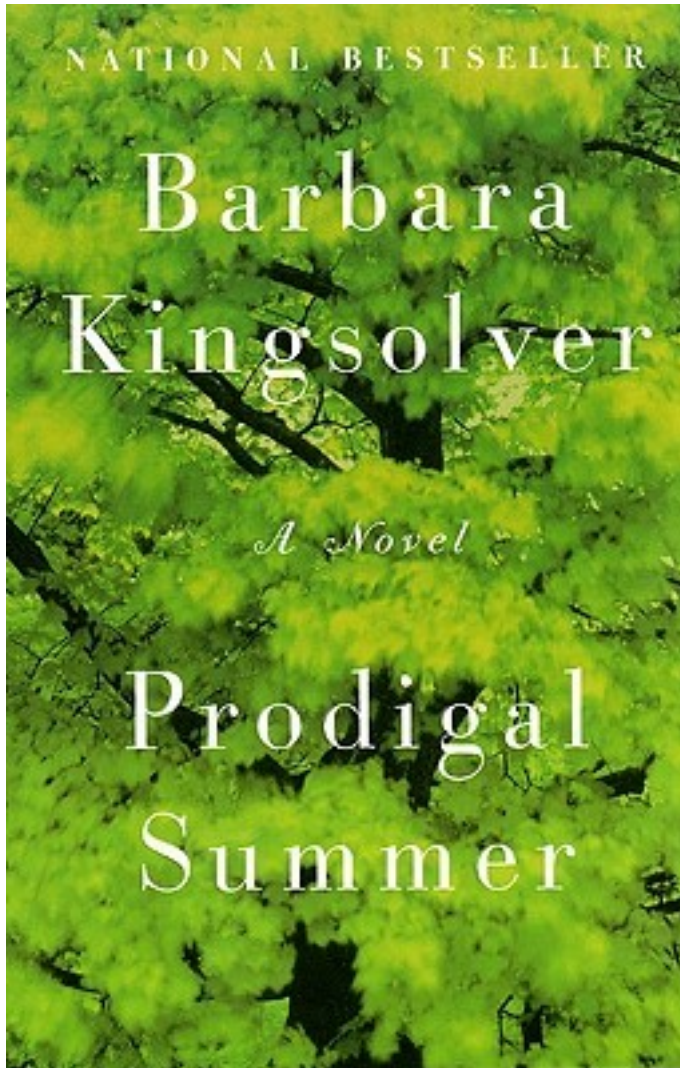

Barbara Kingsolver

Prodigal Summer



Title: Prodigal Summer

Author: Barbara Kingsolver

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Description

Barbara Kingsolver, a writer praised for her "extravagantly gifted narrative voice" ("New York Times Book Review"), has created with this novel a hymn to wildness that celebrates the prodigal spirit of human nature, and of nature itself.

"Prodigal Summer" weaves together three stories of human love within a larger tapestry of lives inhabiting the forested mountains and struggling small farms of southern Appalachia. At the heart of these intertwined narratives is a den of coyotes that have recently migrated into the region. Deanna Wolfe, a reclusive wildlife biologist, watches the forest from her outpost in an isolated mountain cabin where she is caught off-guard by Eddie Bondo, a young hunter who comes to invade her most private spaces and confound her self-assured, solitary life. On a farm several miles down the mountain, another web of lives unfolds as Lusa Maluf Landowski, a bookish city girl turned farmer's wife, finds herself unexpectedly marooned in a strange place where she must declare or lose her attachment to the land. And a few more miles down the road, a pair of elderly, feuding neighbors tend their respective farms and wrangle about God, pesticides, and the complexities of a world neither of them expected.

Over the course of one humid summer, as the urge to procreate overtakes a green and profligate countryside, these characters find connections to one another and to the flora and fauna with which they necessarily share a place. Their discoveries are embedded inside countless intimate lessons of biology, the realities of small farming, and the final, urgent truth that humans are only one part of life on earth.

With the richness that characterizes Barbara Kingsolver's finest work, "Prodigal Summer" embraces pure thematic originality and demonstrates a balance of narrative and ideas that only an accomplished novelist could render so beautifully.

Insightful reviews

Naomi: I bought this book at a library sale and was so excited because I just loved *The Poisonwood Bible* by her; I could not stop talking about it. This book was kind of disappointing in that it took me until about page 162 to get into it, and even then, it wasn't the life-changer that the other one was. But, it did get me thinking about gardening and beekeeping and fun things I'd like to do someday. There was a lot of sex in it. In fact, the whole book was about reproduction and evolutions of all kinds; animal, plant, human, so I get what she was doing there. But it got tiresome fast.

But the most irritating thing about the book is that the author came off soapboxey quite often. I was fascinated to read about the sin of hunting predators vs. prey, and organic farming, and beautiful gardens and raising goats, etc. But it is less effective when it comes off preachy. She also came off anti-religious in a cheap shot sort of way. The characters she obviously wanted us to think of as heroines were, without exception, worshipers of nature and disparaged any kind of organized religion. On the other hand, the most despicable of her characters, the most small-minded and snipey, were always big church-goers. That's annoying, because it is clearly the

author's own feelings that religion is not for the truly spiritual. She did this in *Poisonwood*, too, but that one was a story all about a religious hypocrite. I get that. Now, I am afraid that everything I pick up by her is going to be an obnoxious statement against organized religion. Boring. And small-minded.

Michael: I've read and enjoyed all of Barbara Kingsolver's novels but "Prodigal Summer" stands out for me. The opening lines promise that you're going on a journey into the minds of memorable characters: "Her body moved with the frankness that comes from solitary habits. But solitude is only a human presumption." What follows doesn't disappoint.

Three parallel stories unfold of characters quite unlike on the surface and yet connected in deeper ways that resonate profoundly. It would have been easy – and predictable – to have their stories wind together as the novel progresses. But Kingsolver chooses to let the undercurrents reverberate while the storylines continue in their own direction. In the end their paths brush lightly against one another speaking, I think, of the bonds that connect us all but leave us to make our own connections in our own time.

Anyone who finds solace in nature will find this novel irresistible. Kingsolver pays tribute to the natural world while quietly testifying that we can either live in communion with it or contribute to its demise.

Laura: Lots of different subplots that eventually intertwine, includes a love story too. She writes very lyrically, you'll want to savor this one. Nature / animal lovers will appreciate this one too. Something for everyone, this one is probably in my all time top 10 or 15 list.

2nd reading: This is not a book to read but a book to *feel*. It's a book you feel the truth and the rightness of, down deep in your gut.

Jessica: okay, so this is often my mad sprint again to the book place on the airport book. i selected it simply because i beloved the *Poisonwood Bible* so much. this can be certainly a lot different, and if i might have learn the interior conceal experiences (calling the unconventional "sexually exuberant") i would not have received it. however, i am not all of the manner performed with it, yet i have been form of sucked into the storylines now and that i cannot no longer end it. so, the jury's nonetheless out. okay, so i simply comprehensive and that i was once bugged by way of the ending. it did not have the type of solution that i wanted. total i am not yes if i agreed with the kind of lady empowerment it used to be attempting to portray. i am not relatively an outdoorsy person, in keeping with se, and seeing as to how the full e-book was once form of one substantial commune with nature, i assume it's not astonishing that i did not love the book.

Ray: I first learn Barbara Kingsolver perhaps 10 years in the past and very loved her. due to the fact that then, i have came across authors like Edna Forbes and Alice Hoffman who additionally either be interested within the lives of rural women, wealthy narratives and, occasionally magical realism. That said, Kingsolver remains to be a great deal on the best of this field. However, this ebook left me just a little dissatisfied by means of the top for 2 reasons: 1. great themes- with no

spoiling too much, the subject of this ebook is that evolution is often happening and that humans usually are not the tip made of evolution, only a part of it. probably extra importantly Kingsolver attempts to remind us that evolution is a slow, long, adaptive process. Evolution hardly occurs quickly, but Kingsolver's characters themselves cross although rapid, very likely even radical changes, by way of the tip of this book. great things for drama, yet inconsistent with a few of the broader themes.2. Narrative Structure- nonlinear storytelling isn't really comprehensive exclusively via an unconventional end (read: Hollywood satisfied ending/closure). Kingsolver ends her ebook in one of those summary manner, moving standpoint to a couple coyotes whose lifestyles within the plot sooner than the tip aspect appeared further on. Many minor plot have been left unresolved because the coyotes walked off into the Sun, this may were positive if the remainder of the plot has no longer been so plodding and responsive to each element in every one character's life, however it was. the traditional story paired with an aspiring, yet unresolved ending, simply felt incomplete. Along an identical lines, the interweaving of characters and narrative voices is great, yet approximately 3/4 of how throughout the ebook each major personality have been hooked up to each different major personality in a fashion that easily felt excessive and a piece trite. Like, we get it, it is a small neighborhood and those characters had to have a few type of subject tying them together, however it obtained a section foolish by way of the ultimate connection. Despite those flaws, Prodigal summer season used to be a very good learn and taken up loads of fascinating rules and themes. The discussion was once good written and engaging.

Heather: i do not wish it to end! :(there is nonetheless a lot lifestyles for those characters to steer and that i are looking to be there for it! even if i suppose it has to finish somewhere... the attractive wildlife she offers - my country to grasp a lot and be so deeply curious about the genuine global round me. (This week, I met the wooly undergo caterpillar and the granite spiny lizard at undertaking Trails, either locals. i will not wait to fulfill extra and find out about more. Thank goodness for parks and rangers - at the very least a person is conserving this knowledge!) Her writing is good - she is principally appealing describing vegetation and animals, and has a storyteller's voice for introducing them to humans. Her scenes are lengthy and concerned - no quickly hits to make some degree yet no extra either. The velocity fits the story. It takes TIME to understand the realm and isn't whatever you study in soundbites. i need to stay there. i would like to be those characters and feature their difficulties and flaws. My middle aches. Unreservedly five stars.

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