



# The Saints and Sinners of Okay County: A Novel

*Dayna Dunbar*

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In the tradition of Fannie Flagg and Lorna Landvik, *The Saints and Sinners of Okay County* is a heartfelt and compelling debut novel with an unforgettable heroine. It's the story of a woman whose ability to see the futures of others leads her right back into her own troubled past.

It's the summer of 1976, and it seems like the entire state of Oklahoma is celebrating America's bicentennial. But in the small town of Okay, Aletta Honor has much more on her mind than flags and fireworks. She's pregnant with her fourth child and hasn't seen her husband, Jimmy, in weeks. Although she can guess where the hound dog has parked his red-white-and-blue van—in front of the local gin mill or outside the home of yet another woman for a little Yankee Doodle Diddle. Discretion is not in the man's constitution.

Flat broke and desperate for some cash, Aletta decides to set up a food stand on the front lawn during the Okay Czech Festival. But when a woman touches her hand in sympathy, Aletta is completely unsettled. She never touches anyone outside her family—if she does, she gets overwhelming visions of their lives and futures. It started when she was a young girl and has scared her ever since. Now Aletta immediately sees the woman in a tragic accident, and gives her a warning that will save her life. When the woman returns the next day to thank her, Aletta figures out how to save her *own* life.

With all the courage she can muster—figuring the townsfolk will most likely think she's nuts—she puts a sign in the front yard: ALETTA HONOR. PSYCHIC READER. DROP-INS WELCOME. But doing readings for people opens a door she thought she had locked long ago, as memories of a terrible event come flooding back. She may not be able to see into *her* future, but she realizes she must face the demons in her past if she's going to make a new life for herself and her kids. First, though, she'll have to tell a few fortunes. . . .

Poignant, touching, and full of the kind of wisdom that can only come straight out of the heartland, Dayna Dunbar's *The Saints and Sinners of Okay County* is a wonderful novel of a woman who confronts pain in order to reclaim her belief in herself, lay her past to rest, and bring order back to a life that has veered too far off track.

*From the Hardcover edition.*

## The Saints and Sinners of Okay County: A Novel Details

Date : Published June 28th 2005 by Ballantine Books (first published 2003)

ISBN : 9780345460400

Author : Dayna Dunbar

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## **From Reader Review The Saints and Sinners of Okay County: A Novel for online ebook**

### **Amy says**

I really enjoyed this book! Interesting and thought-provoking, I thought it was well-written. It had an interesting storyline, and Aletta proved to be an honest open character that I came to adore. This was Dayna Dunbar's first novel, but I'm looking for more great things from her.

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### **Dianne says**

A story set in rural (and I do mean rural) OK, young housewife with three children and one on the way has a philandering, abusive husband. She also has a strained relationship with her mother, due to her psychic abilities, which her mother has decided are of the devil. It's an interesting journey where Aletta has to use her psychic abilities in order to keep food on the table, stirring up the Baptists in town but eventually getting her national recognition. Excellent storytelling.

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### **Oona says**

Realistic, complex characters in a small town. An ending that ties up all the threads but manages to feel genuine. Great descriptive writing, whether conversations between children and adults, riding on the back of a motorcycle, domestic violence, feeling forgiveness. I especially enjoyed when the seemingly powerless protagonist did gain some power. A current running through, though not exploitive or sappy, is that friends make the unbearable bearable. Historical? Not really. It stuck me as universal.

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### **Glenna Pritchett says**

I thought the book started off pretty well, but then the time jumps began. They were sudden jumps, one paragraph in the current time and the next one in the past, with no extra space or break line or difference in font to indicate the change. It was so distracting that I just quit reading.

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### **Vickie says**

Easy read. Not thought provoking. Pure entertainment.

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### **Keri says**

I ate this book up, probably mostly because I hadn't had a chance to read a book for a little while. I liked her

visual descriptions and enjoyed the storyline. The resolution seemed a bit rushed though, particularly the part about her relationship with her mother. About 80 percent of the book was third-person limited through the main character's eyes. The other 20 percent was jarringly told through other characters. The shifts always caught me off guard, but I learned to just accept them. The emotions of the book came through strongly. Overall, I would say it was a good first novel but could have used a bit more tweaking.

I gave it a PG-13 because of a bit of language and some scenes of abuse.

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### **Mary says**

It is the summer of 1976, and it seems that the entire state of Oklahoma is celebrating America's bicentennial. Meanwhile, in the tiny town of Okay, Aletta Honor is just barely struggling to get through each day. She hasn't seen her husband, Jimmy in weeks, she is pregnant with her fourth child and she can just imagine where her hound dog of a husband has parked his red-white-and-blue van - probably in front of the nearest gin mill or outside the home of the closest, warmest, most feminine form he can find who isn't her.

Flat broke and desperate for some cash, Aletta decides to set up a food stand on the front lawn during the Okay Czech Festival. However, when a woman touches her hand in sympathy, Aletta becomes truly unsettled. She never touches anyone outside of her family; if she does, she is overwhelmed by visions of their lives and futures. This "gift" has been part of her life since she was a little girl, and she has always been seriously spooked by it. Aletta sees that the woman will die in a tragic accident and warns her to be careful. When the woman returns the next day to thank Aletta for saving her life, Aletta sees a way out of her current situation.

Throwing caution to the wind, expecting that the townspeople will probably believe her to be crazy, Aletta sets up a sign in the front yard advertizing her psychic gifts. But doing readings for people opens a door that Aletta thought she had locked years ago. As the memories of a terrible event come flooding back, Aletta begins to realize that she must face the demons of her past if she and her children are to have any hope of a prosperous future.

This is the first time that I've actually read this book. Mareena found it for me; stowed away on my bookshelf and almost forgotten. I had bought it from my local library's book sale in 2009 and had for some reason never read it. What a shame for me! I had almost missed reading a sweet little gem of a book that I give an A+! I have set it back on my bookshelf and look forward to reading it again sometime soon.

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### **Brandi says**

I liked it - it was a sweet and easy read, entertaining without requiring me to think too much. The plot was a little predictable but life is like that. We all grow up, we all overcome obstacles, we all make decisions on who we are and who we want to be. Fun book to read.

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### **Carol N says**

This author has a gift of bringing her character to life while developing a warm-hearted, touching, funny

novel about being a strong woman that is true to herself. Good summer read - reminiscence of Billie Letts

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### **Rachel says**

This was an interesting novel about dealing with past hurts and present problems, about life in a small town, and about a woman with four kids who turns her psychic gift into a successful business after divorcing her alcoholic and abusive husband. I disagree that being a psychic is okay, but I found the book to be interesting and well-written despite that.

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### **Kelly says**

Set in the 70s in a small town in Oklahoma, this book revolves around a pregnant mother with 3 other children and a husband who has left her for an early midlife crisis. She does the best she can and enterprises on her gift of predicting the future. Great characters and a fun fast read.

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### **Becca says**

An all-around good read. I enjoyed the characters, even the rotten ones. The flashbacks were sometimes a bit abrupt and I kind of wanted a little more from the ending, but I still recommend this one.

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### **Linda says**

I swear I've read this before but I didn't have it in my list so I checked it out and read it again. Set in Okay County, Oklahoma in the 1976s the book setting is pretty nostalgic to me. I was 9 that year and could relate to many of the pop culture things mentioned. But--that's just the background to the story.

Aletta Honor is young and pregnant with her 4th child. She married the local basketball star young and he's been stepping out from the start of their marriage. She's at a cross roads of life and it couldn't have come at a worse time. With no job and no husband to support her, she has to do something to keep her kids fed. What she does is put up a sign for Psychic Readings in her front yard and sure enough things start happening.

This book had a lot of humor, the characters are likable and quirky and Aletta, even when at her most desperate, can find humor with herself and her children.

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### **Mary says**

I love discovering good authors who are new to me, and this is one of those. The book is a first novel, and I'm looking forward to the next. Saints and Sinners captured small-town America with a bit of a quirky approach. It's a quick, light and fun read.

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## **Liza says**

Aletta is a mother of (eventually) 4 with a husband who can't keep it in his pants, or at home with his wife. The story starts off with Aletta wondering where this wayward husband of hers is and how she can keep up with the bills with him gone. She decides as a last resort to do what she she had been suppressing for your years...use her psychic abilities to bring in some money.

Just as things are getting good, that good for nuthin' husband comes back, removes her sign and makes them a happy family again. Being a good Christian woman, she goes back to being the dutiful wife letting Jimmy be the man of the house.

This just doesn't work out

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