



Remembrance Day

Leah Fleming

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Lest we forget...

A poignant new tale from the English Maeve Binchy.

It's 2003 and at over 100 years old, Selma Dixon is the last link to the hidden truth behind her village's refusal to honour its war dead.

1914 saw the Yorkshire village of West Sharland send its men off to fight, including Selma's brothers and her sweetheart Guy. But when Guy is badly wounded and returns home on leave, the horrific reality of war is fully realised in the village. By none more so than Guy's mother, who, in a fit of protective madness, secretly sends Angus, Guy's identical twin brother who was medically unfit to enlist, back to fight in his place. Horrified, Guy tries to reveal the truth about his identity.

Back in France, reckless and naïve Angus is bitterly unprepared for war, and when his actions seal not only his fate but that of Selma's brother, whose name becomes tainted in the village, Selma's life is changed forever.

Forced to start a new life in America, Selma is oblivious to why her family's name is mud back at home. Until the past comes back to haunt her and the names of the dead must be spoken once more...

Remembrance Day Details

Date : Published (first published January 1st 2009)

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Author : Leah Fleming

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From Reader Review Remembrance Day for online ebook

Anne Harvey says

This is the first book by Leah Fleming that I've read and I shall definitely be looking for more. It's a deep absorbing tale with a complicated plot but well worth sticking with. The lives of the blacksmith's children and the twins from the big house are inter-twined from the time when the two Bartley boys saving the life of Angus Cantrell prior to WW1. Selma Bartley and Guy Cantrell become firm friends which later turns into a tender first love. Then, WW1 intervenes and thanks to one twin taking over the identity of the other, a tragedy occurs which tears the two families apart. How the storyline is resolved takes in the inter-war years and two countries until all is resolved following WW2. This novel kept me guessing on how the old hatreds would be swept away almost up to the end.

Karen Wilson says

First book I have read by Leah Fleming - and it was one of those free downloads on the kindle for a while. Thoroughly enjoyed this book - although the ending became almost a romantic prediction. Difficult book to put down once started..my kind of reading!! I shall now look out for other books by this author.

Babs Feasey says

I loved this book. Great story and good strong characters. Leah Fleming is becoming one of my favourite authors.

AvonBooksUK says

Lest we forget...

A poignant new tale from the English Maeve Binchy.

As a new millennium dawns, 100-year-old Selma Bartley alone knows the secret behind a Yorkshire village's refusal to honour its war dead.

One summer's day in 1913, a brush with tragedy irrevocably binds the fates of two families forever.

A year later, and West Sharland sends its men off to fight, leaving blacksmith's daughter Selma Bartley to manage the family business - and her blossoming feelings for aristocrat Guy Cantrell.

Their friendship tests social convention - but will also have unimaginable consequences before the War is over.

When Guy is wounded in battle, his identical twin Angus - desperate for battlefield action but medically unfit - takes his place, unbeknownst to his brother. But, bitterly unprepared for war, Angus's actions result in catastrophe for the Bartley family, hundreds of miles away in West Sharland.

Overnight, the village turns against the Bartleys and urged on by her distraught parents, Selma is forced to make a new life in America.

Deeply ashamed at his brother's actions, Guy adopts a new identity, eventually arriving in Pennsylvania where he finds the peace that has previously eluded him.

But years later, with war again on the horizon, secrets are resurrected, reuniting Selma and Guy - and the names of the dead must be uttered once more...

A mesmerising tale about how a landmark moment in history affected the lives of so many, guaranteed to capture the heart of all those who loved The Island and The House at Riverton

Louise says

Beautifully written. So tragic but a beautiful story about how in years to come, lives cross over.

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Andrew says

There are many things which I liked about this book. The social history of a rural lifestyle in Yorkshire at the time of the Great War provided an interesting setting.

During the early chapters I liked the way in which the social divide between the wealthy and less wealthy families and their place in society was developed. The characters which make up the two central families and how they interacted with each other was developed well. Both from the social divide perspective, but also from the view-point of the changing attitudes across the generations.

to be finished later....

Yvonne (Fiction Books) says

"Lest We Forget"

When I started reading this book, I was immediately taken back to my reading experience and the writing style, of Kate Morton's 'The House At Riverton', in as much as the composition and presentation techniques, and the tone and content of the writing, are quite similar. The story is told as one of the final acts of an elderly person, as a series of memories that are being recounted almost as a living testament, an atonement for wrong doings of long ago.

The main characters in this tragic and moving saga, are so well developed, with their own unique and recognizable personalities and traits, that it is sometimes hard to forget that this is a work of fiction and not fact, although fact is very much present throughout, woven skillfully into the fabric of the story.

There is some well researched material, about both the first and second World Wars and the Christian Anabaptist Mennonite communities, specifically those in the Pennsylvania area of the US, in the mid to late 1900's.

The human spirit is examined closely in the two young protagonists, one from each side of the social divide, in the early to mid 1900's. Class distinction and community social status is still at its post colonial heyday, forcing them apart and attempting to define their destinies. Family loyalties are tested to the limit and found lacking by this new generation of young people, who are trying to shun the conventions and bridge the gap of the 'class war', but are born just too soon for this revolution in social attitudes. Then, when they are eventually reunited, in the strangest of circumstances, are they still the same people, with that same strong and true spirit that they once were?

There is also some interesting social commentary, which touches on the conscience of a nation, if not a World. About the punishment World War 1 soldiers received for the military offence of desertion and how the families of the executed personnel were treated here at home. The shame and humiliation felt by a shattered, hard working chapel going family from the village, is well constructed within the story, along with the jealousy and revenge seeking tactics for imagined wrongs and injustices as perceived by the gentry, who, unwilling to face up to their own failures and shortcomings, hide behind the lower ranks when justice is meted out.

It is clear however, that war is no class discriminator, but a leveller, taking the lives of sons, fathers, brothers and husbands, without distinction. So we start to see the closing of the social divide and the effect that it has on all members of a society, but is it already too late for our young couple, torn apart and flung asunder, whilst at home jealousy has been tempered with humility, shame surpassed by the final parting of a loved one, and a community's humiliation stunned to silence?

The ending may have been predictable to a point, but the final twists and turns in this lifelong saga, were left unrevealed until the last moment, with the lead up to the final revelations being well managed, realistic and credible.

An excellent, intense, moving and very satisfying story, that captured my imagination and held me spell-bound, until the very last page.

Debbie says

A good family saga that explores the lives of the "gentry" and the "workers" and the impact of two world wars. Involved plots with lots of interesting characters. I will look for more books by Leah Fleming.

Lianne says

Very good storyteller..

Lisa Carlile says

i enjoyed this book a lot.

June Churchill says

Another wonderful story highlighting the terrible injustice to soldiers in the First World War.

Jennifer says

This was a good piece of storytelling and I enjoyed it, but I was always aware that it wasn't something I would have chosen to read if I'd not picked it up in a BookCrossing Zone. More of a "Because it was there" than "Where have you been all my life? Thank goodness I found you"

Patricia Bosse says**A darn good book!**

An excellent way to learn about the history of the world war. By reading this book you can get a better understanding of how the war affected every day people and their families. A moving book and heart felt story. We must all come to grips with our past and mistakes we made.

reem habib says**Made me mad**

War does nothing but destroy not one good thing comes out of war except sorrow. Great love story and hope
