



A Wedding in December

Anita Shreve

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At an inn in the Berkshire Mountains, seven former schoolmates gather to celebrate a wedding--a reunion that becomes the occasion of astonishing revelations as the friends collectively recall a long-ago night that indelibly marked each of their lives. Written with the fluent narrative artistry that distinguishes all of Anita Shreve's bestselling novels, *A Wedding in December* acutely probes the mysteries of the human heart and the endless allure of paths not taken.

A Wedding in December Details

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Author : Anita Shreve

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Jen says

I was annoyed with this book practically from the first few pages. I could not relate to any of the characters for whatever reason. Maybe it was the repetition behind each character's selfish thought process which made the reasoning for their actions seem overdone and invalid. There were some promising moments, but overall I was disappointed. For example, what was the deal with nearly every character being an adulterer? I look forward to reading the author's more highly recommended works and hope for something better next time. It's pretty lame that the big secret to the entire mystery of the story lies behind this alcoholic teenager who died because he soiled himself and drowned cleaning himself off in the ocean. Very lame. I would not recommend this book.

Christina Kirby says

Obviously, I went through an Anita Shreve phase. This was one of those books that was hard to get into and hard to finish. I actually quit reading it for a while, read a few other books, and came back to it when I had nothing else to read. I guess it was just boring...nothing really happens to any of the characters, they rarely leave the house where the wedding is taking place, and most of the book is spent reminiscing uninteresting memories from the characters' high school/college days. Skip this one.

Kellie says

This wasn't bad. It is a story of a small reunion of highschool friends. One of the girls, Bridget and one of the guys, Bill are getting married at the Inn owned by one of their friends. This is definitely similar to "The Big Chill". I liked that about it. The Inn is in the Berkshires. There are, of course, demons that are hidden in the back of each of the friends mind. Specifically, the death of their friend, Stephen who drowned in the ocean when they were seniors. The truth comes out in the story. Stephen was an alcoholic already and had soiled himself at the party thrown the night of his death. He went to wash himself in the ocean and fell in and drowned. Harrison, his roommate, always felt responsible. Especially since he was in love with Nora, Stephen's girlfriend. Stephen caught them kissing the night he died. Agnes, another friend, has a secret as well. She teaches at the school they graduated from and has been having an affair with one of their teachers for years. He is married. She is also writing a book about the Halifax explosion. That story is woven into this one. The book could have done without this, although it was interesting. I never heard about the Halifax explosion but it was mentioned in "Until I Find You". And finally, Bridget has breast cancer. Her and Bill, highschool sweethearts, reunited at their highschool reunion. He left his wife and daughter to marry her.

I liked this better reading it the second time.

Becky says

The basic message of this book is that adultery can be justified, which I firmly disagree. At first I thought

this book was ok - it has an interesting plot concept: reunion of a group of friends from high school after 27 years. It also had a story within a story (which the transitions were confusing, but I started looking forward to reading more of the second story) and was an easy read. But by the end (and time I realized the main message), I was disappointed that I wasted my time.

Christine H says

So, I began this book in May just before I went to grad school and was actually intrigued by the plot synopsis. I found the first few pages dry, but I knew better than to give up on a book before the quarter marker. When I picked it up again this month, I re-read the few pages I had already read and continued for another 20 or so more, but I just couldn't get hooked into it anymore. I thought the narrative was needing spice in numerous areas and even the foundation of the plot began to seem unappealing to me. I can't say that my worldview has changed over six months, but the idea of people leaving their spouses for the "real" loves of their lives just couldn't settle in my tummy. While romantic, in theory, the potentially catastrophic repercussions for all involved are just not my thing.

I'll give *LIGHT ON SNOW* a try in the near future. I've heard such great things about Shreve that I'd hate to give up after just one try.

Marika Gillis says

This novel brings seven former schoolmates together after more than 20 years to attend a wedding at an inn in the Berkshire Mountains. The tight bond held by this group of friends was shattered years earlier when one of their own died unexpectedly. The blossoming relationships and potential of each of these central characters jackknifed with the death of this friend, and the wedding reunion gives the characters an opportunity to seek out a resolution for the paths they did not follow.

This is the second book I have read recently in which the others who have read it with me have been dissatisfied. This book was chosen as our December read for my book club. Many, if not all, of the other book club members were turned off by the unhappy marriages and questionable moral behavior that plays out in the novel. (But, then again, this is a church book club!) I, however, was struck by this book. While I did not completely understand the motivation of the characters, I was moved by their strong inner turmoil and their struggles to overcome weakness and temptation.

Despite the setting (which is very appealing to the imagination), the book, like the other Anita Shreve novels I have read (*The Pilot's Wife* and *The Weight of Water*), is shrouded in sadness and regret. The characters are consumed with unhappiness and a feeling of general unease. A member of my book club shared that she felt the characters in this novel were underdeveloped. I believe Anita Shreve intentionally writes her characters to be vague. Like real people, they are complicated and troubled. The reader must infer understanding of the characters through their obscure thoughts and behavior.

The most interesting part of this novel for me was the story within a story. In the book, the character Agnes, a lonely classmate pining for a former teacher, is writing an historical fiction short story about the Halifax disaster. The explosion that occurred in the city of Halifax in Nova Scotia during the winter of 1917 parallels the tragedy of 9/11 in this book- the characters in the novel are reuniting merely two months after

9/11. The story of Innes and Hazel (as written by Agnes in the novel) is told during and after the Halifax disaster and their relationship mirrors the others in the novel in it's tempting impossibility set against a recent tragedy. Prior to reading this novel, I had never heard of the Halifax explosion and I was saddened to learn of the deaths and injuries that occurred during that significant historical event.

This book is not a good one to pick up if you are looking for a lighthearted read. While the novel is easy to follow and won't take long to finish, a melancholy feeling permeates every word and may linger for awhile after you put the book down.

Célia Loureiro says

É um livro lento, com pouca acção. A autora é sempre uma mestra nas descrições das relações humanas, e não estava a dormir quando escreveu este "Casamento em Dezembro". Eu quase adormeci ao longo das páginas, porque me pareceu demasiado nostálgico, pensei que não fosse a lugar algum. E então, de repente, conforme me estendia à beira da piscina num festival de verão com ele aberto, aconteceu: a revelação, o inesperado, a qualidade inegável da autora. E não vou revelar o que sucede que me fez chorar à frente dos meus amigos, numa situação jamais esperada. Foi a escritora a falar da vida, da ilusão de que o passado está enterrado e que tudo está bem ou vai, simplesmente, acabar bem. É por isso que a adoro e que amei o livro.

It's a slow book, with little action. Shreve is always a master when it comes to describe human relationships, and she wasn't asleep when she wrote this 'A wedding in December'. I almost slept through the book pages, because it seemed so nostalgic that I thought it wouldn't go anywhere. And then, suddenly, as I layed by the pool in a summer festival with it, it hit me: the revelation, the unexpected, the undeniable quality of the author. And I won't reveal what happens that made me cry in front of all my friends, in the most unexpected situation. It was Shreve speaking to me about life, about the ilusion that the past is buried and everything is fine or will simply end up right. That's why I love her and I loved the book.

Destinee Sutton says

I've read two Shreve novels now and I think what I've learned from her is this: Before agreeing to marry a man, one should ask him if he's actually deeply in love with someone else. If he's honest he may reveal that he's just marrying you because he thinks it'll never work out with another woman. As Shreve illustrates so well in her novels, it sucks to find out ten or twenty years into a marriage that you were actually the runner-up.

I'm pretty tired of books about domestic funk. Why do I keep reading them? Do I think I'm going to find one that isn't brimming with middle class malaise? (I think I stole the phrase "middle class malaise" from the NYT review of *A Wedding*.)

Still, I'm not gonna lie, I liked this book. I'll probably read another just like it next week. It's like I think if I read enough books about unhappy marriages I'll be able to prevent myself from entering one.

Jennifer says

I did not really care about the characters. It was a straight character study about people who really bored me to death. We compared it to the big chill (that was more entertaining) The book ends kind of like it started it just was and it was nothing I wanted to read.

sarah says

Oh my god, this book was boring and pretentious, for at least the fifty or so pages that I got through, and I almost never put down a book in the middle. I think I've somehow managed to read almost every book by Anita Shreve and I've only liked about half of them, so I believe I give up now.

Caroline Rietz says

This was my first Anita Shreve book. It was enjoyable, but disappointed where it ended. It was almost as if there was to be a continuation. The one female character who was having an affair with an old teacher, her story seemed abruptly cut off. Why was she having trouble w/ her vision? I almost feel I need to read this again in case I missed something the first time around. I never felt there was enough back ground to each character.

Beth says

As with all of her books, the storyline has promise, but falls short (for many reasons). I am not a fan of her abrupt/erratic writing style (she seems to jump from topic to topic with her characters). With this book, I didn't like how she had so many characters that seemed under-developed. The book is about seven former classmates, but there are a few that just seem to be thrown into the storyline. The best part of the book was the mini Halifax story within the story.

Ali says

This is possibly one of my least favourite of the Anita Shreve novels I have read (there are about 3 I haven't read yet - 1 TBR) I didn't find there was the depth that exists in some of her earlier work, like *Fortune's Rocks*, or *The Weight of Water*. The actual story of *The wedding* - is pretty bland, predictable, and not very compelling, although Anita Shreve's writing is always hugely readable. However within the novel, there is a story within a story, which irritated me at first but then hooked me in a way the main narrative didn't. One of the characters Agnes is writing the story of a terrible disaster that took place in Halifax (Canada) during the first world war - and it is this story that is the more compelling of the two. The relationships explored in *A wedding in December* are done well, and certainly there is a definite feeling of sadness that pervades the whole story - a sadness which seems in keeping with how some of the characters begin to look at their lives, their past and their future. I do generally like Anita Shreve's books, but this was a little disappointing.

Jonathan Ashleigh says

I feel I was let down, in the end, when I found out the last details of some dead high school all-star shortstop who died twenty-seven years ago. But, I don't feel I was let down by this book, which was entertaining and held my attention. In the end, I was surprised by parts of some of the outcomes which were not as happy or as Christian as they could have been portrayed.

At times, I was bothered by the baseball parts which felt as though my mother was describing the terminology. "Hole between second and third." And, at one point the main character, Harrison, claimed the dead kid would have become the greatest shortstop to ever play Major League Baseball (that made me laugh).

During the Novel, characters do some of the writing and those parts don't do much for me. I did like the story within, written during the events by a schoolteacher, but I didn't care that much about how that story related to the rest of the book (I guess I might be missing something). The extra story did mean there were a lot of characters to keep track of.

A Wedding In December may not be all that memorable compared to most weddings I have been to, but I wanted to know what was going to happen next all the way through. And that means quite a bit, especially when the story included a few (possibly unfair) stereotypes - a gay piano player who won't play wiffle ball for fear of hurting his fingers.

Dianne says

One of my favorite movies is The Big Chill about a group of friends who get together for the funeral of one of the group. A Wedding in December has all of the same ingredients needed for a weekend reunion of friends from their youth; plenty of drama, secrets revealed, handsome, champion baseball players, beach scenes, memories of favorite teachers and of course romance. Having read way too many mystery novels recently, it was nice to read a story about people, their friendships, their flaws and their aspirations. This is what Anita Shreve excels at, the drama of interpersonal relationships. Now I hope she does a movie script for The Wedding in December.

Suzanne says

Another review. Another very average audio book! Oh well. At least my commute isn't empty, which is the reason I listen to these. I limit myself as I just borrow audio cd's. They are free!

This is a story of high school friends re uniting for a marriage of two of them. This couple have a chance at love after it was assumed they'd marry first time around. They didn't, he split up with her and they regretted it their whole lives. It seems this theme runs this way for all the characters - a lot of what ifs.

Parallel to this was a story of 911 and a war time disaster told in a fictional novel by one of the characters. Weird.

All these characters simply wished for what they could not have, and went about and took it anyway. The moral core of most of the characters was lacking. This was frustrating. Phrases such as 'visceral pain' 'luminous incandescence'.

Then they all left without saying goodbye, which is how I felt about the story. Oh well. Onto the next. Which is a Sandra Brown one, hopefully this will give me a shred of satisfaction!

Karen says

I didn't like Pilot's Wife, by Anita Shreve. So I've not really sought out her others. But, when you are on the road travelling and you need a new book because you've exhausted the three you brought with you, you'll pretty much take anything that isn't utter crap.

Boy, was I suprised. It was AWESOME! One of the best books I have read in a really really long time. I savored every word. I loved every word.

Enjoy!

Jacki says

Well I bought this thinking it would be my tie-breaker for Anita Shreve. I've read two book by her that I enjoyed and two that I flat out hated. I won't be reading Anita Shreve anymore.

After the first 100 pages or so, I started just skimming the 'story-within-a-story' parts of the book. For me, this made it much, much better. I didn't really get the point of including this story.

The other thing that I hated was the whole, overall message. She should have included one couple who was at least semi-happy who hadn't gotten where they are through infidelity. I hated how the idea of infidelity was approached with the idea that if you are happier in your affair than your marriage then it's ok. As long as you're 'in love'. Puh-lease.

I'm over this book. Yuck.

B the BookAddict says

I first read this novel in 2005 and rated it a 4★. Reading it again in 2013, I have had to adjust my rating to 3★. Maybe the reader in me has grown up a little...

Karen says

This book started out with so much possibility. A group of old high school friends gathering for a wedding between two of the friends who had found each other again.

It was very interesting to see where each of their lives had taken them. It was interesting to learn of their relationships in high school. There was even a wonderful second story taking place because one of the characters was writing a novel and it was being revealed as she wrote it.

However, the book ended UGLY. It revealed some really terrible things about most of the people. That in itself would have been okay, but nothing was resolved or no great breakthroughs were made. In fact several more mistakes were made by the characters that seemed to have no meaning or merit.

Both the real book, and the novel being written just stopped. There was no ending to either. The stories just stopped in really bad situations. Worse yet, I didn't want to know what happen to the characters. I didn't want to know them. I was not endeared to them.
