

To Dance with the White Dog

Terry Kay

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A moving story of love, grief, and coming to terms with death, this is the story of elderly Sam Peek, who is mourning the death of his beloved wife when a mysterious white dog appears.

To Dance with the White Dog Details


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
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From Reader Review To Dance with the White Dog for online ebook

Nicholas Sparks says

Quite simply, this is one of my favorite novels of all time, and one that I've reread at least a dozen times. It tells the story of an elderly widower, who's befriended by a dog that no one else ever sees, a dog that helps him through his loneliness. Warm and touching, it's a novel that people of all ages can enjoy.

Todd Cannon says

My wife really likes Hallmark Hall of Fame movies and I recognized this title from one of the movies that she watched a few years ago. I have not seen the movie so I cannot compare it to the book.

This was a quick read but that might have to do partly with the fact that I started it close to the weekend and had more time for reading. The main character is Sam Peek and the story begins as his wife dies. Sam is in his 80's himself so he has had a long life with his wife.

Throughout the book we learn about how Sam met his wife, we learn a little bit about his children and we get a little glimpse into how Sam feels about getting older. Sam was a farmer and a Nursery man. He grew pecan trees mostly, and by this time Sam's trees are all over the county. Sam still has a little plot of pecan trees and although he has to use a walker now because of a bad hip he still likes to get out and take care of them. Sam is very independent but his children worry about him. A couple of daughters live nearby and can see him out working in his nursery plot. One tells him that he needs to stop working out there because it worries her so much that something will happen to him. What he tells her is one of my favorite quotes from the book: "Well, I guess you're going to have to worry. I know what I can do and what I can't. If you want to worry about it, that's up to you." Now this is not a book about how Sam's children are way to over protective and how they should just leave him alone. Like all good stories there are two sides and sometimes his children have good reason to worry.

This is a very touching story and from what I can tell Sam loves his wife and children very much. It is also clear that they love him very much. The White Dog is also a very interesting character and even in the end, although there are many theories on where the White Dog came from, I at least was still left wondering. Not in a way that made me feel that the story was lacking or unfinished. I think the reader is suppose to make up his or her own mind about the White Dog.

Jan says

Terry Kay is a very gifted story teller; I saw the made for TV movie years ago but I am so glad that I read the book. The story is more complex than the movie could convey; dog lovers will love this book. It is based on Terry Kay's parents and is a remarkable account of two people who loved each other. The sentences are simple but elegant and I could see each character in my head including the white dog.

Mark says

This slim book is just chock-full of wisdom and poignancy. Sam Peek has survived his wife of 57 years, but now his children are concerned about whether he can still care for himself. Into Sam's life walks a mysterious white dog, who then becomes his companion, even though no one besides Sam has actually seen the dog. This book may move you to tears -- it did me -- and the sweet story will stay with you long after you finish.

Bob says

A Profoundly Beautiful Short Novel Filled With Insights About Life, Loss, Mystery And Hope! Not To Be Missed!

To Dance With The White Dog is one of the most beautifully written, poignant, tender, memorable, albeit at times heartbraking, books I've read in quite some time. While short in length, the book, to quote the Los Angeles Times, "moves like poetry...is a loving eulogy to old age...and is a tender celebration of life, made poignant by death so close at hand."

I won't describe the book's plot (which is actually based on the author's own parents life and death story), but I will say that in telling this story Terry Kay has created characters that will live on in your memory. They will touch you in ways that will make you wish you knew them in real life, and will have you thinking carefully about how you are dealing with/have dealt with or plan to deal with your own situations with elderly relatives you love dearly. Be aware that although a dog is a central component of the plot (hence the title) this is not a "dog book" such as A Dog's Purpose or The Art Of Dancing In The Rain might be considered.

In my opinion, To Dance With The White Dog, being only a 163 pages in length (in my ebook edition) will more than satisfy your need for a beautifully well-written book. It will also help you develop insights into how an elderly parent looks at life and the prospect of their own death after the recent loss of a spouse. Further, it will help you develop insights into how well the children of an elderly parent who has lost their spouse think they understand their remaining parent's ability to function on their own (i.e., without their children thinking they have to take on the role of becoming the parents to their parent).

John says

I loved reading this book. It is about family caring with all the silliness and loveliness that accompanies it. The author does a good job of writing believably. Here's a sample:

"...they would praise the departed by reciting (and embellishing) some small, special story out of memory. The dead had been good, or the dead had been mischievous or thrifty or strong or shy or outrageous or brave or jovial or any of countless other attributes that, given forgiveness for shortcomings, made for a likeable person. That was the common agreement among them: the dead had been likeable, and in their front-porch, rocking-chair eulogies, the men who remained--waiting their turn to be likeable--momentarily elevated the

deceased to a rare, but impermanent history."

I'm 72 years old so, while I'm not quite as slowed down as Sam Peek, this story hit pretty close to home. But it was a happy hit because I related to Sam in many ways. While I, like him, hope to go quickly when the time comes, I hope also that if that hope is not realized, as it was not for Sam, I will go with the grace that he (and my father) exhibited, while I await my turn to be likeable.

papasteve says

I suggest you not read this book. It's about old people when they get old. You know how old people are. You won't like this book. It's about families dealing with old people--fretting and fussing and worrying and calling each other all the time. You won't like reading about that, I guarantee it. Stubborn old people; you know how they are. No use reading about them. Driving slow down the road. Muttering about stuff you've already heard and don't care about. You know how it is. Why read some story about some old man? I wouldn't suggest it.

Shawn says

Beautifully written, poignant tale about a man finishing the remainder of his well-lived life without his wife of 57 years. As someone who lost both my parents in my early and late teens, I never got to experience them as an adult. I tend to enjoy stories that explore the relationships between adult children and their elderly parents.

This is a novel that begs to be read again and again, with the heartache and hope being just as vivid, just as visceral each time.

Shannon says

I finished this book several days ago, and I'm still thinking about it. (That's significant for me; I tend to walk away from books, even good ones, and forget them almost instantly!)

I'm not going to give away plot points, but I'll say that there is a strong supernatural element to the book. Interestingly (and it's a rare thing when this happens in a supernatural-type book), the mystery is clearly secondary to the characters and relationships. The mystery is even left dangling a little at the end, but it is entirely satisfying--a central theme of the whole story is that sometimes life throws us things we just can't understand.

This book is the whole package...a gentle mystery keeps you turning pages, beautiful writing makes you catch your breath, and the characters (especially Sam Peek) will stay with you a long time.

Carole says

I had seen the Hallmark series production of Terry Kay's "To Dance With the White Dog" when it was on

TV in the early '90s and remember being very inspired by the story; however, I had never read the book. I met the author at a writer's conference I attended in Athens, Georgia in 2003 and purchased an autographed copy. I'm so happy that I had the chance to be re-introduced to this tender story. As well as being inspirational, this is one of the best character-driven novels I've ever read. Terry Kay paints a realistic picture of each of the characters throughout the novel. Based on the author's own parents and set in the deep South, it tells of an old man who recently lost his wife, leaving him to feel very much alone and depressed. Subsequently, a white dog appears almost as if by magic and oddly the dog makes its appearance only when the old man is present. Thus when he mentions the illusive dog to his married daughters and sons, they can't help but think their father is on the brink of senility. One day the man has a sudden attack and collapses in his home. One of his daughters who lives in the neighborhood sees the dog in her father's front yard, almost as if to alert her there's trouble inside. The daughter comes to her father's rescue and tells the rest of the family the dog is real after all. Just the same, they all continue to fuss and dote over their independent father, worrying about his every move. The story will have you laughing at the protective family's antics and the father's stubborn ways. And naturally you'll need to keep a couple hankies on hand in between. Most of all you will wonder -- who is the "White Dog" and where did she come from? NOTE: Ironically I had a similar experience in the Spring of 2005 with my very own special white dog who mysteriously appeared at a critical time when I needed support and encouragement. I'm happy to report that my beloved Daisy is now 8 yrs. old, and we're still the best of friends .

Doree Burt says

The whole dog/wife concept was a bit odd, but I still liked this book a lot. I thought it was interesting that the story was based on true happenings in the author's father's life. And I especially liked the interplay between the family members. I like that these books chosen for my church book club are ones that stretch my book choices and make me think about different things and situations. I hope that I am the type of old person that my family cares for and about, like the children in this story. This book also helped me to re-think the way I interact with the elderly. I'm not mean to them and I don't, like, push them down, but maybe I could be more attentive and see them as just people, more than old people.

Added: Today I was in a store parking lot where an elderly driver was taking FOREVER to back up. Instead of becoming as impatient as I wanted to become, I thought of the character Sam, and his experience driving. While the slowness of of the parking lot driver was annoying, I refrained from making a quizzical face, gesturing, or honking the horn. So, I guess I learned (a little) to control my outward reactions after reading this book.

Jean Labrador says

This book is definitely a Five Star book. And like the white dog dances into the protagonist's life after his wife of many years dies, this book danced into my life at a time when I needed to be enchanted and lifted up by a tale. I fell in love with the character who goes on a journey; who couldn't empathize with him as he encounters trouble and puzzlement on his adventure? This is simply a delightful book.

Justin Haynes says

TO DANCE WITH THE WHITE DOG by Terry Kay is one of those books that I know I'll continue to read every few years for the rest of my life. All that he can fit into less than two hundred pages leaves me and every other reader of this book breathless and crying a mix of tears from joy and sadness.

TO DANCE WITH THE WHITE DOG primarily concerns itself with an elderly man, Sam Peek, who is a man in his early eighties that has recently suffered the loss of his wife of fifty-seven years, Cora. Once a strong man in his prime he is now reduced to having his nagging children try to accomplish all his task for him. Alone and bothered by his children Sam finds White Dog and takes the reader on a beautiful, magical journey into the heart of a man who knows his time on earth is ending.

I'm twenty-five as of the writing of this review and I've read this book three times, all in my twenties. As I said previously I know this is one I'll continue to read every couple of years for the rest of my life. The journey of Sam Peek, his children, White Dog, and the corner of North-East Georgia they call home is timeless and quality for the soul. Terry Kay was already a master craftsman before TO DANCE WITH THE WHITE DOG. With this book, however, he cemented himself firmly in the place of great southern writers. Pat Conroy could only hope to write a novel that contained as much meat in so few pages.

Suzanne says

Sweet story about growing old, loss, and family.

bookczuk says

A lovely little tale about growing older and recovering after loss. An old man, now alone after the death of his beloved wife, adjusts to his life. And during this time, he is befriended by a white dog, that at first, no one else can see. But he and the dog develop a wonderful understanding, and the old man doesn't let a little thing like age stop him from living. The discussions that the old man's daughters had while worrying about him in a widowed state made me smile, for kids never seem to remember that parents were quite competent long before their children became adults. I'm guilty of it myself, with my mum, but certainly I raised a child who will be more tolerant of me and my eccentricities, right?
