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Shortly after burying her unfaithful husband, Georgia Peyton unexpectedly inherits the derelict *Stardust* motel from a distant relative. Despite doubts from the community and the aunt who raised her, she is determined to breathe new life into it. But the guests who arrive aren't what Georgia expects: Her gin-loving mother-in-law; her dead husband's mistress; an attractive but down-on-his-luck drifter who's tired of the endless road; and an aging Vaudeville entertainer with a disturbing link to Georgia's past.

Can Georgia find the courage to forgive those who've betrayed her, the grace to shelter those who need her, and the moxy to face the future? And will her dream of a new life under the flickering neon of the *Stardust* ever come true?

Stardust Details

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From Reader Review Stardust for online ebook

Rebecca McNutt says

Stardust is an amazing story of family, love and faith, taking place in a rundown motel riddled with dysfunction. Well-written and nostalgic for earlier days, this book is really one worth reading.

Catherine Richmond says

"Stardust" is a delightful journey to the bayou country of east Texas in 1952. Georgia Peyton is a strong character, unafraid of hard work, who tells her story with a vivid Southern voice. The terrifying unknowns of polio add a unique tension to the story. If you enjoyed "The Help", you'll love "Stardust"!

Audrey Grant says

This book was from an era that I love reading about but don't often find books written during. I love the "Ozzie & Harriett" time when Ladies dressed like ladies and men acted like Gentlemen! Where families were real and spent time together. Had picnics and played ball, went for walks, Sunday drives and Drive in Movies!

This book is from that time...but tells one of the sides of that time that was a hidden and "taboo" part of that time. I don't want to give away the story but Carla does a wonderful job of writing about a part of the period that was very real and sad. Yet very resilient! I love her characters!! She does such a wonderful job of making everyone come to life and come right off the page! I just wanted to meet Luli and could almost reach out and touch each of the children!

A wonderful book about not perfect people who learn to live with each other and what God has given them!

Tami says

With the death of author Maeve Binchy yesterday, Twitter was awash with quotes from and about her books. One line from Ms. Binchy herself immediately made me think of this book: "I don't have ugly ducklings turning into swans in my stories. I have ugly ducklings turning into confident ducks." Georgia Peyton is widowed, raising two daughters and nearly broke. With no experience as anything but a housewife, she sets out to remake the Stardust motel. Part of her transformation involves uncovering the secrets clouding her childhood and surrounding her husband's death. But it wasn't the ugly duckling or the mystery - although both are very good - that made this a five-star book on my list.

I was fascinated with the setting and the era. My family took a vacation each summer, usually to the mountains, and sometimes stayed in small, cabin-style motels similar to the Stardust. Though that would have been a decade later than the 1950's setting of the book, the giant chain hotels were yet to take over. Reading Stardust brought back some fond memories. It also introduced me to the polio epidemic.

Poliomyelitis was rampant in the U.S. in the first half of the twentieth century and reached it's height in the

early 1950's, with over 50,000 cases in 1952. I've met several people who contracted polio as a child and were left with twisted or paralyzed limbs, and I've heard stories of iron lungs, but they were distant stories to me - something that happened to someone else before I was born. I had no idea of the fear that gripped communities where someone contracted polio or the torture of treatment in an iron lung. I recall, as a child, collecting and saving dimes in cardboard folders to be contributed to the March of Dimes, but had no clue why. Reading *Stardust* was an eye-opener for me, as well as a good story.

I'm recommending *Stardust*, both as a good read and as a history lesson. If you read it and become curious about the history of polio and it's effects on individuals and the nation, I recommend the Smithsonian Institute's site *Whatever Happened to Polio?* Both are fascinating reading.

Camille Eide says

Reading this story makes me feel like I've made a new friend.

Georgia Peyton is a true southern gentlewoman; strong, yet open and kindhearted. She's gracious and generous, but not a pushover. What she gives, she does of her own choice. She quietly carries her hurts, longings, and betrayal, but remains loyal, regardless of whether or not it's deserved. The kindness she shows to her cheating dead husband's mother first comes from her instinctive sense of duty, but, as Georgia is challenged to dig deeper throughout this story, her care for Mary Frances comes from an untapped place in her core, borne out of compassion. I love this! I also admire the way her unconventional friendship with Ludi, the black woman from the bayou, begins so naturally. She slips it on like a favorite sweater, without regard to the constant censure of people in her life and community who can't see past color, fear, and bigotry.

Georgia is a woman who shows patience and respect for others even when she doesn't agree with them, yet she still has plenty of room to grow. Her life has been fraught with unanswered questions and memories that eat at her sense of security. In this story, when the polio epidemic moves in closer to home and fear escalates, Georgia must make difficult choices that affect those she loves. In the midst of fear, confusion, and the unknown, she must keep her head and consider what's best in the long run for others, and to follow through by faith.

Through forgiveness and surrender, she finds the love and peace she seeks, and I love that. Faith is ironic that way, best tested and strengthened when the outcome is unknown. An example of this is seen in one major test of Georgia's strength and grace: the challenge and opportunity to help her dead husband's mistress. Georgia's courage and willingness to go the extra mile for others--whether or not they deserve it--is a powerful example of Christ-like, sacrificial love you can put your trust in.

Besides my friend Georgia, what I loved about this story is its subtle complexity. While a smooth, easy read (Carla Stewart's soft southern voice is like a soothing song), its layers are rich with real characters, each with their own unique strengths and flaws, right down to the children, who charm us with their childish moods and true childlike wonder. While simply captivating and entertaining, this story gently touches on some weighty topics such as infidelity, addiction and prejudice with the same grace and compassion we quickly come to love in its heroine.

This is such a beautifully told and engaging story, but it's also a subtle but powerful lesson in hope, redemption, love, loyalty and grace that you won't soon forget.

Courtney says

I received this book from a Goodreads Giveaway. When I entered, I had no idea it was a faith based book. When I received it, and noticed it was, I was trepidacious. Although I have my own beliefs, I am not religious, and I do not care for others cramming their religion down my throat. If you are like minded, don't worry, this is not that book. This was a sweet book, with a nice little story. I appreciate the author's light hand. She could have been very heavy handed here, and she did not once fall into an overly sentimental storytelling, nor was her faith like a sledgehammer. This kind of book can easily have that, and I enjoyed her light touch. I wish all people's religious leaning were so honest and true to them, while being so subtle.

sophia walsh says

The book "Stardust" is about a woman named Georgia Peyton. After her husband, O'dell dies, Georgia is left with two girls and no income. After a few weeks of job hunting, Georgia finds out that she inherited the local motel, The Stardust. She gets there in earnest expectation only to find that all of the lodges are damaged! Now she thought her new-found dream of switching on the "No Vacancy" sign was ruined! All until one day, a man named Peter comes looking for an overnight stay. He ends up staying way longer to help Georgia clean up and rebuild! In Georgia's personal life, things aren't so sunny side up. Georgia finds a life insurance policy in her husband's work briefcase. To her great astonishment, it doesn't have her name on it. Back at the Stardust, business is going good until two things happen. First, she comes face to face with the receiver of her husband's insurance policy. Then, the polio epidemic of the 1960's hits her hometown, starting with the Stardust. More detail lies in the pages if the book "Stardust" by Carla Stewart.

Some of the things I liked about the book? There were a lot! I really liked how Carla Stewart made the characters believable. In some of the fiction books i read, the characters aren't believable at all! I also like how you got attached to the characters in your own special way. For me, the conflict and emotion were the things that kept me reading. Can't wait to read you other books, Carla! :)

Cathy Daniel says

Well done!! Great writing! Natural plot developments! Great ending. Interesting to learn more about polio. What a terrible time..

Gina says

I love a good historical read and before I talk about the book itself I have to say the history in this one knocked me out of the park! Stardust was a truly amazing riveting book. Georgia Payton goes through quite a bit of growth as a character in this story, she loses a husband, uncle, gains a property, gains some unlikely friends. Finds out the answers to some secrets burning in her mind and through it all does so with grace and poise.

I mentioned before I love a good historical read and the history that drew me in here was the March of

Dimes. My blogging partner and baby girl C was a premature baby so I've worked with the MOD frequently. But now I get to see their initial cause up close and personal. The descriptions of life at the beginning of a polio outbreak, the treatments use and most especially the Iron Lung really drew me in to this story. I love learning as I read a book I consider great entertainment! This story really tops off the charts with some many facets and great writing!

Carla Stewart says

My third novel coming in May, 2012!

Brianna says

I picked this novel up on a whim at the library as a result of my not wanting to read crime/supernatural/war/chick lit fiction that particular day (leaving this book as the best option). I hadn't been expecting much from it since I try to stay away from heavy drama in novels and thought this would be just another hard-luck tale with little redemption. As it turned out, Stardust surprised me. I got sucked into the narrative (excellent storytelling!) and felt myself relating to the main protagonist, Georgia, even though our lives are very different. I loved the history portrayed in the story - it's set during the polio epidemic in the 1950s - and I appreciated how the drama wasn't "fast and furious" but still remained compelling enough that I finished the 300-page book in about three sittings. Even better, it's a clean story that didn't insult my intelligence as a reader. A refreshing novel.

Melanie says

<http://christianbookshelfreviews.blog...>

3.5 Stars

I'm new to Carla Stewart's books, as Stardust is the only one I've read of her novels so far. While the story was interesting, it never really grabbed by attention. Toward the end, though, it did get a little better as there was some mystery/suspense.

The romance between Peter and Georgia added a nice element to Stardust. I really liked Peter's character - he seemed like such a nice guy! A lot of the characters in Stardust I found to be really unique and that made reading it more enjoyable.

The ending was good, but I do wish there would have been a bit more closure to some things - specifically if someone survives or not.

While I did like Stardust, I don't plan on rereading it. I am eclectic in my reading, but I'm not a huge fan of books like this - where the husband has an affair, etc. If you like books that are similar to this, then you should definitely consider reading this book. :)

I received a complimentary ARC copy of this book for my review. I was not required to give a positive review, only my honest opinion - which I've done. All thoughts and opinions expressed are my own.

Silver Thistle {adores JAFF & TEOTWAWKI. Oh, and accronyms :P} says

1950's Texas Motel near the Bayou. Such a sweet read. Since finishing this I've found out it's classed as a 'Christian' read, if I'd known that before starting I might have been a bit leery of it. I've got beliefs but I'm not religious and I try to steer clear of anything that might be a bit preachy. That kind of stuff just rubs me up the wrong way. I didn't get preachy with this book though, I just got a lovely, sweet story.

The narrator Georgia is a recent widow and she hasn't had an easy life, she was abandoned as a child, married young to a womaniser and is now in sole charge of two young daughters and has inherited a run-down motel complex. Add to that the polio epidemic, her late husband's mistress and *her* children, a difficult mother in law, a little bit of romance and money worries and it all makes for a really interesting story. It touches slightly on racial prejudices but as with everything in this book it's handled in a way that is touching and heartwarming.

I really liked this story and I might overlook the 'Christian' tag from now on as this is a great ambassador for the genre. Georgia is such a lovely person and I really enjoyed reading about her. The ending wasn't brilliant and although there were a couple of things I would have liked more closure for, overall it was a good read.

Note: I received a free copy of this title from the publisher.

Marian Baay says

In Stardust we travel back to the 1950's.

Georgia's husband has left her for another woman. After two months his body is found in the swamp. Now she's a widow and she needs to take care of her two daughters alone.

Georgia was raised by an aunt. Her parents left her at the Stardust motel when she was 3 years old. Her aunt doesn't want to tell her the reason why her parents left her there.

While growing up Georgia often found refuge in the Stardust. Paddy and Doreen ran the place and loved her like a daughter. When Paddy dies he leaves the Stardust to Georgia. Doreen tells her that the answer to her past is hidden in the Stardust.

Her aunt doubts that she can run the place as a stand-alone-mother. Besides it's dangerous for a woman alone to run a highway motel.

Soon her mother-in-law comes to live in one of the cabins. Then a stranger –Peter- comes to the Stardust and asks for a job. Peter is helping Georgia with repairs. Georgia grows to like him and people start talking behind her back.

Then a pregnant woman and her young daughter come to the Stardust. The woman is sick and needs to go to the hospital. While she's there Georgia takes care of the woman's daughter. But then Georgia finds out who the woman is...

Can she forgive the woman for ruining her life?

And when she finds out the truth about her parents, can she forgive her aunt for keeping the truth from her?
Peter gets a phone call from a woman and needs to leave immediately. Is there another woman in his life, or will he come back for her?
Can Georgia let go of her hurtful past and focus on a new life with the people she loves in the Stardust?

Carla Stewart knows how to make you feel at home with her characters! A well written novel!
I'm looking forward to Carla's next book.

Pamela says

"My marriage to O'Dell Peyton was already over when he washed up on the shores of Zion [River]. . . . Truth was O'Dell left me and our two girls the second week in February. I found the note tucked in the sugar bowl, telling me he'd met a woman who appreciated him. I'd spent two months chewing on that, hot as a pistol one minute, crumpled in grief the next, trying to figure out where I'd gone wrong."

With an opening hook such as that, I just knew this was going to be one of those good old "you-done-me-wrong-song" kind of stories; a bittersweet, eccentrically southern tale of a woman spurned, pulling up her bootstraps, rising above the ashes, and getting her groove back with a hunky hero come the end.

Well, yes and no. It was a good book, exceptionally good to be exact. I enjoyed the heck out of it!

I loved the storyteller vibe; the ebb and flow was almost lyrical. And it was an age old "you-done-me-wrong" story with laugh aloud moments mixed with the bittersweet, reflecting on what it feels like to be cast aside and a widow to boot; what (if anything) could have been done to prevent such a heart crushing devastation. Then too, it was a story about mothers and daughters, friendship and community, the 1950s and polio, small town gossip and southern prejudices, renovations of hearth and heart.

But it wasn't one of those woe is me, "I've been spurned - so I'm going to get even, and you can bet your sweet patootie everyone and their dog is going to hear about it - snarky sagas. And I am glad! There's enough of those kind of tales around to fill a coral - many corals, in all of Texas, most likely.

Yes, it was refreshing to read a story about infidelity from a Christian worldview that portrays a realistic character who works through devastation and angst, grief and anger, disappointment and humiliation, and comes out better- not bitter - for the journey. Grace, love, forgiveness, and faith make all the difference in the world when facing ANY of life's many trials and tribulations.

Oh, and as for the hunky hero . . .

There is a light romance element to the story. But the man in question isn't a clichéd beefcake. He's just an average Joe. Nor does he swoop in and save the day. Georgia is the hero of her own story. Yes, she gets by with a little help from friends, and with a bit of serendipity - but she rises to the challenge, renovating an old motel, and her heart, and her mindset, and in a way she overhauls her little east Texas town too.

FOUR ***** You Done Me Wrong Songs, But You Told It Well and Did It Right ***** STARS
