously scrambling to collect his wife's ransom, tending to the needs of his two young children, and reconnecting with an old friend who may hold the key to his past and his wife's future.

Set in Lima, Peru, in a time of civil and political unrest, this evocative page-turner is a perfect marriage of domestic drama and suspense.

Chasing the Sun Details

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Author : Natalia Sylvester

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From Reader Review Chasing the Sun for online ebook

Dana says

Chasing The Sun is the stunning debut novel from Natalia Sylvester that I just couldn't put down. It's books like these that really make me appreciate how lucky I am to be able to participate in the Firstreads program. Being given the chance to win an advance reader copy is always thrilling. For a broke student like me who always plays it safe when purchasing books, the giveaways give me the opportunity to go outside of my comfort zone when picking stories.

The novel tells the story of a husband, whose wife has been kidnapped and follows his desperate attempt to get her back. What adds to the story is that this husband and wife have a crumbling marriage and I was constantly wondering when he would decide that enough was enough. Was it worth it to give up everything he had to get her back, considering that she had already left him in the past? Do you still fight for someone who doesn't even want you?

I was at the edge of my seat while reading this and ended up chewing my nails to the quick. The suspense was terrible! but I didn't want it to end. The plot was so well thought out and clever. The characters were very believable. I have never loved a book so much yet hated a main character so badly. I was raging to anyone who would listen, about my strong opinions on this book and to me, that is the mark of a good novel. One that you just can't stop thinking about, can't stop caring about.

5/5

Liz says

I had absolutely no expectations with this book, so I was pleasantly surprised that I finished it in just a few days. I got it as a Kindle First book, a month or two ago , and decided to download it yesterday while I was in between books. It was a fast read and I found it fairly enjoyable.

Imagine that your marriage is failing, and then your significant other is kidnapped and held for ransom by political extremists. What would you be willing to pay? How would you feel? Could things ever be the same afterward?

I wasn't exactly connected to these characters, but I thought the author did a good job developing them. Overall, a quick read, but forgettable book.

Pam says

Chasing the Sun by Natalia Sylvester held my interest from beginning to end. It is the story of a marriage. A marriage that was already in trouble, but becomes even more stressed when the wife Marabela is kidnapped. Andres must do what he can to get her back. He hires a professional mediator to help him in getting his wife

back home. While, he is struggling to do what he needs to do, he has time to reflect on his life, his children, and his marriage.

Well written, with just the right amount of suspense, and well-thought out characters.

Diane says

Years ago I read Ann Patchett's haunting novel, *Bel Canto*, about a group of people kidnapped by terrorists at a party at the home of the vice-president in a South American country. I can vividly recall sitting on my porch mesmerized by the characters and the story.

When I heard about Natalia Sylvester's debut novel, *Chasing the Sun*, which tells the story of an industrialist's wife's kidnapping in Peru, I was curious to read it. Sylvester lived in Lima, Peru and her novel is inspired by a family member who was kidnapped.

In Peru, kidnappings are an almost common occurrence. Wealthy people live behind walls and gates, and many have security. Andres owns a label factory, and his family, wife Marabela, teenage son Ignacio and young daughter Cynthia live a good life. The children go to private school, and Marabela volunteers for many charities and is close to the women who cook and clean for them.

Things between Marabela and Andres are not good. Four months ago Marabela disappeared, unhappy with her marriage. She returned because she couldn't leave her children. When Marabela doesn't return home after an errand, Andres fears she run away again.

But this time Andres gets a call from a man; they have kidnapped Marabela and want one million dollars in ransom. Andres doesn't have that kind of money, and his wealthy mother sends over a man who helps people deal with kidnappers.

As the story unfolds and Andres deals with the kidnappers and the facilitator, he tries to hide the situation from his children, his employees and their friends. He discovers that his childhood friend Elena is in a hospital after a suicide attempt following her own kidnapping. From her, he learns something shocking and saddening.

Part two deals with the aftermath of the kidnapping. We don't have first hand knowledge of what happened to Marabela, we only get bits of the torment she suffered. Andres hopes that they can pick up the pieces of their life together and move forward, but Marabela isn't so sure she can or even if she wants to.

I enjoy reading about places and cultures I don't have much knowledge of, and with Sylvester's growing up in Lima, we get an insider's view. I can't imagine living with the constant fear that you could be grabbed off the street.

I also like reading about the Peruvian dishes, like tallarines verdes, a pesto-like sauce served with steak. It makes me want to read more about it, and maybe even make it for dinner.

Chasing the Sun drops the reader into the lives of this upper middle class Peruvian family during a crisis. Although the kidnapping propels the story, this is a more personal story about a marriage unraveling. Andres loves Marabela and desperately wants to love the life they have build together, but things and people from

their past come bubbling up to the surface and try to pull them apart. Fans of Bel Canto will find much to appreciate in this debut novel.

Melissa Crytzer Fry says

When I met Natalia Sylvester on Twitter four years ago and first read her blog, my immediate thought was, “This is a writer to watch. Big things are in her future.” Her blog posts, from the start, were poetic and laced with beautiful metaphor. And they still are. (It’s not easy to silently weave metaphor into a piece and have the reader not even know she’s reading it until the very end).

So it comes as no surprise that her debut novel, based in part on a kidnapping within her extended family, held the same captivating metaphor. This time the metaphor about light and darkness: the comfort of it, the fear of it. What struck me most about this book was the author’s ability to paint a realistic portrait of PTSD.

An example of the beautiful prose from the book: “She turns her back to the mirror and looks over her shoulder. If she hugs herself, she can see ribs protruding through her skin. She taps them like they’re the keys of a piano, her fingers stepping gently over the deep gaps between each bone. She has never felt so small, so shrunken into herself, while at the same time heavy with everything her body has held on to. It tells a story she never wants to hear again.”

I never really considered what a person must go through *after* a kidnapping. How her sense of safety would change so dramatically, how the once-normal, everyday surroundings would become sinister, filled with fear. In the characters of Andres and Marabela, we see an imperfect marriage before the abduction. We see reality. We journey with them and ask: will their marriage make it? Can they find happiness again, even after the darkness?

Zoeytron says

I do not need to actively like the characters in a book. Indeed, I am typically happier to be able to grab onto a loathsome heavy to keep my interest in a story. Sorry to say, there was nary a person in this tale that sparked my interest one way or the other. Tepidity - that is shaky ground for me.

The plot was okay, there was nothing egregious about the writing, but it felt for all the world that I was just going through the motions to read it. The phrase 'making up for lost time' is faulty. It can't be done. 'Lost time is gone forever', as the author aptly notes. I rather wish I had my time back on this one to spend on a different read.

This was a Kindle first-reads offering.

Jolina Petersheim says

"He is always thinking of the last words he said to her." I was captivated from this opening line in Natalia Sylvester's stunning literary debut, *Chasing The Sun*, and remained absorbed in the story of an estranged marriage pushed to the limits when a wife is kidnapped. Her husband must then choose to what extent he is willing to sacrifice in order to get her back . . . a woman who left him before. Clear prose, vivid characters, and keen psychological awareness--*Chasing The Sun* has all this and more. Looking forward to reading Sylvester's sophomore novel and whatever else she creates.

Lisa Alber says

This debut novel was a perfect balance between a page-turner and a wonderfully written literary novel. In fact, I'd call *CHASING THE SUN* a literary thriller!

Natalia Sylvester paints a portrait of the Jimenez family in Peru that is so specific and so true that the story becomes universal. We can all connect to poor Andres, struggling to do the right thing; to his kidnapped wife, who has been unhappy for awhile; to his daughter, who doesn't understand what's going on but just wants her mom; to his angry son on the edge of manhood.

The specifics about life in Peru lend this novel its uniqueness at the same time that it sets the story in a time and place that opens our eyes to what families just like ours live through in strife-ridden, third-world countries.

I loved the interplay between the universal and the specific in *CHASING THE SUN*.

Rachel León says

I listened to the audiobook and disliked the way it was read, so I advise you not to check this one out on audio. I loved Natalia Sylvester's beautiful prose and the skill in which the plot unfolded. I wish I would have read it rather than listened to it, as I'm sure I'd have enjoyed it so much more.

Lorrie says

Thank you to Goodreads for providing me the opportunity to receive this free book in their giveaway. I, in turn, read this novel and am providing an honest but simple review.

The setting is Peru where police can be often unable to provide help with kidnappings, for whatever reasons. This story required the help of an intermediary, someone who could help with the demands of the kidnappers. I was very interested in this story and did find myself unable to put the book down for the last half.

The husband, Andres, trying to come up with the money necessary to get his wife, Marabela, back from the kidnappers is forced to come to terms with himself. He must look at his job, his family (children, Cynthia

and Ignacio), his relationship with his wife, his material possessions, and his best friend, Elena.

I was unsure what happens to kidnap victims in 3rd world countries and found this telling mildly disturbing. The accounts are not what we see on tv for the most part.

The author, Natalia Sylvester, came to the USA as a 4 year old. The story is partially based on personal, family stories. This is her first novel.

Sam says

DNF

The cover of this book hooked me, and its interesting blurb reeled me in.

Then it lost me *literally* as soon as I started reading.

Some reasons I am abandoning this book

- Stiff, unnatural dialogue. (This is basically a dealbreaker for me on its own.)
- Boredom from the get-go. (Weird start to a book when you should be hooking the reader, let me say.)
- Overly descriptive about things like cans of vegetables. (I don't care. Please don't give me a detailed description of canned food, unless there's something special about it, like...it's glowing? Canned food shouldn't glow, I probably need to know that.)
- I'm pretty sure I'm NEVER going to care about these characters at all, because I resent them for boring me to death.
- One other reviewer said it perfectly. Reading this book feels like you're just "going through the motions."

I just can't.

I'm sure there are people who will love this book, but I'm not going to be one of them, and I have too many other books to read to invest several hours into this one only to come out feeling like this, but also angry because I wasted valuable reading time that's hard to come by in my house.

Bill Wolfe says

Andres appears to have it all. He owns a successful printing company, lives in a beautiful house in a wealthy neighborhood, and is married to Marabela, a beautiful and strong-willed woman who works as a freelance photojournalist and is a devoted mother to their two children.

But appearances can deceive. All is not well in the Lima, Peru home of the Jimenez family. Marabela recently left Andres, only to return after four days for the sake of their children, Ignacio and Cynthia. Andres still loves Marabela and tries to save their marriage, but she is uncooperative. She has grown tired of Andres's workaholic lifestyle and resents having to give up most of her photojournalism work. They talk past each other; Andres is too eager to please, which Marabela interprets as weakness. She is often callous

and self-absorbed. The tension is palpable.

This already difficult situation falls away instantly when Marabela is kidnapped and held for ransom by men who may be associated with Shining Path, a communist insurgent group that terrorized Peru in the 1980s and early 1990s. Andres is distraught but, with the help of Guillermo, a retired police officer-turned-negotiator, he begins to work toward Marabela's release.

Andres and Guillermo work from Marabela's darkroom, which they have converted into a custom-designed office wired to record calls and maintain records of all communications and activities regarding the kidnapping. With the hours of waiting stretching out before him, Andres has time to explore their failed marriage and home life. Through a series of flashbacks we learn how he and Marabela met and how his decision to marry her affected Andres's lifelong friendship with Elena, the daughter of his father's business partner. Their romantic history is full of complexities that have reverberated down through the years.

How far will Andres go to obtain the return of a woman he loves but believes may well leave him again? What does he owe her? What will be enough to free her and also convince her to stay and rebuild their marriage? Can he obtain her release without giving up everything they've achieved? Does he possess enough to satisfy these hardened and very professional kidnappers?

Andres also has his hands full caring for the children, whom he is trying to protect from the truth about Marabela's sudden absence. Ignacio, who is in high school, suspects all is not as it seems and wants to know the truth — and to help his father. Andres is also trying to keep the kidnapping from colleagues, friends, and family, including his very shrewd mother, Lorena, from whom he has been estranged since he married Marabela.

After many years apart, Andres reestablishes contact with Elena. He has learned that she may have special knowledge and insight that could help him through his difficult situation. Can she help save Marabela and thus Andres?

Sylvester turns what could have been a soap opera into a suspenseful and literary novel through a tightly controlled narrative that provides a detailed view into the main characters' hearts and minds. She has tamped down the melodrama in favor of a more subtle emotional intensity that builds as the story progresses. The nature of the plot alone provides plenty of conflict and page-turning suspense; Sylvester had the good sense and discipline to opt for a thoughtful, probing approach that will remind some readers of Ann Patchett and Graham Greene, with the elegant prose to match.

Chasing the Sun is a summer novel for readers who want something to think deeply about as their hearts pound and they turn the pages, hoping for the best but fearing the worst.

See more of my reviews at my blog, www.readherlikeanopenbook.com.

Chaitali Sen says

I started this book when I didn't have a lot of time to sink into it, and finally finished it today in a feverish marathon. This book is so full of quiet suspense and emotional heartbreak. It's about a troubled marriage at its most harrowing moment, during a three-week period when the wife of a businessman in Peru is kidnapped. To me this book is about letting go of sentimentality and facing hard truths about one's life -

truths about the self, marriage, and society, and the courage it takes to act on those truths. It isn't a comforting read, especially about this particular marriage, (in some strange ways it reminded me of Revolutionary Road), but it was immensely rewarding and beautifully written.

Ily Pastor says

loved it, can't wait for it to come out and then a sequel.

Tessyohnka says

This book leaves me a bit muddled. Marabela and Andres are together because they both deceived Elena. Andres and his children are estranged from his parents because Marabela deceived Rolando. Marabela is unhappy that photography is now just a hobby and not her livelihood because Andres deceived her. Elena and Marabela have both suffered at the hands of kidnappers though it seems Marabella was arbitrarily spared sexual assault. There's a hint of something between Marabela and Guillermo -- which is strange because Marabella is angry at Andres for taking so long to free her from the kidnappers and Guillermo had everything to do with why the negotiation took as long as it did. Marabela seems as selfish at the end of the story as she did when she met Andres. Elena seems as young. Is she taking Andres back because she's so afraid of life and Andres is the only connection to her life before she was kidnapped? And does Andres really have any idea what he wants? The explanation that he had to lose Elena before he could long for her -- not buying it.
