



I Still Dream About You

Fannie Flagg

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The beloved Fannie Flagg is back and at her irresistible and hilarious best in *I Still Dream About You*, a comic mystery romp through the streets of Birmingham, Alabama, past, present, and future.

Meet Maggie Fortenberry, a still beautiful former Miss Alabama. To others, Maggie's life seems practically perfect—she's lovely, charming, and a successful real estate agent at Red Mountain Realty. Still, Maggie can't help but wonder how she wound up in her present condition. She had been on her hopeful way to becoming Miss America and realizing her childhood dream of someday living in one of the elegant old homes on top of Red Mountain, with the adoring husband and the 2.5 children, but then something unexpected happened and changed everything.

Maggie graduated at the top of her class at charm school, can fold a napkin in more than forty-eight different ways, and can enter and exit a car gracefully, but all the finesse in the world cannot help her now. Since the legendary real estate dynamo Hazel Whisenkott, beloved founder of Red Mountain Realty, died five years ago, business has gone from bad to worse—and the future isn't looking much better. But just when things seem completely hopeless, Maggie suddenly comes up with the perfect plan to solve it all.

As Maggie prepares to put her plan into action, we meet the cast of high-spirited characters around her. To Brenda Peoples, Maggie's best friend and real estate partner, Maggie's life seems easy as pie. Slender Maggie doesn't have to worry about her figure, or about her Weight Watchers sponsor catching her at the Krispy Kreme doughnut shop. And Ethel Clipp, Red Mountain's ancient and grumpy office manager with the bright purple hair, thinks the world of Maggie but has absolutely nothing nice to say about their rival Babs "The Beast of Birmingham" Binghamton, the unscrupulous estate agent who hates Maggie and is determined to put her out of business.

Maggie has heartbreaking secrets in her past, but through a strange turn of events, she soon discovers, quite by accident, that everybody, it seems—dead or alive—has at least one little secret.

I Still Dream About You is a wonderful novel that is equal parts Southern charm, murder mystery, and that perfect combination of comedy and old-fashioned wisdom that can be served up only by America's own remarkable Fannie Flagg.

I Still Dream About You Details

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From Reader Review I Still Dream About You for online ebook

Elodie (hello.sunday) says

Dans ce livre, l'auteur de "Beignets de tomates vertes" nous amène dans l'Alabama de nos jours, auprès de femmes nostalgiques d'un autre temps. Après de nombreux échecs, Maggie a décidé d'en finir avec la vie. Mais cette dernière, pleine de surprises, en a décidé autrement et va l'entraîner dans des situations aussi cocasses qu'inattendues.

D'abord gênée par cette idée de suicide, je me suis peu à peu attachée à l'histoire de ces personnages si drôles et humains. Au-delà de l'histoire, l'auteure pose ici une vraie question: la vie est-elle finie lorsqu'on a passé le cap de la soixantaine?

Un roman touchant et une petite ode à la vie qui redonne le sourire :)

Carrie says

Started it as a possible book club pick. 20 pgs in I'm a little annoyed by the writing, so it's a No. However, I'll keep reading.

I think I really liked Fried Green Tomatoes at the Whistle Stop Cafe! (Another Fannie Flagg novel).

This should've been in my started but didn't want to finish pile. It was not good! The story starts with a sixty yr old woman writing her "suicide" note; she's merely going away in her mind, and the story is about her mistakes (boring, she was a previous Miss Alabama & one of her big regrets is that she's been too polite).

The fact that her black friend pulls out a "I was in a relationship with a white Jewish married woman" at the end of the book (token Lesbian?), and ends up as the town mayor, the main character doesn't "go away" but reunites with her long lost love & goes from penniless to buying the town mansion in a minute, the dwarf friend (yes, there's a dwarf too) saves her from beyond the grave is all ridiculous.

Also, about 3/4 of the way through the book which up to this point centers around the 60 yr old depressed realtor, a back story of Edward/Edwina a Scottish woman masquerading as a man for most of her life and the skeleton they find in a listing house. It didn't work.

Unfortunately, I kept reading because I wanted to see if she was going to get on with her ankle weights in the river or not, and at times, I just wished she would.

Manon Bénabent says

J'ai vraiment adoré ce livre !!! seconde lecture de cette auteure. même si le résumé peut paraître gnangnan le livre n'en reste pas moins léger et une bulle de bonheur. Je n'ai pas vu passer la lecture. Les personnages sont tous attachant même Maggie qui s'avère être "rigolotte" dans sa démarche de suicide, de le repousser etc. C'est aussi l'idée de profiter de chaque petit chose qui peut nous rattacher à une pointe de bonheur et j'aime bien cette façon de voir les choses. Je vous le conseil. Bonne lecture à tous

Anne (Booklady) Molinarolo says

Ahhhhh, Birmingham, Alabama, how I miss that city! I was excited to read what was advertised as a mystery by Fannie Flagg. But alas this book did not meet my expectations. While the descriptions of the Magic City were spot on and life in the Old South was true to what I remember, having lived there for ten years; I STILL DREAM OF YOU is not a mystery. Though there is a small mystery within the novel, the story is Maggie's. And I found her to be whining and a bit boring.

In the last days of the 2008 Presidential Election, Margaret Fortenberry has made the decision to leave. She has made a list of pros and con's: 14 pro and only 2 cons to stay in this world. Maybe she saw too many movies. After all, the former Miss Alabama spent her formulation years living above the Dreamland Theatre. She hadn't accomplished anything in her 60 years, had she? And she misses her great friend, Hazel "the biggest little Real Estate woman in the world." She should have married Charles, but then it was Richard that she devoted her child bearing years. Oh the scandal of it, she had a long adulterous affair with a married man! Always the gentle Southern woman, she can't leave until she ties up all the loose ends – and the loose ends keep her from her mission throughout the book.

We meet Red Mountain Real Estate's Team Hazel: Maggie, Brenda, Ethel and even the late Hazel through flashback vignettes and short chapters set in 2008 and 2009. The characters are well developed and the setting descriptions, especially Maggie's dream home, Crestview are wonderfully accurate. However, Flagg's humor doesn't seem appropriate when the subject of suicide is the main plot. For 175 pages I grew weary of Maggie, but after Crestview goes on the market and a skeleton is found in the old home's attic, the story picks up and Flagg's humor shines to the end of the novel.

?Karen says

This was all right as far as a light read goes but not the best Fannie Flagg I have read, by any means. The audio was read by the author and she did a really good job. It was almost depressing in some parts and the separate story from the 1800s didn't seem relevant to me. I did much enjoy the ending, though.

Felicity says

This probably deserves a 2.5...it wasn't a bad book. But it's Fannie Flagg (I mean, how can you take anyone with such a name seriously?). So the book is one of those syrupy, feel-good (even if it is about suicide), pantheon to female friendship books that you expect Fannie Flagg to produce. And if you're writing a feel-good book about suicide, then you're left--as I was--with this slightly uncomfortable feeling that Flagg didn't really address the kind of serious issues that might drive someone to commit suicide. There's a certain amount of risk involved in writing a book that treats suicide in such a comical way.

One difference from her other novels (as I recall) is that Flagg does take on some "big" issues in this book, acknowledging the mixed and difficult legacy of Birmingham's racist past. Yet, once again, it's somewhat disquieting that her white characters (at least) can only understand that past via its impact on them--how misunderstood they were. Flagg may be trying to disquiet, but it gets lost under her sugar-coated, feel-good story. What exactly is her purpose here? What is she trying to do? The distraction of a dead skeleton

(literally) in the plot just sends the story off another tangent that seems to add little to the novel's overall resolution. It is possible that Flagg is trying to make a larger point with this novel about tolerance and understanding, but to do that, she needs to convince her readers to take her seriously.

Carol says

[skeleton (hide spoiler)]

Susan says

Fannie Flagg's charm has always been in her creation of communities where polite, optimistic and kind people are respected and successful. Take a few of those characters, throw in a neurotic friend, and then introduce a less friendly person to the mix, and you basically have the makings of a Fannie Flagg novel. This book is no different. In fact, it adheres to that formula so well that I can't entirely separate it from her previous books. Fortunately, I liked "Can't Wait to Get to Heaven" and "A Redbird Christmas," so the similarities weren't entirely unwelcome to me. I laughed at times, read fast, and then fell asleep with the satisfaction of good things happening to good people.

But I never really loved this book the way that I loved Fannie Flagg's earliest books. First, the formula is a little tired by now; I didn't need to read this book to meet the same sort of characters, or have the same sort of "It's a Wonderful Life" conclusion. Second, the main character seems too unrealistic to be taken seriously, and too sad and confused to be taken lightly. Maggie feels that since the news on TV is too sad and there is a mean person rivaling her in real estate sales, suicide is the only answer. Perhaps Maggie's true provocation is the loneliness she feels at living in a model home with few personal effects, and having only one friend. I would get that reasoning, but Maggie never sees those as being her true problems, and Flagg's narrative is unable to bring forth the legitimate causes of depression, likely because keeping Maggie's reasoning silly makes the tone light enough not to drag the book down. (Additionally, the rationale's implausibility lends credence to Maggie's easy decisions to keep postponing her death day.)

The narrative has some other lapses as well. The prologue to the story is merely confusing: does the age of Maggie's flame actually match the age of the boy from the prologue? And if it is the same boy, why doesn't he make a bigger reference to seeing her from afar when she was a young girl? Also, why do Maggie and Brenda remove the skeleton from its trunk instead of logically sending the whole trunk to storage?

The last problem I'll dwell on is that the most interesting character of the book is either Hazel, who is years dead by the beginning of the story, or the skeleton in the attic, who is even more years dead. Even with multiple flashbacks dead characters cannot propel the story as effectively as living characters. It is certainly a problem when the deceased seem more alive and plot-propelling than the living main character.

There are undoubtedly more issues you can take up with the book, but Fannie Flagg's good-hearted characters and themes make me feel guilty for even bringing them up. I wouldn't buy the book, but I can't regret the hours I spent with my library's copy.

Tonya says

I couldn't read this fantastic book fast enough. Our main character Maggie feels as if there is nothing more in this life for her, so she has planned her own death. She gives away her clothes, closes her bank account; has basically everything all planned out. But one thing after another keeps happening so she has to delay her death.

All the characters are just fabulous and so full of life you can't help but chuckle outloud throughout the book! I really wanted to get more in depth in what happened between Maggie and Charles though but it never did. That didn't take away from the book though. Brenda is a real hoot - her and her ice cream and sweets.. too funny! Ethel, her purple hair and all, what an image in my mind! I sure did love all the memories of Hazel though!

Fannie's books always have women in such a wonderful bold scene -- very awesome to read!

Every time Maggie gets ready to go down to the river and then something happens to delay her, I think God is speaking to her. What made this book even better is the bit of mystery about what they find in the trunk in the attic at Crestview! Nothing like a good little mystery hidden deep in a wonderful book like this!

Perfect book to read this holiday season all warm and toasty inside -- Enjoy! Fannie Flagg is worth the wait!

Mary Ronan Drew says

How did I manage to miss out on the entire Fannie Flagg thing? I've heard of Fried Green Tomatoes at the Whistlestop Café, but somehow I didn't get around to reading it. I might never have discovered the delightful Fannie Flagg if my belle-soeur hadn't sent me a copy of this book, *I Still Dream About You*.

There were a dozen things I liked about this novel, the most important being the two real estate agents who are best friends and work together as a team, Maggie and Brenda. They work at an agency that has been going perilously downhill since the death of the owner, the irrepressible little Hazel. A rival agent, Babs Binghamton, "The Beast of Birmingham," an unethical realtor and a thoroughly dislikeable person, has been stealing their clients. Babs hires a young couple to front as the "buyers" of properties which are really being bought by developers (from whom Babs takes kickbacks.) The developers tear down the houses and build McMansions or apartment houses, destroying the fabric of neighborhoods.

Don't you love having a bad guy to boo and hiss?

Maggie, an ex-Miss Alabama who missed out on being Miss America because of an unfortunate development at the Miss America Pageant, has never married and is dragging along from day to day with no hope for change in her future. So she decides to kill herself. She has worked this all out in detail, involving a plastic raft and ankle and wrist exercise weights. (She really needs to see a psychiatrist.)

Maggie pays off all her bills, cancels her credit cards, has her phone service cancelled, gives her good clothes to a little theater that can use them for costumes, and leaves a To Whom It May Concern letter explaining what she has done. She then calls a taxi (using the name Mrs Tab Hunter – she always thought he was a wonderful actor) and heads for the river.

Her friend Brenda is vivid and thoroughly likeable. She has, in her day, been colored, Negro, black, and African-American and she no longer cares what people call her except that she wants to be called Mrs Mayor. She plans to run for mayor of Birmingham and she has the network from her real estate work to get her started in politics. Brenda's major problem is a sister who is a nurse and who is trying to put her on and keep her on a diet. She joins Overeaters Anonymous and gets a former police officer for her mentor: "Brenda, put down the doughnut and step away from the counter."

Anyhow, complications arise and people from Maggie's past drift into her life and she has to put her plans on hold for a time (and of course she has to buy some clothes, get the phone re-connected, and retrieve the suicide note.) Birmingham's most beautiful estate on top of a hill, overlooking the city, has come on the market and Maggie wants desperately to save it from Babs and the developers. But what is she to do? Meanwhile, there's an incident with mint chocolate chip ice cream that makes Brenda depressed and needing to take advantage of a Kate Spade sale.

Well, this is cozy-style non-mystery (though there is a mysterious dead body that needs accounting for) so we know things will turn out ok in the end. The reader can enjoy the suspense of Maggie's repeated attempts to get in that raft on the river, the dread that the mansion on the hill will be torn down for a shopping mall, and the threat that Brenda's health problems will escalate because we know that in the end the good will be rewarded, the bad will be punished, and the sun will set on beautiful Birmingham to the reader's satisfaction.

2011 No 40 Coming soon: Unknown Quantity by John Derbyshire

Kathleen says

I think those of us who loved Fried Green Tomatoes at the Whistle Stop Cafe keep waiting for Fannie Flagg to give us another book that wonderful. Sadly, *I Still Dream About You* is not that book.

However, it is a solid 3.5 star entry (I rounded up). The characters, including the protagonist - an aging, former Miss Alabama, who is just about the nicest person ever set down on God's green Earth - are a bit on the cartoon side, but they are entertaining.

Ms. Flagg nails Alabama, how it looks, how the people act, its internal conflict with the past. I completely enjoyed all her references to various landmarks and neighborhoods of Birmingham.

All in all, this was pretty predictable (although there were a few surprises in the murder mystery that is a small part of the story. Still, enjoyable, especially for those of us in Alabama, who will enjoy the authentic feel of the setting.

Shana says

To me, Fannie Flagg and Lorna Landvik land in the same category of light, but not too fluffy reading. Their characters tend to be oddballs from the Midwest or the South, real, but still lovable. The stories encompass a community and usually ends happily with lessons learned and wishes fulfilled.

I Still Dream About You fit well within this category, though the pacing of the story really threw me off. I felt that it spent too much time setting the stage for the “big” event, then rushed through it, and barely addressed the aftermath. It felt unbalanced, and this was my one major criticism.

Otherwise, it was cute. It dealt with morbid subjects in an oddly matter-of-fact manner and involved the typical cast of adorable misfits, including the memory of a midget real estate mogul, an old-fashioned former beauty queen, an outspoken woman struggling with eating issues and working on a political career, as well as an old grumpy lady with a penchant for anything purple. Ultimately, the novel leaves you with the message that you just never know what’s right around the corner and you should wait to find out cause it might be grand!

Stacy says

I have read every single book that Fannie Flagg has written. I've been a big fan ever since Fried Green Tomatoes at the Whistle Stop Cafe. When I discovered that I Still Dream About You came out last year without me knowing it, I wondered, "how come I didn't hear about this?" I promptly went to the library and checked it out. Well now I know. If you want a good book you can rely on when you have a hard time falling asleep, well, maybe this is the one for you. I found myself reading one paragraph maybe 10 or 11 times as I kept nodding off.

I really tried to give this book a chance. But for the longest time, nothing really happened. Ms. Flagg spent too much time trying to sell the characters by making attempts to throw in plenty of quaint and quirky 'Southern-isms' that in turn never really came together like the rest of her books. It seems like she is forcing things whereas in her past books, things flowed naturally. Used to be that she would weave an awesome tale from the very start to the very end. If you're reading a good story, you forget reality--you find yourself lost inside the pages, wanting to know what happens next. You justify reasons to put off doing dishes or washing the laundry, just for a while, so you can keep reading! I never had to try so hard to get into one of her books as this one. In fact, I would say her books have steadily gone down hill. I'd rather wait longer for a GREAT story than to be fed regularly with mediocracy. In other words, I was sadly disappointed in this book.

Lavonne says

Where, where do I start with this book? I picked it up because I had loved the movie "Fried Green Tomatoes" by the author. However, I never actually read the book and probably never will now. I absolutely hated this book, although it did make me feel like a teenager again. I swear I haven't rolled my eyes so much while listening to anyone since I was 15 or 16.

I can rate this book on two levels:

First, the story, or lack of one. If you have ever heard a trite, over-used saying, it was in this book. If you were lucky, the saying was just uttered once by a character or characters. More often, it was repeated again and again and again. It was such cliched dialog that I got to the point where I could tell you what the character was going to say before they said it. There was not one original sentence or thought in this book. Many of the chapters started out with the same exact wording and sentence structure, to the point that I kept thinking my i-pod was screwing up the tracks and playing them again. No, my ipod is fine, this lady just

can't write. The story jumps around in time, which normally doesn't bother me. Here, though, there was no logic to it. The chapters would bounce from the 1890's to 1976, to 2008, to 1955, to 1934. Nothing much happened in the first half of the story. Then about 2/3 of the way through, the author tried to start a BIG mystery, when the two main characters literally found a skeleton in the attic. The "mystery" was so transparent that two or three pages later, there could only be one explanation. It was one of those books, that when you get to the end, you're still waiting for it to begin.

Secondly, the narration: The author herself read the book. She has a sweet, Southern accent and seems like a lady you'd want to have tea with. At first, it was very charming. That quickly grew old, though, when you found you couldn't tell the difference between two characters having a conversation. The male, New York lawyers, a first generation Scottish immigrant, an Alabama policeman, they all sound like Scarlett O'Hara's maiden aunt. And oh, lord! The "oh, lords!" This complaint is actually about the writing, but this book is peppered with this phrase. If they had cut that one phrase out of the recording, it would have been only 4 cd's, instead of 9.

In conclusion, I think I need a new shelf. "Audio Books I finished because I spent so much frickin' time loading them to my ipod". Are we allowed to have that many characters? Oh, lord, I hope so.

V. Briceland says

Subtle, this book ain't. Rather than let any mystery of character or plot accumulate throughout the book, Flagg stops the proceedings immediately to insert flashbacks that explain everything that happened in the previous chapter. In a novel that hinges on a girl-detective-style discovery of a literal skeleton in a closet, it's like reading a Nancy Drew mystery written for those with the shortest of short-term attention spans.

As for the decades-old mystery at the center of *I Still Dream About You*—it's tangential, unfocused, and largely unintegrated with the rest of the story. Nobody solves it; it scarcely matters that they don't. Flagg's done better in the past.

Still. Flagg's primary virtues as a writer are an abundance of effortless charm, and the ability to fashion stories around communities of nice, polite people with nice, polite intentions . . . and to make characters that could be homogenous seem quite real. As whisper-thin as the plot might be here, its cast is engaging. Flagg has an unparalleled ability to immerse readers into her fictional communities, and make them wish they resided within the pages of her gentle Southern comedies.
