



Due Date

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Surrogate mother Shelby McDougall just fell for the biggest con of all—a scam that risks her life and the lives of her unborn twins.

Shelby McDougall, recent college graduate, is facing a mountain of student debt and carting a burden she'd like to exorcise. A Rolling Stone ad for a surrogate mother offers her a way to erase the loans and right her karmic place in the cosmos. Within a month, she's signed a contract with intended parents Jackson and Diane Entwistle, relocated to Santa Cruz, California, and started fertility treatments.

But Jackson and Diane have their own secret agenda, one that has nothing to do with diapers and lullabies. With her due date looming and the clues piling up, Shelby must save herself and her twins, and outwit those who wish her ill... She learns the real meaning of the word “family.”

Due Date Details

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Author : Nancy W. Wood

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From Reader Review Due Date for online ebook

Kelly says

This book was action packed right from the start – the first page had a car crash which resulted in a forest fire and a hospital stay for Shelby! Upon leaving the hospital Shelby moves in to a cottage, on the large estate belonging to Jackson and Diane, to await the arrival of the babies that will be theirs when born. Once there Shelby quickly realises that things are not at all as they seem and she, as well as others, are in very real danger.

As Shelby begins to piece things together we come to find that she may be naive but she certainly has courage and quick thinking on her side when it matters. She also has the support of her brother Dexter who, although he doesn't agree with her surrogacy, is there to help her solve the mystery of what's happening right under her nose. As the story progresses we see Shelby mature and make decisions that are not just based on her best interests but the interests of others too.

Due Date is a fast paced, well thought out, and well written mystery. My heart was seriously beating fast at certain points and I had that strange taste of adrenaline in my mouth! That's definitely the kind of reaction an author of a mystery wants from a reader!

Due Date also offered an intriguing look at the controversial and much debated subject of surrogacy and in some people's opinions "selling a baby made to order". I really enjoyed learning more about the subject and I think the idea to use it, along with the baby selling ring plotline, was genius!

I can't wait to read more from Nancy Wood, hopefully soon.

*My copy of Due Date was provided free of charge by the author in exchange for a review. This has not influenced my review in any way.

Karen B says

Noooo -- why did it end so abruptly! I was ready to give it 4 stars.

Deborah Ross says

This is a first published novel from a talented writer who received very poor editorial support from her publisher. The premise -- a down-on-her-luck student undertakes to become a surrogate mother, only to discover that the parents are baby brokers -- is interesting and refreshing, and the prose is smooth. (I also think it's a hoot that for the past few days, my Spam Box has been full of ads for surrogate mothers.) The characters are strongly drawn, with solid dialog. Yet although the overall story arc has a decent shape, the book feels flabby. The tension takes too long to escalate (for example, it isn't until very late in the book that we learn why selling babies is a horrific thing instead of an illegal way of giving them to loving parents who don't qualify for traditional adoption), too many details and incidents are unconnected or connected in the wrong way, and the protagonist appears either inappropriately suspicious or equally inappropriately gullible.

I don't see these as faults of the author, but of a failure of editing. Even seasoned writers need that second pair of eyes, that professional perspective on how to pull it all together, to make every piece pull its weight at the right time in the right way. All the elements of a really good suspense novel are present, and as it is, *Due Date* offers an entertaining story with many strengths, worth reading. It could have been much more, and I'm hoping that future novels from Nancy Wood will do justice to her considerable potential.

September says

This book had so many twists and turns. So tightly written and so well thought out! Great read!! Kept me up at night and was the first thing I reached for this morning, even before my coffee! Can't wait for the next book!!

Nancy Curteman says

Things are not quite what they seem to be in Nancy Wood's fast-paced, action-packed novel, "*Due Date*." The story is full of surprises—characters, events and even settings are artificial facades that morph into terrifying, life threatening horrors for surrogate mother, Shelby McDougall.

From the opening car crash through the suspicious perfection of Shelby's cottage to her agonizing, sometimes heartbreaking, discoveries the reader is kept on an emotional roller coaster of continual suspicion and suspense.

Wood paints excellent word pictures filled with vivid detailed descriptions of everything from settings and characters, pregnancy and childbirth to interior emotions and fears.

Each of her characters has a unique personality and voice. Her brother, Dexter and Jessica, her sister-in-law, are clearly mismatched. Diane and Jackson the perfect couple with the perfect home, don't quite make the mark as future parents. Frankie, Shelby's elusive love object, is a strong, handsome, protective dream man. Shelby is an almost impossible combination of naiveté, intelligence and courage, but is able to master the difficult hurdles in her life.

If you love excruciating suspense, "*Due Date*" is the novel for you.

Gail Bagniet says

The title of this novel had me waiting to see if I was in for a lot of details about morning sickness and water retention. It was a short wait. The opening paragraphs of the first chapter alleviated any such worries. What should have concerned me was whether the pregnant protagonist would survive some of her less-than-thought-out action-packed responses to dangerous predicaments and make it to full term.

This story involves a scam to have women deliver and give up their babies, supposedly to a loving mother. With this theme as a backdrop, Wood's main character manages to get herself into several harrowing situations, often seemingly forgetting that she is in what was once referred to as "a delicate condition." The suspense and intrigue were well-developed, holding my interest to the denouement. The author chose a Sue Grafton-style climax that appealed to me.

Along with a good story line, the novel presents a double-edged debate concerning the ethical and legal aspects of surrogacy and the accountability of all participating parties. The topic would be a good choice for a book club discussion.

My choice for a rating is 4.5 stars.

Mariann says

I enjoyed the book up until the very last page. It left me saying WTH. Argh !!!!

Jodi says

With her debut novel Nancy Wood firmly places herself in the Mystery and Thriller genres. The book grabbed my attention from the hit-you-with-a-right-punch opening, through plot twists that kept me glued to the pages.

Meet Shelby McDougall college graduate with tuition debt and with the hope of enrolling in graduate school she needed money. Searching for a way to solve her cash flow problems, Shelby comes across an ad looking for a surrogate mother to a childless couple. After answering the ad and meeting the couple; Jackson and Dianne Entwistle, and settling the details and undergoing fertility treatments, Shelby finds herself pregnant much to the chagrin of her straight-laced family.

Through events that left her shaken and without a home, the Entwistle's move Shelby into their guest cottage for the duration of her pregnancy. During her stay Shelby begins noticing little things that don't quite add up but is unwilling to believe the couple has ulterior motives until she finds herself in the middle of a fight for her life and her unborn babies.

Nancy Wood skillfully sets the scene for this thrilling mystery. Her characters ring true and alarmingly the plot could be based on true events. Her descriptions drew me into the story making me feel the fear and determination of her lead protagonist however she was frustratingly clueless. I did find some of the story repetitive and drawn out at times as Shelby is caught in the same predicament several times.

All in all Nancy Wood has written a winner with this solid read. I for one will be waiting for the release of her next book.

Disclaimer: This book was given to me by the author in exchange for an honest review. I was not compensated for the review.

Abbie says

Actual rating - 3.5

Shelby was a strong character, and I felt quite sorry for her for what she went through in this.

The first half of this was slow, but it still managed to keep my interest. The second half picked up the pace though, and I started to really enjoy it.

Overall, A decent read.

Henry Simpson says

This is a novel about a young woman who gets herself into a jam, finds what seems to be a quick and easy solution, and suffers the consequences when it turns out to be scam that puts her life at risk. The narrative is character-based, told from the point of view of the protagonist, Shelby, a twenty-four year old. Technically, it falls into the suspense category, but the polish of the writing and character development exceed the usual standards of that genre. The writing brought to mind Sue Grafton's crime fiction. This novel has all the elements of a suspense tale. The character starts off blissfully ignorant, events raise her suspicions that something is amiss, she investigates, evidence is gathered, suspicion increases, a confrontation occurs, her life is imperiled, a crisis occurs, and . . . sorry, no spoilers allowed.

The novel also qualifies as a character study and, as such, rises above the suspense genre. The thoughtful reader will be inclined to ask questions about Shelby. For example: How did she get into this jam? What does it say about her judgment and maturity? What kind of bargain is it to trade your twins for a paycheck? How will she feel when they are born? When they are given away and gone? And so on. One is inclined to sympathize with her, but she has made a bargain that raises personal, ethical, and moral questions. Hence, the complexity.

The novel is structured in two parts. The first deals with the transition from blissful ignorance to the resolution. (She survives, in case you had any doubt.) The second deals with the aftermath. In it we find Shelby still in town, working at a job, getting involved tangentially in the continuing investigation of the adoption ring. It amounts to a second act, with another suspense trip and a few surprises.

Dan Springer says

Don't you just love it when you read the opening pages of a book and you are instantly drawn in? You picture the characters in your mind. The action is so real you are transported into a movie in your head. You find yourself firing up the Kindle reader on your phone while waiting for an appointment to gobble up a couple more pages of a great mystery because you just have to know what happens next. That was me while enjoying Nancy Wood's mystery, Due Date.

Shelby McDougall is young, naive, and very pregnant with twins. She is also a surrogate mother for a yuppie couple yearning to be parents. Drowning in debt, she wants to help the rich couple--seems like a win-win

situation. But, all is not what it seems, and Shelby and her unborn babies find themselves in the fight of their lives.

As I mentioned before, I could not put this book down. The descriptions and dialog created a movie in my brain as I read, which for me is the pinnacle of good writing. IT is no surprise to me this novel has been optioned for film/TV.

Do yourself a favor and get this book! I can't wait for the next Shelby McDougall mystery.

Disclaimer: Due Date, is published by my publisher, Solstice Publishing and I have appeared on the author's blog. That being said, I paid for my my copy of the book and this is an honest review.

Lisa says

I thought the book started off slowly but picked up very quickly. Once it did I found it hard to put down. When the protagonist felt tense I felt tense-that's how engrossed I got. It was filled with interesting characters and the plot was very timely. Overall I enjoyed the book.

Lynda Lafond says

Nice long mystery

Final ending was a bit contrived, but the other 99% of the book more than made up for that. I would read another with the same "sleuth"

K.C. Sprayberry says

Being a surrogate goes against everything Shelby McDougal learned during her Catholic upbringing. Yet, she can't resist the urge to help a childless couple, and is soon pregnant with twins she will never have any contact with. Was this the right decision?

The moment I started Due Date, I felt as if I had jumped into a Mary Higgins Clark mystery. Nancy Wood immediately draws the reader into questioning Shelby's determination to give up the twins she carries to Diane and Jackson, a couple who appear to have lost their previous baby when the mother disappeared with it. Shelby won't let that happen a second time, despite disapproval from her own family.

Set in the Central California city of Santa Cruz, the surrounds lend as much to the ever increasing conflict as they do to the colorful background. This novel lends itself well to what goes on behind the scenes of surrogacy and the world of selling babies.

Wood more than returns the promise of an intriguing and suspenseful mystery in this book. Each page, each word draws the reader further and further into the action, makes them wonder if Shelby has made the right decision, and once she discovers the truth, again is coming to decisions that are completely wrong. The tension is always at a breaking point, causing you to turn the page as fast as you can to discover how things turn out. I highly recommend this novel for anyone who enjoys a great mystery!

Kassandra Lamb says

Some members of Shelby McDougall's family are pissed at her for becoming a surrogate mother, but Shelby's not doing it just for the money. She's hoping to atone for some sins in her past by helping a childless couple fulfill their dream. But there's something a little off about this couple...

Nancy Woods does a great job of developing Shelby's character and building the sense of tension as she begins to realize that things are not quite what they should be. The writing flows nicely, making this a pleasant read, and there's an unexpected twist at the end.

This is an impressive debut novel and I look forward to reading more of Ms. Woods' work.
