



## What Hope Remembers

*Johnnie Alexander*

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When Amy Somers loses her job as a lobbyist, she moves to Misty Willow, well aware that she's crossing bridges she'd burned years before. With all the mistakes she's made and the uncaring things she's done--even to her own family--she can hardly believe that happiness will find her, especially when Gabe Kendall, her first crush and her first kiss, rides back into her life atop a buckskin mare.

A former Marine, Gabe is at loose ends after serving a prison sentence for being in the wrong place at the wrong time. He sees beyond Amy's hard exterior to the girl he once knew and loved, and he longs to see her open her heart. Yet with his vision clouded by shame for his past and fears about the future, he finds it difficult to see the path ahead.

But the memory of that long-ago kiss just may have the power to reignite a romance that brings out the best in both of them.

## What Hope Remembers Details

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## From Reader Review What Hope Remembers for online ebook

### Fiction Aficionado says

It always makes for an interesting read when a character who's been something of a villain in the series gets the chance to tell their story. A hard-nosed, high-powered lobbyist, Amy Somers sued her cousin AJ for the rights to Misty Willow so that she could develop the land into an upscale retreat—a plan that would further both her personal and her professional ambitions. Those plans collapsed with her body on the floor of a nightclub and, after undergoing treatment for an eating disorder, she's come to live at the family cottage. She's feeling more abandoned and alone than ever, despite having both AJ and Brett (and their families) nearby, and she's hoping that she will somehow find the same peace her Gran found in that little cottage. But there are two problems: Gabe Kendall and Logan Cassidy.

Gabe has returned to Glade County to find his feet and help his Aunt Tess with Whisper Lane Stables. The place has steadily declined since his uncle's death and he's determined to help her get the farm back up and running again. But Gabe isn't aware of the extent of the financial debt his aunt is in, or of the pressure she is under to sell to property developer Dylan Tapley—Amy's former client. He's surprised and a little hurt that Amy claims not to remember him, but it'll take more than that to discourage him.

Fellow lobbyist Logan Cassidy was often Amy's confidential sounding-board during her lobbying days, not to mention an obliging plus-one when she needed an escort. Dylan Tapley is his client now, but when he arranges to meet with Amy to discuss Dylan's plans, it becomes clear he has more than just business on his mind.

Like the other novels in this series, there's a gentle pace to the story, but there were some definite surprises toward the end. Amy's a tough nut to crack—she's defensive, and often goes on the offensive to avoid being hurt—but Gabe's constant friendship and the memory of the way he reached out to her after her parents' death gradually soften her towards him. I couldn't help feeling the story wrapped up a little quickly in the final pages, but the collision of ambition, hope, and regrets made for a strong conclusion to the *Misty Willow* series.

I received a copy of this novel from the publisher. This has not influenced the content of my review, which is my honest and unbiased opinion.

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### Candice says

What Hope Remembers is book three of Alexander's Misty Willow series and is a nice conclusion to the Somers family saga. Set in rural Ohio, this romance features two broken characters fighting for a fresh start. With pasts that both bond Amy and Gabe together and makes their future relationship challenging, this story brings the Somers family together, heals, and brings true faith to light. The twist at the end caught me completely off guard, which was nice as that doesn't happen often. This book reads as a standalone novel, however, I recommend reading the entire series in order to better appreciate Amy's character. I give this book four stars, and I'm looking forward to what Ms. Alexander brings us next!

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## **Staci says**

Lovely conclusion to the Misty Willow Series.

Readers of this series know that Amy was not a warm or kind person in the first two books. As can happen, she has a life event that alters her world. Amy returns to Misty Willow to take a break from the only life she knew as an adult. Life in the fast lane. A life of using others for her own upward progress.

At the same time, Gabe returns to spend time with his aunt Tess. He is also mending wounds from his past.

It was a joy to watch their love blossom among the backdrop of each of them working through their own struggles as well as work together to save Tess's stables. Having AJ and Brett from the first books in the series and their families be a part of the story added to novel.

Misty Willow was a well done contemporary fiction series. I recommend it to fans of Becky Wade and Robin Lee Hatcher.

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My gratitude to the publisher Revell for a complimentary Net Galley copy of the novel. I was not required to publish a review. The opinions expressed are my own.

## **Hannah says**

3.5 stars

I began this book by not liking Amy at all. She has stirrings of conscience, though. Very slowly, she begins to awaken out of her selfishness. She's been driven by a desire for power and control, and even now her reputation is good enough that she has a good bit of political clout. But she's come to the country to be near her brother, who is now living a summer idyll of a life with his new wife, his restored faith, and his newly discovered son.

Amy's not very likable for the entire first half of the book, and it does rely heavily on having known about Amy from other books. I did really like Gabe! He's a former Marine and a soft-hearted man, hoping to overcome the events of the past few years and some consequences of another's actions.

As to the second half, major spoilers:

(view spoiler)

...basically, it was like we started skimming over events to get the story done. Just when I really began to like Amy and to want to spend time with her, events snowballed and then were...done! With a more rounded, deeper ending, I'd have easily given a full four stars rating.

I loved the epilogue! But I did want one for AJ and Brett as well. ;)

I received a free copy from NetGalley for review.

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## **Madison says**

To say I was excited to read this book would be a massive understatement. I have loved both books in the Misty Willow series so far and the books just keep getting better, so I knew What Hope Remembers was going to be awesome. I was right - it is certainly a beautiful story. Amy and Gabe are characters who both have so many issues to overcome and their story of reconnection is founded in the sweet love of their adolescence.

Gabe has returned to his Aunt's farm after many years away, first deployed overseas and then in prison. The farm is now rundown and vastly different from that of his childhood memories. But his aunt's love remains the same and the community is far more welcoming than he ever dreamed. But the biggest surprise comes when he learns that Amy, his first love and the woman who has always held a place in his heart, has also returned to Misty Willow. Amy has decided to leave her old life behind. She is ashamed of who she has become and yet doesn't know what to do to turn her life around. Rebuilding the relationships with her brother and cousin and their wives seems a good place to start. As Amy and Gabe reconnect they have many secrets and fears to face, while an outside threat attempts to keep them from rekindling their childhood romance.

We got the first glimpse of Amy's story in the previous two books in this series, particularly in When Love Arrives, when Amy collapses and is abandoned by her boyfriend, a married senator. Amy is fighting an eating disorder, as well as the grief and fears of her childhood that she has long-buried beneath a cold exterior and battling for success in the corporate world. Her choices have distanced her from her family, when being abandoned is what she fears most. Coming face-to-face with Gabe Kendall is certainly unexpected, as is the sudden rush of emotions she feels. She isn't sure someone like Gabe would ever want a woman with her past, while Gabe has the exact same reaction.

What Hope Remembers was an unexpected story and took many unexpected turns. I enjoyed the majority of it, but I was a little disappointed with the ending. There were so many issues the characters faced in the story and while the big one was resolved it was the little, but I think more important, ones that were overlooked. For example, Amy spends the majority of the book hiding her recent past from Gabe, which prevents her from pursuing a relationship with him and yet it seems that by the end of the story she never actually has that important conversation with him. There were also other discussions they had about freedom and taking the time to decide what they both wanted to do in their lives and yet by the end they seem to have fallen into something and it's not discussed again. But while I would have loved more of an ending, the book did conclude with a sweet simplicity that attests to the enduring nature of Amy and Gabe's relationship.

The charm of Amy and Gabe's romance rests in their history. A childhood connection, a first kiss, and a friendship rooted in pain and the solace found in each other's company. It was enjoyable to see their friendship rekindled, and it was lovely to return to Misty Willow and reconnect with Brett, Dani, AJ, and Shelby.

Summer picnics, childhood memories, sweet romance, fears faced, heartbreak, horses, family, and even a good dose of suspense combine in this contemporary novel.

The publishers provided an advanced readers copy of this book for reviewing purposes. All opinions are my own.

Find more reviews, reading age guides, content advisory, and recommendations on my blog Madison's Library.

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### **Dawn says**

Amy Somers never dreamed that she'd be living in the country. Yet after walking away from her career, she discovered she needed her family. And her family happens to live in the country. Amy's hoping to figure out who she is when she runs into childhood crush, Gabe Kendall. Gabe is a former Marine with a prison record. He happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. As he tries to make sense of his life now, he finds himself drawn to the girl he never forgot. Can these two hearts find healing together?

I didn't like Amy in the first book. I thought she was a brat. I didn't care much for her in the second book either. But this book showed how more there was to her. By the end, I actually liked her. I loved Gabe though. I loved how he wanted to take care of his family.

This series is great. I have enjoyed each one.

I received this book for free from the publisher for the purpose of sharing my honest opinion. My thoughts and opinions are my own.

Recommended to fans of women's fiction.

Rating - 4 stars

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### **Beth Erin says**

Full review on Faithfully Bookish <http://wp.me/p7ngfE-Tu>

Our leading lady Amy is haunted by her past mistakes and feels unworthy, lonely, and cast aside despite the presence and support of her family. Former boy-next-door Gabe returns to the only place that feels like home and unexpectedly discovers his first love living right across the road.

This sweet rural romance has an intriguing mystery thread and lots of down home country living fun. Readers will enjoy catching up with characters from the first two books while getting to know Amy and Gabe. What Hope Remembers is a lovely conclusion to the Misty Willow series!

I requested the opportunity to read this book through the publisher. The opinions expressed are my own.

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### **Rebecca says**

"He could understand her forgetting the arrowhead he'd given her . . . . But who didn't remember their first kiss?"

Amy Somers absolutely remembers her first kiss, it was quite unforgettable, but just now she wants to banish that memory into a safe place where she has tucked everything else that was pleasant about her childhood. Adulthood? Not so much. Amy has been a person whom not many people in her own family, let alone in her

home town of Misty Willow, have been very fond of. Driving herself into oblivion as a political lobbyist, her life and health suffered the consequences, but she's determined to make a fresh start. She's just not sure how Gabe Kendall fits in, if at all.

At first glance, Amy Somers is even more beautiful than she was as a teenager, but underneath that alluring exterior package lurks a wounded spirit that Gabe Kendall is convinced that he cannot save. Returning to his Aunt Tess's Misty Willow horse farm, after an unfortunate incarceration for a crime that he did not commit, Gabe has no idea where the future will lead him. What a coincidence, or is it providence, that places Amy Somers back into his life, for she is seeking to build new bridges as well.

Enjoy Johnnie Alexander's third book in the acclaimed "Misty Willow" series, as she tucks hope back into the hearts of those who never imagined they could remember it, especially when outward circumstances take a turn for the worse. Will Amy and Gabe find a way to join the psalmist in saying, "I trusted in the Lord when I said, 'I was greatly afflicted.'"

I received a copy of this book from the publisher. The opinions stated are entirely my own.

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### **Dana Michael says**

What Hope Remembers is the third story in the Misty Willow Series and this book features that little stinker, Amy. She wasn't so nice in the other two books and I wondered what her story was. Well, the author did a beautiful job of getting us into Amy's head and heart. This story not only had a sweet romance, but a bit of action and mystery as well. The end packed a big punch and I couldn't go to sleep until I finished it. The ending had me gushing "awww!!" I love sweet happily ever after endings. Especially when there was so much turmoil and pain to get through. I really enjoyed the book and I highly recommend it and all of this author's books.

\*I was given this book by the publisher and was under no obligation to leave a review.

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### **Amy says**

"It's about expectations. And perhaps figuring out what's really important in life."

If you're like me, then you hope to get a little more from a book than just an escape for a few blessed minutes. Though, that is one great perk. I usually look for something specific to take away. Lately my life has felt a little clouded, and I've done a lot of soul searching. I do feel like most of how we view this life is based around experiences, and our expectations. With that, we make decisions in our heads about other people's choices & behaviours and try to second guess it. That seemed to be a major theme of this book. The author claims that she never intended to write Amy's story, but I'm glad she did. I didn't read book 1 in this series, only book 2. I didn't even realize the connection until I was a couple chapters in and the names and locations started ringing a bell!

I find Johnnie Alexander to write a well thought out and unhurried story about far more than just two major characters. Though the focus is mainly around Gabe & Amy, there is so much more here. I found the dialogue of Tess to be a rich addition. She brought so much to the back story, with the financial struggles she faced, and in helping us to understand the difficult family history for Gabe and Amy. She was honest and

real, and while I was frustrated often by the inability to share with others when help was needed, I did feel she was pretty spot on, most people would probably react the same way. Even the ruthless and calculating Logan was a needed inclusion to make this story great.

I'm not really a fan of the cover, which, is a minor thing I suppose. I read the book before looking at it, and I just felt like the characters are a little more older & wiser - and that the plot is more intense and darker than the bright cheery cover suggests.

Fantastic story, not always easy to read when difficult subjects are tackled. But it felt honest, and that is refreshing. Along the same quality as book 2, I'm thinking I'm going to go right back to the beginning and read about AJ & Shelby, though I'm getting the feeling I'm not going to like Amy too much if I do that!!

As for figuring out what really matters in life, that's one constant I never have a question about. God & family. Always.

Thank you to Netgalley & Revell for the eARC. This is my honest review.

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### **Sarah says**

What Hope Remembers is the third book in the Misty Willows series and I loved this book! If you have never had the opportunity to read any of Jonnie Alexander's books, you are missing out. First, you can read this novels as stand alone, but I would recommend picking them all. This is the perfect beach read novel. You'll love the story of Amy and Gabe. This is a book that you'll read in one sitting as you are tucked back in a small town with two hearts that need some mending. Will there be hope for a romance? Will Amy be able find a job and make a decent living or will the past ruin a possible future between any flames at all? Find out in What Hope Remembers! Thank you to the publisher for providing me a copy. I give this book 5/5 stars. A favorable review was not required. As mentioned before this is the third book in the Misty Willow series, but can be read as a stand alone.

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### **Amy says**

I have followed The Misty Willow series from the beginning and I was very much invested in Amy's story. After her cousin A.J. and her brother Brett have found true love, Amy's life seems to be going nowhere. All three of them have known heartache and searing loss with the loss of their parents and now recently their grandmother. However, Amy's cousin and brother seemed to have moved on with love and happiness in their new families.

Amy was a hard character to like at first, as I remembered how callous she seemed in the first book. By the second book's ending I was looking forward to her story and happily ever after. Carrying a load of guilt, she had made some really poor decisions in her life. Struggling with an eating disorder and the shame of letting men use her, she certainly does not think she is worth much and not only that but the lure of prestige and money is a temptation to her.

Her first crush and true friend, Gabe Kendall has come back to help his aunt out with her stables. He has never forgotten Amy but due to some darkness in his past and sorting through what his now future looks like,

he does not believe he can offer Amy much. These two have a lot to sort out and sometimes I just wanted to sit them down and make them both listen. But both were dealing with feelings of inadequacy and loads of guilt that they needed to find their own path through.

This was a heartfelt and bittersweet read of two young loves who meet up again years later after many mistakes. I think there was a lot of lessons here of learning to let go of your past and the shame that goes with poor choices and life decisions and to grasp your second chance and live the life you were made for.

There is much more going on in this novel, the love story just really stood out for me and I recommend the whole series about this family and the lessons of not letting prior generations mistakes be the only way to continue.

I received a copy of this book for free. I was not required to post a positive review and all views and opinions expressed are my own.

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### **Denise Hershberger says**

it was neat to revisit Misty Willow in this third book of the series. It does read okay as a standalone but I always recommend reading any series in order.

I love Tess. She is such a good aunt and mother figure. But as she was only a secondary character I didn't get enough of her in this book.

I really liked Gabe. I feel like he overcame a lot and showed a lot of growth even if most of it was not necessarily on the pages of the book but implied.

I didn't connect with Amy at all. I didn't see the character growth I would have liked to have seen. I also didn't like how she constantly references old problems she had and things she'd done as if I should already know about her past. I was also disappointed by her maturity level. I would have expected more.

This book's plot didn't keep me real engaged either. I liked the setting and the intrigue of finding out how things would work out but it wasn't a page turner for me. I usually read a book quickly and this one took me three evenings.

Thanks to Revell for the free book. All opinions in this review are my own.

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### **Tima says**

Amy Somers is now back home in Misty Willow. She's staying in her grandmother's cottage while she regroups and tries to figure out where she's headed in life. She misses the big city in some ways, but she can't go back to who she was and what she did. When she sees Gabe again after many years, she pretends she doesn't know him. It isn't because of his recent release from prison. It's because she needs to protect her heart. And who would want her anyway, when they realize what type of person she is.

This was a sweet, but complicated story. I've read one of the previous books, so I knew the characters. But it took me a few chapters to refresh my memory and place everyone again. There are still complications going on with the land and the people who live there. The author added drama, a little bit of mystery, and lots of faith and romance. The characters fit their parts well and played off of each other to the benefit of the plot. I enjoyed the story, although it did have some sad elements. Overall, readers who enjoy Christian fiction with a touch of drama and sweet romance will enjoy this book.

I received a copy of this book from Revell Reads. All thoughts expressed are my own.

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### **Kav says**

Well, my heart is in a hundred knots tied so tight it hurts! I really didn't want to read Amy's story. Really, I didn't. But I love this series and the way Johnnie Alexander spins a tale so I took the plunge and got emotionally pummeled for my trouble. But it's all good -- pain means growth, both for heroines and readers.

So, this is the third book in the Misty Willow series, but each book reads as a standalone. Though fans of the series will be thrilled to meet up with AJ and Shelby and Brett and Dani (heroes and heroines from books one and two) in this final story.

I love homecoming stories -- the power to change that comes from embracing what you ran away from in the first place. Lots of scope for angsty plotlines which follow both Amy and Gabe to Misty Willow. She plays self-defeating mind games that keep her frozen in a dark place. He is burdened by a guilt that isn't his to bear. Two hurting souls, once young and innocent and on the verge of fledgling love. But a whole lot of living has happened in the past decade or so and it seems like they will never capture their lost love.

Sometimes I had to put this book down and practice deep breathing exercises to calm myself down before I could bring myself to face more of the harrowing journey that leads to Amy and Gabe's happily-ever-after. In fact, I will confess to sneaking a peek at the last page -- a very short but hope-filled epilogue -- just to convince myself to keep reading. Yes, I get that involved with my characters.

And if the romantical journey isn't enough to leave a reader gnashing her teeth and pulling out her hair, a villainous subplot nearly tipped me over the edge. I do so enjoy seething over a truly conniving bad guy...as long as he gets his comeuppance by the end.

An excruciatingly thrilling read that broke my heart in places.

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