

Sacramento Book Review



Below is a clipping of your book review that appeared in the January 09 issue of the *Sacramento Book Review*. Thank you for sending us the book.

The Prairie Bridesmaid

By *Daria Salamon*

Key Porter, \$24.95, 261 pages

Anna Lasko doesn't really know how things got to be this bad. Stuck in a job as a teacher that she is no longer inspired by, or even likes, she lives in a renovated house with her emotionally abusive boyfriend of the past ten years, whom she can't bring herself to break up with due to all their history together. One of her best friends is getting married and has turned into a nightmare bride, and Anna and two other friends are stuck as bridesmaids in "the perfect wedding." Her pregnant younger sister is living in Iran with her husband and his other wife, her grandma Baba is determined to stay out on her farm until she is completely blind, and her slightly eccentric parents just want their children to be happy. Now Adam, the boyfriend, is overseas working for a month, and Anna has six months to get her life straightened out.

And with the help of her friends, family, and a therapist, she just might be able to manage it.

I was not expecting to like this book at all. It seemed like generic chick lit, a feel-sorry-for-me main character stuck in a bad situation who would eventually rise above circumstances to be happy and successful. In reality, *The Prairie Bridesmaid* was funny, smart, and heart-wrenching all at once. The subject of emotional abuse is dealt with in depth, and anyone who has ever been

in such a situation will surely recognize themselves in Anna's guilty feelings and neurotic coping mechanisms. I found myself rooting for her as she made progress with her therapist, and sincerely hoping she'd have the strength to stick to her new-found convictions when actually faced with Adam again. I actually thought the novel was too short; I would've liked to hear more about how things worked out with Baba, how Natalia's birth went, and whether or not Anna convinced her to come back home, how Renate's daughter was recovering, how Julia was being accepted into her newly-found birth family. I would've liked to hear more about the aftermath of Sara's wedding, and if she continued to even speak to Anna at all. I also was somewhat disappointed with the ending; ideally for me, Anna would have become stronger and more confident without Adam, and the wedding scene would have happened differently. But I also understand and accept that this wouldn't have been true to Anna's character, and that things ultimately couldn't work out any other way than they actually did. *The Prairie Bridesmaid* was fun, full of wry humor that I appreciated, and inspirational.

Reviewed by Holly Scudero

