



Desperado's Wife

Amy Friedman

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"Fearless is an overused word." Maybe Amy Friedman isn't really fearless, but you couldn't tell that from her memoir, which grabs your shirt in its fist on page 1 and forces you to see humanity in places most of us are too scared to go. Everybody who's ever given up on anyone must read this book," David Dow, author of *Autobiography of an Execution*. The story of the author's journey into prison and her marriage to a man serving a life sentence for murder.

Desperado's Wife Details

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Author : Amy Friedman

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From Reader Review Desperado's Wife for online ebook

Cheryl says

Hard to put down, a book that stays with you after the book ends. A love story that defies logic and society rules, an honest, raw look at our flawed judicial system that often treats loved ones and family members like criminals instead of visitors. A well written memoir.

Peter Friedman says

I'm Amy's brother, so I'm not the audience this book is aimed at; I lived through the events it recounts, and so the experience of reading the book constitutes more a reliving of a terrible time in my own life than I like to experience in my reading, but also points out several reasons why the book is so extraordinary. There's no other way to say it than to say flat out that Amy can write a story as well as anyone, and the story is a compelling one. Life is sad and beautiful, and it never ceases to astound me. Amy's story is just one more astounding one.

Melissa says

It is never the "bad" parts of a bad guy we fall for, at least with those I've been smitten with, but the flashes of good -- warmth, humor, vulnerability, whatever -- that contradict the persona and leaves you feeling deeply special and justified in your passion.

Friedman finds herself quite the bad boy in Will, a convicted murderer, and it's easy to assume this is an all-too-familiar good girl meets bad boy, gets crushed by bad boy, becomes an even better girl story. But Friedman, has a fierce sense of justice that permeates the narrative. You want to see these two on the outside -- to see if they make it, and if so, how.

A thoughtful, smart, bravely written book that's as much about a cold hard look at the penal system and the often ignored realities of prisoners' families as it is about the unexpected places our hearts can take us.

Cassy says

I received this book as a Goodreads winner. I enjoyed this book, it gave an insight into a world I had no idea about. A world behind bars.. I like anything non-fiction so this book was right up my alley and I would recommend to anyone who also enjoys non-fiction. It did get a little repetitive with the comparisons of her relationship to her parents relationship but that's the only real negative for me.

Suzanne says

I had a vision of a person that would marry a person in jail (you know, someone you would see on daytime television) and Amy was not it so I was intrigued. I could not put this book down. I find myself thinking about this long after I read it. Why do we chose our mates in the first place? I gained so much more understanding of the prison system and the hardships it causes for families. This book really makes you think.

Amy Scripps says

Prison is a world I have never had any contact with, and this book takes you inside. It's an inherently dark journey and the author is brave to share what amounts to a major lapse of judgement as she becomes involved with a highly manipulative inmate. The feelings she plumbs are more familiar - those of caring about someone's plight seemingly more than they do. And in the end realizing that the person has chosen their own path, and may choose not to better their life

Kathy Crenshaw says

This story drew me I and I thought she did a wonderful job recounting it. I felt her frustration, anger and rage....her helplessness at "the system" was mine. I admire her tenacity, I would have gone mad with these feelings. As a person who has always struggled with rules and particularly STUPID rules this story caused that rebellion to well up in me. Her situation really illustrates how people are broken....you chip away at their spirits until they die inside.

Claire says

Full disclosure: I know the author. But I also think the book delves into what it's like to care about someone in prison in a way nothing else I've read has ever done. Such a fascinating, frustrating, painful world.

Hollye Dexter says

What compelled me from page one of this book was my need to understand how a nice Jewish girl ends up marrying a convict. I've seen the women on daytime talk shows - the ones who marry serial killers and the like, and easily passed them off as crazy. But – how is it remotely possible for a beautiful, smart, well-bred, successful, SANE woman to end up the wife of a convicted murderer? As a journalist, award-winning storyteller, and gifted writer, Friedman leads you through her journey with her clear-eyed intellect. She knows all too well how easy it is for us all, herself included, to make judgments, falling into that familiar “us against them” mentality. But the deeper truth is, we are all human beings with deeply layered and complicated passions that drive us. Friedman lays out the humanity on both sides of this coin.

I tore through this book in a matter of days, and now I understand how a nice girl ends up with a convict. Like anyone else, they met, and they fell in love. Seeing only the best in each other, they had great plans, and then, things fell apart. This is a story that's happened to all of us, in different ways. A highly recommended read.

Paula Patterson says

I really wanted to like this book. I just didn't. The story was one that intrigued me. Girl on outside falls in love with man in prison. The details weighed the story down. I found this a very drawn out read. I felt as if the details overpowered the storyline. Could love triumph over all? Were the burdens and circumstances just too much? It was like digging for answers to what seemed like the reason for the author to write her autobiography.

My review is based on my feelings regarding this book. I received this book free as a part of Goodreads First Reads. I was not compensated for my review.

Chelsie says

This book really opened up my eyes to the other side of prison and how visitors and families view prison and the inmates this place holds. I myself being a correctional officer understand the aspects of safety, policy and procedure amongst the institutions and why they are in place. But through this book I see how it can seem that correctional officers are mean and hindering certain inmates rights and aspects. Although I am sure a lot has changed since this happened in the mid-1990's but there are some things I feel are still similar or still going on. I also thought it was odd some of the things that were allowed in those prisons being they were in Canada and I work for one in the U.S. but some of the things are similar if not the same. It gave me a little better of an understanding of how inmates and family members can easily become depressed, angry and mis-trusting of the law and any law enforcement type people. I hope that through this book others see what I had seen but also keep in mind that some of the rules and policies that are in place in these prisons are not in place because of the person they may know in prison but because of others actions in the past. I recommend this book to anyone who is interested in the life of prisons, prisoners and thier families.

Heather says

I was very excited to read this book. I thought I would learn something about prison life that I didn't know or suspect. The first three chapters are very well-written, and the author does a great job of drawing you in. Then the writing became repetitive - phrases talking about how she thought she knew more than she really did, because she was really naive; statements about how she was looking for a love just like her parents and to be treated the way her dad treated her mother. I also found that I became morally challenged. I could not wrap my head around the feelings Amy was having and the fact that she was building a relationship with a murderer. I totally can see her point of view, because she explains it very well. But I realized something about myself: even though I can see her point of view, I understand that this man killed someone so he wouldn't be killed, that I am truly afraid of people in jail. And I really began to cringe when Amy spoke of prisoners' rights. I was surprised at some of the rights they have in Canada. I did not realize that one could visit a person in prison daily for several hours a day and then speak on the phone for several hours at night. How??? Picnics and social events? Wow. 48-72 hour trailer visits? This is more than homeless people have. Yes, prisoners are people. But they made a choice to break the law. And the political injustices that happen are morally wrong as well. I think what really lost me on the book was the way Amy became a woman she wasn't. The injustice and lie that Amy was fighting to fix was just not that big of deal in my mind. I never got

the sense in the end that Amy truly understood the root of her issues and how she became this woman.

The book is really about a woman who is a little lost in her life. Nearing 40, personally not where she expected to be, and allows herself to build a relationship with a man she can never be with, this is what the book is about. Two broken people who try to help each other be happy and feel loved, but neither are capable.

Susan says

Friedman's account of a period in her life when she fell in love with a man serving a prison sentence for murder is a unique and valuable addition to the world of memoir. She is a highly educated expat American journalist working in Canada, who falls in love with a man whose story is not drawn from tabloid headlines, but rather an ordinary crime committed by a charismatic, intelligent man who'd been a drug dealer in his early life. Friedman's reasons for falling for a murderer, and later marrying him, are informed by the commitment to social justice and equality instilled by her family and by an understanding of her own desires for a great love affair like her parents had. In the process of reporting on the prison for the Ontario newspaper where she works, Friedman's preconceived notions of who prisoners and their loved ones are changes as she grows close to the man (Will) she later marries. The transformation from open-mindedness to empathy to love is not a smooth one, and in the narrative she compares her emotions to a version of Stockholm Syndrome, while still owning the power of the love she felt. As she grows close to Will, she develops a lifelong attachment to his family. But there are serious consequences to her love for Will, as her professional career is threatened and her personal relationships suffer. In the end, the heartbreak and disappointment Friedman experiences are redeemed as she recounts the life-changing experience of her own vulnerability and transformation, and her advocacy for the families of incarcerated people.

Jennifer Chow says

Friedman provides an intriguing look into the world of prison. It's especially interesting to hear her portrayal of the beginnings of her relationship with Will. Sometimes I wonder: Who would fall in love with someone behind bars? She tells her story with courage and honesty. (In retrospect, it would have been great to hear his side of the tale, too.)

I also thought that Friedman did an excellent job at detailing the injustices that families deal with just by association. There were many behind-the-scenes concepts and practices that I didn't know existed. I wonder how much of her experience could translate to the American system.

There was a small portion of the book that I felt to be filled with acronyms that I couldn't follow. Sometimes I also had difficulty tracking the different people and prisoners mentioned. Also, I think I came into this book expecting that I would see more of her marriage after the parole began. The bulk of the memoir takes place while she navigates prison visits, though.

However, I believe this is a powerful book that exposes the unknown experiences of prisoners' families. I admire the bravery it took for Friedman to write this book.

Katherine says

What a fascinating book this is. I read it after reading Just Mercy and I'm glad I did. It's a great additional look at the prison system (albeit in Canada) that helps to show just how broken it is. It's also a wonderfully insightful look at, well, how opposites attract. It's a great reminder too how important it is to have wise friends around you and that it's equally important to actually listen to those friends.
