



The Magic of Ordinary Days: A Novel

By Ann Howard Creel

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The powerful story of one woman's passion in a world at war.

Olivia Dunne, a studious minister's daughter who dreams of becoming an archaeologist, never thought that the drama of World War II would affect her quiet life in Denver. But when an exhilarating flirtation reshapes her life, she finds herself in a rural Colorado outpost, married to a man she hardly knows. Overwhelmed by loneliness, Olivia tentatively tries to establish a new life, finding muchneeded friendship and solace in two Japanese American sisters who are living at a nearby internment camp. When Olivia unwittingly becomes an accomplice to a crime and is faced with betrayal, she finally confronts her own yearnings and comes to understand what she truly believes about the nature of trust and love.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

This is the first adult novel by an author who has written two well-received YA books. Livvy Dunne is a thoughtful 24-year-old with yearnings toward archeology, who in a rash moment in WWII Colorado becomes pregnant by a dashing officer and is forced into a marriage of convenience by her sternly puritanical minister father. She goes off to Ray Singleton's remote farm knowing nothing about him except that he is lonely, utterly inexperienced around women and touchingly devoted to her. The relationship between the two, graced by some delicate, perceptive and fine-boned writing, is at the heart of the book, and Creel gets it all just right. She is also skilled at evoking the peculiar remoteness from the war of the high plains country, where farmers were regarded as an integral part of the war effort and even got enough gas to drive around for pleasure, a rare privilege in 1944. Lonesome Livvy yearns for more communicative companionship, however, and grows close to a pair of charming Nisei sisters at an internment camp and this is where plot devices begin to play an unwarranted role. For Rose and Lorelei, it turns out, will do anything for love and involve Livvy in what develops into a dangerous (and inherently improbable) exercise in deceit and manipulation. The book recovers its stride for a poignant if rather hasty finish, but the calm spell cast by the tale of Livvy and Ray, which would have been perfectly satisfactory to maintain the book, has been broken.

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Review

"...a gentle but powerful novel, combining a story of bittersweet love with a poignant account of the journey toward self-realization..." -- *Book Page*, July 2001

"...blends historical richness and a fine sense of place...a satisfying emotional depth...a light, precisely written novel." -- *Kirkus* May 15, 2001

"The Magic of Ordinary Days" is a simple tale, well-told, featuring some lively and believable characters and gorgeous, stark landscapes. -- *Boulder Daily Camera*, July 22, 2001

"This is the ideal book to read while sipping lemonade on the porch swing this summer." -- *The Gazette*, August 5, 2001

From the Back Cover

"Ann Howard Creel explores the effects of mistaken and offered love in rural Colorado in the 1940's where World War II, though seemingly distant, reaches deeply into the lives of the innocent and the misled. Rich in reminiscence, *The Magic of Ordinary Days* treats imperfect humanity with respect, tenderness and understanding, qualities which mature in the characters into the finest of loves. A highly satisfying read." (Susan Vreeland, author of *Girl in Hyacinth Blue*)

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Eric Ballentine:

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