



Last Ride to Graceland

Kim Wright

Download now

Read Online →

Last Ride to Graceland

Kim Wright

Last Ride to Graceland Kim Wright

One woman sets out for Graceland hoping to answer the question: Is Elvis Presley her father?

Blues musician Cory Ainsworth is barely scraping by after her mother's death when she discovers a priceless piece of rock 'n' roll memorabilia hidden away in a shed out back of the family's coastal South Carolina home: Elvis Presley's Stutz Blackhawk, its interior a time capsule of the singer's last day on earth.

A backup singer for the King, Cory's mother Honey was at Graceland the day Elvis died. She quickly returned home to Beaufort and married her high school sweetheart. Yearning to uncover the secrets of her mother's past—and possibly her own identity—Cory decides to drive the car back to Memphis and turn it over to Elvis's estate, retracing the exact route her mother took thirty-seven years earlier. As she winds her way through the sprawling deep south with its quaint towns and long stretches of open road, the burning question in Cory's mind—who is my father?—takes a backseat to the truth she learns about her complicated mother, the minister's daughter who spent a lifetime struggling to conceal the consequences of a single year of rebellion.

Last Ride to Graceland Details

Date : Published May 24th 2016 by Gallery Books

ISBN : 9781501100789

Author : Kim Wright

Format : Paperback 352 pages

Genre : Fiction, Womens Fiction, Chick Lit, Contemporary, American, Southern, Adult

 [Download Last Ride to Graceland ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online Last Ride to Graceland ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online Last Ride to Graceland Kim Wright

From Reader Review Last Ride to Graceland for online ebook

Julie Durnell says

This was a great story of a daughter re-tracing her mothers trip from Graceland to hometown Beaufort SC in Elvis' Stutz Blackhawk car, finding more about herself and her mom along the way. I didn't like Cory so much, but loved the car and Elvis lore, the towns she visited and the characters from her mothers year at Graceland as back-up singer!

KathyAnne says

Fans of Kim Wright will no doubt want to put this in their to read pile! I fell in love with this author when I read her book The Canterbury Sisters last year so when I got my greedy little hands on this advanced copy I couldn't wait to dive in! And, no I definitely was not disappointed.

I will give you a little teaser... it's the opening paragraph:

"I was a premature baby who weighted nine pounds and nine ounces. Yeah, I know. Impossible. But you have to understand that this particular kind of medical miracle is common in the rural South. Jesus still looks down from billboards around here and people care what their neighbors think. We pray and we salute... and most of all, we lie. It's why we have so many good writers per capita, and so many bad writers too, because all of us learned to bend the truth before we could even half talk."

I was giggling out loud at this opening paragraph because I grew up in the South and yes, we do have some very unique ways of telling half truths to cover up the most ridiculous lies. And, we opt to just let these lies go even when we know that they are the biggest whoppers you've ever heard. It is a strange phenomenon but so very true! And this book is basically the story of a daughter that finally decides to dig out the truth behind a big whopper of a lie that she had been choosing to ignore for most of her life. But, as all lies go, the truth eventually finds it way to the surface. And, when Cory finds her truth it is indeed life changing. This is a book where past finally catches up with the present and truths are finally shaken out of the seats of a famous car with red leather seats... A Black Hawk that belonged to none other than... Elvis.

This author has a unique writing style that I think appeals very strongly to older women who have been through the many ups and downs that life can throw at you. Women who are that point in their lives when they begin to reflect on the past and are at a crossroads.

That is how I felt about this book. Cory was a woman who recently lost her mom. She was stuck in a rut and had an unsettled past. A past that was haunted by the spirit of Elvis and the impact he made on her mother. She travels the same route back to Memphis that her mom took back to her hometown decades ago in the hopes of discovering the secrets of the past that made her mom the woman she was. It was a "Who am I?" search. And, I'm sure we can all relate to that.

The book takes us from past to present and we get to meet her mom as a young woman named "Honey" and how her life became irreversibly changed because of her time as a backup singer for Elvis during his last year as a performer before he died. She was only with him for a year but the things that occurred during her time there would change her forever.

The one thing that I truly enjoyed about this book was the effect it had on me in regards to the life Elvis apparently lived behind the scenes. A man who had it all but it was still not enough. He was haunted by his own ghosts and he was clearly a troubled man. I only know Elvis as the King of Rock 'n Roll and never really thought about how hard this fame truly was on him as an ordinary man. He was indeed very eccentric,

but also very compassionate and kind. Even though this is a work of fiction, I appreciated the way the author honored Elvis by adding in snippets of him as a real person who like everyone else can be forever haunted by the tragic events and loss that surrounded him throughout his life. Beautiful storytelling!

As someone who has recently lost her mom, I can tell you that the things mothers leave behind can drive you to do some serious soul searching. And, Cory had some of her own to do when she found a very large secret that her mom had been hiding from her for almost 30 years hidden in the shed after her death.

Cory's road back to Graceland as she followed her mothers long ago footsteps is a compelling, touching and emotional journey of a young woman discovering that life is not always as it seems. She meets some very eccentric characters from her mothers past that helps her to learn not only who her mother truly was but she also eventually finds out where she truly belongs.

I adored this book and I have found a new author to stalk! She definitely writes stories that touch me in ways that will keep me coming back for more.

I received an advanced copy of this book as a member of the Simon & Schuster XOXperts street team.

Follow us on

KT Book Reviews

Twitter

Facebook

Pinterest

Camie says

Don't let the pink cover discourage you from reading a story you'll most likely enjoy !! Finding out (after her recent death) that her Mother had a mysterious past as " Honey " a back up singer in Memphis Tennessee, 38 year old Cory Beth Ainsworth a struggling musician decides to set out on what will become a well imagined search for her roots. Following leads found in a shiny black Stutz Blackhawk unearthed from a shed near her families South Carolina home, she traces her mom's trail right to , you guessed it, Graceland itself. Could Elvis have actually been her biological father? It's pretty hard not to be interested in all things Elvis, even if you (like me) missed the full excitement surrounding him in the 1950's. In addition it's a fun, easy , read about a mother and daughter each on their own journey of self-discovery. 4 stars

Book Haunt says

I just returned a couple of weeks ago from a vacation in Memphis, Tennessee. I went to visit some friends. We spent the weekend seeing some awesome music at the Beale Street Music Festival. I stayed on past the weekend because, as a lifetime Elvis fan I wasn't going to miss out on a visit to Graceland! I didn't have a lot of time that day so I didn't get to see everything there is to see. Let me tell you, there is a heap to see and do. But I am so glad I finally got to see it! Much to my surprise, I found myself in tears when I got to the meditation garden where Elvis is buried. It was an emotional experience for me.

Coming home and reading *Last Ride to Graceland* was a special treat after having just been there. This book will be enjoyed by all, whether you are an Elvis fan or not. If you are an Elvis fan, well what's not to like! If you're not an Elvis fan, you may learn some things here. And hey, why aren't you an Elvis fan??? ~LOL~

Cory Beth Ainsworth is a 37 year old musician in her hometown of Beaufort, SC. Cory plays guitar and sings locally. It's a seasonal gig and Cory just manages to eke out a living. Cory has inherited her musical talent from her mother, who left town after high school and spent a year living at Graceland and performing as one of Elvis's backup singers.

Cory has recently lost her mother to breast cancer, but her father Bradley is still there for her. Though Cory was raised in a loving home, she's known since she was 9 years-old that Bradley isn't her real father. Her school project led her to do the math. Everything points to her mother having been pregnant already when she returned from her time at Graceland. There's always been that one little question in the back of Cory's head, is Elvis Presley her real father?

When Bradley calls Cory at work and leaves her a message to send him his boots, she goes out to his place. Since Bradley's message specified over and over that she should NOT to look in his shed for the boots, Cory can't resist the temptation of looking in his shed! So what to her wondering eyes should appear? Well, when Cory manages to unwrap it, it's a 1977 Stutz Blackhawk in mint condition. There is not a doubt in Cory's mind who this car once belonged to. Elvis was renowned for his love of this car.

Cory's mother never talked about the year she was at Graceland and Cory has always been more than a little curious about her mother's past. Hoping to discover the answers she has wondered about for so long, Cory sets out on a road trip through the south, on her way to Graceland. Using the items she finds in the car she retraces the route her mother took home those many years ago. Cory knows that her real motive is to find out if Elvis was her father. What she doesn't bargain on are the truths she reveals about her mother's past.

Cory's a gal who doesn't hesitate to face down her fears. She may not have done much with her life, but she's not apologizing for it. Hey, it's her life and she likes it that way! She's gritty and a bit rebellious and I loved her character. The fact that she named her male dog Lucy just cracked me up.

The author, Kim Wright infuses this book with heart and humor galore! She paints Elvis as the huge megastar that he was, but also as a gentle, caring, scared and vulnerable person with a heart of gold. All of these traits ultimately led to his tragic death. I admire her for respecting our memories of Elvis, his great talent, and the wonderful legacy that he left behind.

I would definitely recommend this book. I enjoyed every moment of this ride to Graceland.

I want to thank the publisher (Gallery Books) for providing me with the ARC through NetGalley for an honest review.

Elaine says

A road trip, the Deep South and Elvis Presley. What's not to love about this book? When Cory Beth finds a Stutz Blackhawk, belonging to Elvis, hidden away in her father's shed, it starts her on a journey of discovery. Her mother was a back up singer for Elvis and spent a year at Graceland. Could Elvis be her biological father? This was an entertaining and at times emotional read filled with lots of nostalgia, especially for fans

of Elvis. I thought it was cleverly written and the way Kim Wright created a story around a car, that weaved through so many towns, on a road trip from South Carolina to Memphis and through history was an enjoyable read. It just reinforced my desire to travel through the Deep South and as a massive fan to get to Graceland. But fan or not this was a fun read.

Diane Barnes says

This book has to go into the category of "much better than I thought it would be." Something about the cover art, (all that pink!), the fact it was only issued in paperback, I don't know, I just had the impression it was going to be a sweet, romancey kind of thing, which I'm not really into.

But I was SO wrong. It's a book about a solo road trip taken by a woman who has always thought that Elvis was her father because her mother had been a back-up singer for him, and she came home pregnant and married her high school boyfriend in Beaufort, SC. She finds Elvis' Stutz Blackhawk in a shed after her mother's death, and sets off for Graceland, following the trail of trash left in the car. Her path takes her through, Macon, GA, Fairhope, AL, and Tupelo, MS, finding people and clues all along the way.

This book is told in alternating chapters by Cory, our heroine, looking for the truth, and Honey, her mother, telling us what really happened. The inclusion of Elvis's story, and his last days at Graceland, the panic and confusion surrounding his death, and the vulnerability and loneliness that all his fame and money couldn't salve, is what puts this book over the top.

Did the author take liberties with the truth? Yes, because it's fiction, and that is known as literary license. But it sticks close to what is known about Elvis Presley and his last days, and also gives us the story of a woman searching for her real father, and finding pieces of her real mother, and herself as well.

So, I was wrong. Not a romance at all. But it was a very funny, entertaining, informative read. I liked it a lot. And yes, Cory finds her father.

Dawn says

There was a lot for me to like about this book.....I enjoy Southern Fiction, I like reading stories that involve a road trip & I love Elvis. It just happened to be a coincidence that I was reading this book during the 40th anniversary of Elvis's death. I toured Graceland in 1985 and have always wanted to go back. Knowing the author visited Graceland to help her in writing this book, I felt she gave a detailed description of Graceland and the Memphis area. It sounds like Graceland has expanded since I visited 32 years ago.

The author creates a fictional story with fictional characters around true events and people. The book points out many of Elvis's short comings and demons, which at times can be hard to read even when you know they are true. A story of self discovery, I really felt for Cory on her quest for the truth. The fictional characters were interesting and quirky. Even though they were created by the author's imagination, you could picture Elvis having people like this in his large entourage of workers, "friends" and family.

Chris C - A Midlife Wife says

Author Kim Wright has created a fresh and original road trip down memory lane that involves not only the main characters mother but also Elvis. Who could resist a cool book like that?

The author take some literary license and a lot of history about Elvis and crafts a delightful story that is told from two points of view – the mothers, from 40 years ago and her daughter's, from today.

When Cory finds a unique and cool car on her parents property that she suspects belongs to none other than Elvis, she knows she has to follow in her mother's footsteps and return the vehicle to Graceland. What she doesn't realize is that her walk down memory lane will teach her not only something about herself but her mom and who she really was too.

With a unique concept like this, the author has developed a lighthearted read that is perfect in so many ways. As we meander through the southern states and everything with that southern feel to it, I actually found myself reading with a southern twang that I used to have when I lived in the south. LoL! It was a humorous way for me to enjoy this book thoroughly!

The author has a beautiful talent to create in your mind a free spirited, fun-loving and somewhat humorous road trip that begs to be enjoyed curled up in your comfy chair, but even better, on a road trip of your own. It reminds you to take the road less traveled and be open to anything.

With memorable characters and a look at the deep South in its truest fashion, Last Ride to Graceland by Kim Wright will spark something in you that won't soon be forgotten. A fast yet engrossing read any contemporary fiction reader will enjoy immensely.

Full review on <http://AMidlifeWife.com>

Cynthia says

What a great concept this book was! There were Elvis facts in the book, but the story was of Cory Beth taking the same journey that her mother, once a backup singer of Elvis, made thirty seven years prior. I couldn't wait to see what would happen next on Cory's journey, in Elvis Presley's favorite car of course!

Brina says

Last Ride to Graceland by Kim Wright is the post-1980 group read for the Southern literary trail group for September 2016. It is the story of Cory Beth Ainsworth, a 38 year old who has made a career of singing in bars and living from paycheck to paycheck. One day, while running an errand for her father, Cory Beth discovers a 1973 stutz Blackhawk once belonging to Elvis Presley. Only knowing that her recently deceased mother Laura Berry was once the King's backup singer, Cory Beth decides to take the stutz for one last ride back to Graceland in order to find out both about her mother's past and about herself.

The story takes place in five parts, which Wright has said correspond to five southern states. What ensues is a charming summer road trip as Ainsworth ventures from her home in Beaufort, South Carolina, taking back

roads all the way to Memphis. Along the way she makes stops in Macon, Georgia; Fairhope, Alabama; and Tupelo, Mississippi. At each stop, Cory Beth meets a key figure who was part of her mother's life during her year singing with Elvis, as she tries to unravel the mystery that was her mother's life the year before she was born.

Wright, a writer for 20 years, most recently the *Unexpected Waltz*, has created some memorable characters, from Cory Beth and Laura to Marilee Jones, Laura's former backup singer, to Dirk, a Graceland security guard. As in any road trip book, there are other characters at every stop along the way as well as road trip companion, in this case Lucy the dog. Additionally, there is local food in order to get a taste for Americana from southern barbecue to fried seafood to honey and biscuits on Beale Street.

Yet what makes this more than a fast paced summer road trip is Cory Beth's quest for self discovery. All along she wondered about her mother's life in Memphis; why she has left the comfort of her life of her life in Beaufort, which included marrying her high school sweetheart after graduation. Why exchange the life of a preacher's daughter for that of a roadie. After not knowing for the first 38 years of her life, Cory Beth, upon uncovering the car, was determined to find out. At each stop, Wright peels back another layer to Laura's life, creating intrigue that kept me reading until the conclusion.

The Last Ride to Graceland is a story of self discovery and a glimpse at Elvis. This was the first time I had read a book by Kim Wright, but it will not be the last. From the memorable characters to charming story to a slice of Americana, there was something for everyone in this book. I recommend it to anyone looking for a fun, summer read.

? Kimberly says

Cory Ainsworth knows her mother was a backup singer for Elvis Presley. Her mother was there the day Elvis died, but she quickly returned home to Beaufort and married her high school sweetheart. Cory also knows she could not possibly be her father's biological daughter. The math just does not add up, although friends and family will tell you Cory was a nine-pound premature baby.

The Last Ride to Graceland really takes off when Cory finds Elvis Presley's Stutz Blackhawk bubble wrapped inside her families shed. It is like a time capsule with clues from the past. Anxious to know more about her mother and possibly discover whom her Daddy is, thirty-seven year old Cory impulsively jumps in the car and decides to retrace her mother's trip from Graceland.

Wright delivers the story from Cory's perspective, but she also takes us back to the summer Cory's mother Honey spent in Graceland. The journey may have begun as a quest to learn who her father was, but it slowly becomes a journey to understand her mother and herself.

The pace of *Last Ride to Graceland* was easy-going, as we traveled the back roads and met friends of Cory's mother. I enjoyed these small-towns and the bits of nostalgia. While fictional, Wright did research Elvis, giving bits of the tale an authentic feel.

I loved the landscape, iconic stops we made and enjoyed getting to know Cory and all of her quirks. The reveal of Cory's biological father felt genuine and Wright gave us a clear account of Honey's time in Graceland leaving me satisfied. I closed the book happy and hopeful for Cory.

Julie says

Last Ride to Graceland by Kim Wright by Kim Wright is a 2016 Gallery Books publication. I was provided a copy of this book by the publisher and an XOXpert, the official street team of XOXO After Dark.

“It was like he came along and whispered some dream in everybody’s ear, and somehow we all dreamed it. -
Bruce Springsteen

This is an engrossing story, steeped in whimsical history, featuring the King of rock -n- roll, and the story of Laura “Honey” Berry and her daughter, Cory.

The rich atmosphere of a good old fashioned southern road trip, peppered with history and sprinkled with a colorful cast, all works together to generate a poignant tale which connects a mother and daughter, on the ultimate journey of self-discovery.

Cory Ainsworth, a blues musician, at the age of thirty-seven, has never seemed able to settle down. With her mother’s recent death, Cory feels as though the time is long overdue for her address the issue of her biological father, because it is most certainly not Bradley, the man who raised her as his own.

Laura Ainsworth, nee’ Berry, also known as “Honey”, was a backup singer for Elvis in the last years of his life. She lived at Graceland, fell in love, then soon finds herself ‘in trouble’. She makes the long sojourn back home to South Carolina and immediately married her high school sweetheart, gave birth to Cory seven months later, and continued on with life with little mention of her past and certainly not Elvis.

Now, all these years later, Bradley sets things in motion for Cory by sending her on an errand which leads her to the discovery of a 1973 Stutz Blackhawk automobile, that has been literally entombed since 1977. There is no doubt this car belonged to Elvis and Cory intends to return it to Graceland and retrace her mother’s journey in reverse from South Carolina to Memphis, hoping to prove Elvis was her real father.

Along the way, Cory picks up a fellow traveler, a coon hound, she names Lucy and the two become inseparable, which convinces me this trip is karma at its finest.

While Cory’s focus is on finding her father, what she discovers is how complex her mother really was. Honey was not the Laura Ainsworth that Cory grew up with. She is certainly remembered by many, but each person seems to have a different take on her character, making her a bit of a mystery to Cory.

Via Honey’s diaries, we are privy to Honey’s version of events, which, coupled with the retelling of Elvis’ last days adds a bittersweet quality to the tale.

Cory’s journey opens her eyes to many things, as the past merges with the present, and she discovers she is more like her mother than she ever thought possible. All the characters she encounters are unique, all of them giving Cory a little insight into her mother’s past. Some of these characters are likeable, some not as much., but in their own way, I think they all felt a sincere fondness for Honey and for Cory, even those who were

full of it.

I have to admit, I was never a huge fan of Elvis, but I did find the passages highlighting conversations between him and Honey to be interesting, and I do believe Honey and Cory had him pegged pretty good, but of course, he did show Honey a great kindness, and for that reason, he is a redeemable character in the story.

This journey will resolve many of Cory's lingering and burning questions, the most important of which is the discovery of the real Laura Ainsworth, and in the process, the discovery of her own self, which gives her the courage to grab hold of a promising future with both hands, which I am sure would make Honey, and maybe even Elvis, very proud.

I enjoyed this story very much, thought it was poignant, humorous at times, bittersweet, but ultimately a heartwarming story that left feeling like Cory has finally gotten her footing and will become the success she was destined to be.

Tom Mathews says

Being a member in good standing of the 'He Man Woman-Haters Club' I don't usually stoop to reading that subgenre commonly referred to as *chick lit* but after corresponding with author Kim Wright and finding her to be delightful and funny, I figured I would go ahead and give her newest book a try, so I ordered a copy. My resolve wavered a bit when it arrived and I found the cover to be pinker than a flamingo's tutu but Kim assured me that as the author she had no say in any decisions regarding cover color so I braced myself, wrapped the book in a brown paper cover like mama used to do in grade school, and gave it a go.

It was actually pretty good. For starters, it's about a road trip. For some reason 2016 seems to be my ear for southern road trip books, what with *Carrying Albert Home*, *Fallen Land*, *Rivers and Absalom's Daughters: A Novel*, and I've found that I've come to enjoy the way they flow with new adventures arising at every bend in the road. *LTtG* has the advantage of including one of the coolest cars in existence, a 1973 Stutz Blackhawk, the last car that Elvis Presley (pause for moment of reverent silence) ever drove. Before I started this book my only knowledge of the Stutz Motor Company came from building a model of a 1913 Stutz Bearcat, the stripped-down models with the cylindrical gas tank behind the seats. I didn't even know the company still existed into my lifetime. But this car is **amazing**. It's like if a Lincoln Town Car and a Jaguar got together and had a shiny black baby.

I digress. In short, Cory finds a car that once belonged to her mother, once a back-up singer for Elvis, and set off on a four-state ramble to discover just who she was, or so she thinks. Over the next few days she meets several people who share with her the story of her mama's trip from Graceland on that fateful night in August 1977.

Ms. Wright spins an imaginative tale full of well-developed characters and does it in a manner that would

make her story-telling southern ancestors proud.

Tina says

Ladies and Gents,

You should never judge a book by its' pink, girly, screaming of romance cover. You might miss out on a really good, all genders allowed, humorous read. Glad I nominated this one for my book club. I had a feeling there was more than bubble gum under that pink wrapper.

More on this story and a male hound named Lucy later. Hey, if Johnny Cash can write a song about a boy named Sue, why not?

To be continued...

Jennifer says

Jump in the car -- we are going on a road trip!

Corey Ainsworth of Beaufort, SC has always stumbled around through life, and even at the age of 37 she doesn't quite know what she wants to do when she "grows up." There's something that's always been gnawing at the back of her mind though. In her words, she was "a premature baby who weighed nine pounds, nine ounces. Yeah, I know. Impossible. But you have to understand that this particular kind of medical miracle is common in the rural South." Born 7 months after her parents got married (and 7 months and 1 day after her mother, a former back up singer for Elvis Presley, unexpectedly returned to town after living at Graceland for a year) Corey has long suspected that her biological father isn't Bradley Ainsworth, who lovingly raised her, but The King himself.

A few months after Corey's mother passes away, she makes a startling discovery in the shed of the family's fishing cabin -- a flawless Stutz Blackhawk (Elvis's favorite car) packed up tight. Corey decides to drive the car back to Graceland following the route her mother must have taken (based on clues left in the car) to determine once and for all the identify of her biological father.

The story is told in alternating points of view between Corey and her mother, Honey. While one does not need to be an Elvis fan to enjoy the story, some familiarity with the singer and his story will probably add to one's interest.

Kim Wright has found her niche in developing strong female characters, entertaining story lines laced with humor and grace, and a plot that seems fresh. I thoroughly enjoyed this book, as I did with last year's *The Canterbury Sisters*. This book is perfect for the beach, pool, or a trip of your own. It would also be a good "palate cleanser" between heavier books.

4+ stars

Although I was given a galley of this book, I listened to the audio, which was excellent.

Thank you to NetGalley and Gallery Books for a galley of this book in exchange for an honest review.
