



Whitefern

V.C. Andrews

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Whitefern Details

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From Reader Review Whitefern for online ebook

Rabbit {Paint me like one of your 19th century gothic heroines!} says

[Sylvia getting molested by not only her art tutor and later revealed to be impregnated by Arden. Also Arden gets really rapey]

Tina says

The genuine VCA books and even the early Neiderman-written ones published under her name were always guilty pleasures for me -- I knew they were trash, but I enjoyed them anyway. But the recent ones have been so bad I finally gave up reading them, until the Christopher's Diary trilogy (of which I only read the first two) and this one; I know they're all basically fan fiction, but I was interested enough to want to see where Neiderman would take these stories.

I should have heeded the reviews on this one. Wow, it really was bad. Other reviewers have covered the salient points, but:

- Audrina is a totally oblivious idiot. The major plot points were telegraphed so early that you really didn't need to finish the book to know what would happen, but Audrina, who's narrating the story, practically has to be beat over the head before *she* figures anything out. For example, (view spoiler)
- Sylvia's mental abilities seem a lot more advanced than in MSA, in which it seemed like she'd never even be toilet-trained or be able to focus her eyes consistently, let alone speak in complete sentences and cook.
- Arden. Yes, he's very weak in MSA, but he obviously loves Audrina. In this one, he's only nice to her in one or two scenes, and that's when he's trying to get something from her. He's an abusive asshole and (view spoiler). And he only keeps Audrina around because of her money. (view spoiler)
- (view spoiler)

So yeah, this whole book is a massive retcon. I've seen way better-written fan fiction than this.

Judy Lesley says

I received an e-ARC of this novel through NetGalley and Gallery, Threshold, Pocket Books.

I did not read My Sweet Audrina and this book can be read without having had that experience. The backstory is explained well enough for me to have an understanding of what had come in the first novel. However, I have read other novels which were actually written by V. C. Andrews and I can tell you this one doesn't measure up to the original works, no matter what series you might have read. I'm sorry, but this book didn't give me the shivers, it didn't make me wonder about the existence of ghosts or haunting spirits. It just made me irritated with Audrina and the situations she allowed herself to be maneuvered into.

Whitefern is more than just a house, it is a world. A world that has become more and more isolated because terrible things continue to happen to those who make it their home. Does this house contain the restless spirits of those who have died within its walls? Audrina and her husband Arden share the house with Sylvia and the family patriarch Damien. Sylvia is now twenty years old but has the mental capacity of about an eight or nine year old. She suffers when being exposed to interactions with people outside the realm of Whitefern so she remains within its protective area watched over by Audrina. You would think in a family that is supposed to be wealthy that outside help would be employed and Audrina wouldn't be so totally tied to the house and her sister. Unfortunately that is the role placed on her by her father and once he has died the burden continues because of a circumstance which must be hidden from the outside world.

At times during the reading of this book I honestly wondered which one of the characters was the most emotionally handicapped. I think you could put them all in a bag, reach in and choose one, and when you pulled that one out of the bag they would be the choice of the minute. The overall feeling is supposed to be dark and oppressive (I think). Instead what I felt was anger at Audrina for allowing herself to be pushed, forced, coerced - whichever or all three - into a truly bizarre situation. Whew, at least it was a fast read but quite disappointing.

Elle's Book Blog says

Release Date: July 26, 2016

Series: Audrina #2

Genre: Gothic Romance

This long awaited sequel to one of my favorite V.C Andrews books –My Sweet Audrina—did not disappoint! Told in an old worldly and classic way, this follow-up intrigued, surprised, and thrilled me the whole way though. I never knew what was going to happen and when I found out, I was shocked and in total surprise. The secrets and lies that this story emits are terrible in every way possible, but it's these terrible and shocking things that make the book that much better! Now, I have seen A LOT of bad reviews about this book. And while this didn't stop me from reading it, it did make me think twice. But I am so glad I read a copy because I honestly didn't find it to be bad in any way, shape, or form. Many people are not keen on the "new V.C. Andrews" but to each their own and you should judge it by how the book makes YOU feel, not how it made others feel. So definitely give this one a try if you're a fan of the author. It's honestly just as shocking as her earlier works...

In this installment of the Audrina series, we follow Audrina, her sister Sylvia (who suffers from some mental deficits) and Arden (Audrina's husband) after the passing of their "papa". Anyone who has read My Sweet Audrina, knows that their home of Whitefern holds many secrets and lies... The type of secrets that have almost swallowed the characters whole and ruined their lives. But having risen from the ashes and married, Audrina is living an almost new life. Until more secrets square their ugly head and hurt all of those involved... What will become of Whitefern and will Audrina ever live a life she was meant? You'll have to see for yourself!

Overall, I did enjoy this book and it really brought me back to my "V.C. Andrews days". Now, although there are some differences between the original and the newer Andrews, I believe these differences are pretty slight. And I would know as I have read nearly all of her books! So don't necessarily listen to what others have to say about this one. Just read it for yourself and judge with your own views!

Anna (Curiosity comes before Kay) says

Was curious to see if the ghostwriter would tank this as badly as he did with the "diary" series additions to Flowers in the Attic. This was, by comparison, at least semi-readable. But all the shocking "plot twists" were things I called as soon as they happened. As much as Arden has his dickish moments in the first book, this is a guy I did not even recognize as the same character. Audrina has become a complete wet rag, actually a bit reminiscent of Haille Logan from the "Logan" series, only with even LESS personality. The way the ghostwriter chooses to wrap things up is disappointing to say the least, yet another thing recycled from Virginia's heyday. Yet another trash heap that reminded me why I quit reading after Willow's series. Thank God for Netgalley, which means I didn't buy it! :/

Shay Hawthorne says

Normally I'm strongly against reviewing a book before it's been read, let alone before it's even been written and released. However...

I maintain my stance that these prequels and sequels piggy-backing off of Virginia's original work have no place being written and released. I don't care how good they are (so far they've been horrible). They are official fanfiction for pay. The recent Dairy series should tell us that no one who is making money off these books(VCA's remaining family members included) cares about the integrity of Virginia's original work. All they want is money. Neiderman can't give us "new details" because he didn't write My Sweet Audrina. Virginia did. And she's dead.

To anyone who says "what if VCA left behind notes and he's incorporating that into the new book?" And that's a strong **if**. I ask: Have you seen the manuscript for "Where the Greener Grass Grows"? It's the first draft of what would ultimately become Petals on the Wind. Yep, the sequel to Flowers in the Attic. It's *wildly* different from the finished version of Petals. And she wrote both of them herself. People might bring up Garden of Shadows. It's the "original" prequel to the Dollanganger series. Written by Neiderman after Virginia's death. It's mostly accepted by fans as being cannon. Well, not all of us. There's a reason why Neiderman and the publisher is keeping us in the dark about how much of the book is based off Virginia's work and how much Neiderman made up. Same goes for books 3, 4 and 5 of the Casteel series. Did you know they decided to scrap the 100 page draft for Fallen Hearts that Virginia had been working on when she died? We'll never know what *she* had in mind for *her* characters and *her* story.

Neiderman can continue to write under her name for all I care. Just use original characters and stories please. Everything since Dawn has been the ghostwriters original stuff. Fine by me. Hey, I actually *like* some of his ghostwritten work. Tarnished Gold (Landry #5) for instance is a favorite of mine. VCA books are very unique. There's nothing like them. So I do appreciate that the ghostwriter continued writing in her style. But as more time goes on the quality has been declining. Marketing trends shape the books more then ever now. First they dropped the keyhole cover, switched to mini books, now it's 2 or 3 books in each series. The Kindred series would have never happened if it weren't for the popularity of Twilight and the explosion of "paranormal romance" novels. And it's no coincidence that the Dairy series came out when the Lifetime movies of the Dollanganger series did. Now an Audrina movie is coming out... and an Audrina sequel is coming out. You know what else is coming out? A TV series based off of Ruby. That's pretty cool for

Neiderman because **he** wrote the Landry series. Those are all his characters. If he wants to write another book taking place in the Landry universe when the TV series comes out, good for him. Personally my fingers are crossed for screen adaptations of Heaven & Dark Angel. But I don't think my blood pressure can take anymore of the prequels and sequels that will inevitably come of it.

There's no excuse. It's all about the money. Anything Neiderman writes changing and "expanding" upon VCA's original work is fanfiction in my opinion.

Please stop retconning Virginia's original work.

Amanda says

Originally posted at Desert Island Book Reviews

Whitefern is the sequel to My Sweet Audrina, a standalone novel about a family's secrets and ghosts. I read a ton of V.C. Andrews books in high school, and I've had trouble remembering which ones I read and which I didn't. After reading Whitefern, I'm pretty sure I didn't read the first book, but enough of it was recapped here that it didn't matter (and I looked up a summary, too, just to make sure I knew the world we were in). I'd say you probably could read this without having read the first book, and you really aren't missing all that much (though the plot in the first book does sound more interesting than this).

That said, I don't know that I can really recommend this book. Maybe I'm just well beyond my V.C. Andrews years, or maybe this book just wasn't my cup of tea. Either way, I didn't really enjoy it. I had expected some drama, some ghosts, and some secrets, and while I did sort of get all of those, reading this book mostly just made me feel angry.

First of all, Arden was the absolute worst from start to finish, and Audrina just kind of took it. She didn't stand up for herself very much or take control of her life. It was extremely frustrating, and since Arden was a huge part of this book, it was hard to like any of it.

Then, there's Sylvia, who is mentally challenged in some way because of her premature birth. She's treated terribly by pretty much everyone around her, and I really hated that. I understand that it's a book and many characters aren't perfect, and that's fine, but without exception every character treated her badly. I don't know if it was ever made clear how old any of the characters are, but my assumption is that Sylvia is actually an adult. She's treated like a worthless child, though, and it bothers me.

The main plot lines of this book are a semi-secret pregnancy and the fallout from Audrina's father's death. Arden is front and center in both and is completely unlikable in every single way. His beliefs about women and what they should be allowed to do come up frequently and made me angry every single time. It didn't take me long to decide I hated him while I was reading. Normally, if I hate a character, I can still like the book, but this book relied way too heavily on such an unlikable character.

I gave this book two stars, and while I probably could have dropped it to one because there was so little I liked, I kept it at two because I did like the elements with ghosts. There aren't too many, but the parts where they were definitely stood out as the winning passages for me. Honestly, this book does remind me of a lot of the other V.C. Andrews books I've read, but I think that I've outgrown these books as a reader. It might be because the original V.C. Andrews isn't writing them (a ghostwriter has been publishing under her name

since she passed away), or because I've just read so many better books at this point. Either way, I don't think I'll be going back to this author and I can't really recommend this book.

*ARC from NetGalley

Betty says

I received an advance review copy of this book via Netgalley and Gallery Books in exchange for an honest review.

It's been nearly 30 years since I first read *My Sweet Audrina*. I loved the book, and read it many times over the years. I always wished a set of sequels had been written for this book, as there had been for the *Dollanganger* and *Casteel* series. When I heard a sequel had finally been written, I was very excited to read it. I was looking forward to finding out what came next for Audrina, and hoped the sequel would be a worthy follow-up to the story Virginia Andrews wrote so beautifully.

I was sadly disappointed, however.

Whitefern definitely had potential. Arden, once a loving husband, is now cruel to Audrina and obsessed with making money. Her father dies, leaving Audrina controlling interest in the family business, which surprises her and enrages Arden. Why did Arden change? And why did her father change his will? The answers to those questions were not nearly as shocking as I'd hoped they would be.

In fact, none of the major plot points delivered any shocking revelations. Every moment that was meant to leave the reader wide-eyed and thunderstruck fell flat, because I'd been anticipating it practically the entire time. There was only one thing that happened regarding a secondary character that actually surprised me, but given the explosive potential that could have played out involving multiple characters in the story, that one surprise didn't pack much of a punch. The final conclusion was unimaginative, and boring in its predictability.

Whitefern is a pale imitation of the brilliant and hauntingly tragic *My Sweet Audrina*. As readers, we often crave to know what happens next with characters we've grown attached to... but —as the sequels to *Gone with the Wind* have proved— sometimes 'what happens next' is best left to the reader's imagination.

Carrie says

Whitefern is the long awaited sequel to *My Sweet Audrina* by V.C. Andrews. After nearly a quarter of a century we now get a look into Audrina's life as an adult after she had found out the secret that her family had hidden from her for her entire life.

Picking up Audrina's story after her father has passed away Audrina is still living in the *Whitefern* mansion raising her mentally challenged sister Sylvia and married to Arden. Audrina's father has left controlling interest of the business to her causing Arden to pressure her into signing it over and Sylvia is making progress in life and developed an interest in art.

Whitefern was actually better than I had expected it to be but to me still not quite as good as the earlier works written by Ms. Andrews herself. This was one of the better stories that I've read since the ghostwriter had taken over writing under the V.C. Andrews name though.

Somehow when reading along though I kept getting the feeling of deja vu as if I had read this book before. I can't think of any particular book the events in the story remind me of so I'm almost wondering if it weren't just the predictability of the story that made me feel I knew what was coming. Part of the edge missing from this one also may have been the lack of Vera in the story as she centered around a lot of the earlier controversy in *My Sweet Audrina*.

Also, I kind of felt all throughout the story that Sylvia's character felt a bit off for the way she's described. In the earlier book it was written that Audrina was trying to teach her to be as normal as possible but in this continuation it seems a bit contradictory at times in how she is written. One minute it's said she is still completely dependent but the next speaking in full sentences and carrying on a normal conversation along with doing a lot of things that I wouldn't expect.

Overall, a bit predictable but not too bad overall of a continuation from the earlier work. Almost as if this was a duller version of the first gripping novel, not quite up to the standards of the first but closer than some of the other later works from the ghostwriter era.

I received an advance copy from the publisher via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

For more reviews please visit <https://carriesbookreviews.wordpress....>

Marianne Hagadorn says

The Ghost Writer absolutely destroyed this series. The watered down version of Audrina and Arden's complete character assassination came across as glorified FanFiction. As an adult, making Audrina come across as so completely and utterly daft was bad. However, the way Andrew Neiderman completely destroyed the love Arden had for Audrina was too much to bear. The Arden that VC Andrews created for us was flawed but forgivable. He loved Audrina despite his mistakes. Her Arden would never have thrown Audrina's infertility in her face. He would have consoled her. He also wouldn't have raped Sylvia. Especially after what happened to Audrina. This book was like a car crash. You don't want to look but you have to in spite of all the blood Neiderman spilled. And to have Arden die at the end by falling down the stairs was unoriginal and completely uninspired. I didn't think it could get worse after the Dollanger Diary series but boy was I wrong. I do not understand how Andrew's family allows this man to keep destroying her life's work. It's time for a new GhostWriter.

M.M. Strawberry Reviews says

So. Writing crap under VCA's name was not enough. Nor was "adding" to the Dollanger series with the "Christopher's Diary" series. Now he has to "add" to the Audrina book. Because he, the publishers, and VCA's family have ZERO respect for the hard work of a dead woman, who unlike Neiderman, actually CARED for her craft. (Neiderman may have cared once, as is evident by his earlier works, but it's clear that at this point,

he doesn't care about anything besides the money and piggybacking on someone else's name because he knows he can't be anywhere near as successful under his own name)

Those who have been following my reviews may be surprised at how late I am in reviewing Neiderman's latest work. There's a good explanation for that. I work in a store (not a bookstore, but a store with a book section primarily for new releases and what not) You'll see the more recent books by Nora Roberts, James Patterson, etc etc. Up to a couple of years ago, it was easy for me to skim through a Neiderman book after I was done with my shift and be on my merry way, the same day it was released.

The books my store chooses to stock are determined in a very large part by what sells, since it is a fairly limited section. And apparently, Neiderman's books simply are not profitable for the company I work for, as it appears that other stores under the same company have stopped stocking VCA books (I've looked at a few other stores!) And I assure you, it is not a small company, as its stores and businesses span several states. So now I have to wait until it is convenient for me to head over to the Mart of Walls (Walmart for you non-American peeps) to check out their stuff. I head down there a while ago with my boyfriend and scored a great deal on a new pair of shoes I needed for work. Sweet! (and some hard cider, as well) Anyway, back to the story! And yeah, that store does carry these books, although they were not specially featured or anything and were actually shoved over to the side/corner with little visibility. (I remember in bygone years when a new VCA release was always within the top 10 new releases in the book section at Walmart among other places)

Having read several negative reviews on Amazon and Goodreads, I was not the least bit surprised at the poor quality of this story. But then I would not have been surprised even if I had not read other reviews. The characters in this book are so far removed from the original MSA. While Arden was weak before for having witnessed her rape and not admitting it to her, in this book he is just so unlikeable and idiotic. And Sylvia confuses me. In MSA, it is very strongly implied that she is a victim of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, and one of the pretty obvious clues to this is the observation that her mother drank bourbon-laced tea multiple times throughout her pregnancy (not to mention Damnian beating Lucky when she was pregnant, although that's a different matter...) In this book, Sylvia's intelligence seems to wax and wane at the author's convenience because apparently now Sylvia has da 'tism.

Never mind the fact that autism is not visible/diagnosed until at earliest, the child's toddler years, and in MSA, there was obviously something wrong with Sylvia at birth, which is typical of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, including facial traits. The baby didn't come home at all for the first 3 years of her life, as is clearly mentioned in the book, and the way Sylvia stumbled around on her homecoming is also indicative of the brain damage caused by FAS, not autism. But then, I actually know the difference between FAS and autism because I, yanno, actually do research. And having Audrina and Sylvia sleep together in a way that is described as them being lovers... ew. Just, ew.

While Audrina was purposely kept naive in MSA, with a reason behind it, she was a complete idiot in this book. She was shown to have matured at the end of the book, and here she just goes back to being an idiot. But then Neiderman writes plenty of people throughout his books as idiots, as if he perceives his readers as idiots. And as per usual, the evildoers have an easy way out – in this case, Arden takes a tumble down the stairs. Come on, that is just effing lazy. He raped Sylvia, Audrina should have gone after his man-bits with a meat cleaver.

But then, in MSA, while Arden was a weak and flawed man, i sincerely do not believe he would want to rape anyone, let alone a severely mentally disabled person. Neiderman has re-written Arden into a person who would do such a despicable thing, and I don't even...

I don't feel that VCA would have ever written Arden the way Neiderman did. The evilness of Arden's character here was so cardboard and the story itself pretty predictable. It simply does not muster as a VCA-inspired work at all. It would be great, SO great if Neiderman wrote a male lead who actually manages to redeem himself somehow in the end. But then, it'd be totally great if Neiderman did plenty of other things in addition, like, taking his time to craft the story and do research, and read/understand the source material.

I am addressing the last part of my review to the author who wrote this book. Mr. Neiderman, I know you do not think much of me. But I hadn't written my reviews in a personal mission of hatred against you/stalking you/whatever crazy stuff you and Justin came up with in your heads. I'm a longtime reviewer, and my reviews are written with honesty. I've written over a thousand reviews for books alone. Some get good ratings. Other get poor ratings. The early works you did under VCA's name got good ratings from me, and positive reviews, because I feel like you put genuine effort into these, and it showed. I give praise on merit.

Unfortunately, like many other authors, you stopped trying so hard. Flush with money and fame, (even if it was a ghostwrite) can cause an artist to grow complacent. It happens in books, movies, music, etc. Think about it, Mr. Neiderman. Is this really the kind of legacy you want to leave behind? Quickly penning out this or that with little regard to plot, character, or research. I see gaping plot holes and cardboard characters, along with recycled story lines, and I am not the only one who sees that. As I said before, i give praise on merit, and your recent works do not merit.

My criticisms about you are about your writing. I have no interest in your family/friends/etc, so don't try to pass me off as a stalker. My reviews for your works are just as honest as the reviews I write for other books. You can do better than this. I know, because you've done so in the past. Step away from the keyboard and take a breather. Take the time to develop your stories, and do research. By that I mean real, actual research, not 'I saw this (Hollywood) movie about vampires or witchcraft so I know enough about it to write a book about it!!!'

Please stop dragging VCA's name through the mud. If you truly are so confident in your writing skills, you shouldn't need to use someone else's name. You should be able to stand on your own two feet and use your own name with pride as you present your stories to the world. YOUR stories, because even though this book among others have VCA's name on the cover, it's obvious she didn't write them. Be a man. A man of honor, of integrity, and respect for the noble craft of writing. Be a decent human being.

Tez says

[Racism, sexism, abuse, rape, and SO MUCH ABLEISM. Ableism in almost every chapter. (hide spoiler)]

Lorraine Elgar says

The curse of Audrina's Swiss cheese memory seems to have plagued the author during the creation of this sequel.

Carefully crafted characters from the original My Sweet Audrina have been rehashed and history rewritten in order to produce a plot line for a sequel that was never really necessary.

Sylvia has miraculously developed into a fully speaking , eyes focused , albeit slow woman of twenty who

adores her father Damien and is permanently attached to him until his death leaves her so distraught she has to attempt to dig up his grave

Damien himself, rather than avoiding Sylvia and looking at her in disgust, idolises her in return and dotes on her - a complete contrast to the Damien Adare readers of the original Audrina will recognise.

As for Audrina herself, gone is the childlike innocence and naivety she still managed to possess even as an adult ...even after the revelations. In her place is a rather frustrated housewife, unable to conceive and remembering too well Aunt Ellsbeth's advice when it came to men (some which Aunt Ellsbeth *never* would have said)

Which brings me to the villain of the piece ...Arden ... a terrible caricature of the original Damien Adare, with the original Arden although he failed Audrina time and time again, he still held for me at least the redeeming quality that he really did love Audrina, he was just extremely weak. Arden 2.0 is not and neither does he love Audrina much, if at all. He also seems to believe that his mother married Damien therefore he was his son and entitled to inherit upon his death.

No, just, no - if you are to write a sequel of a beloved book then please have the respect to actually know the original source material and more importantly your characters.

Original V C Andrews fans will not be happy with these obvious changes in order to make a plot work.

OK, there will not be the venomous reaction to Whitefern that the Christopher Diaries trilogy had as at least history hasn't been rewritten too much (apart from Sylvia), just rather lazy fact checking and editing. These beloved characters are only recognisable by their names and this will come as a big disappointment.

As usual with current V C Andrews books there are unnecessary sexual references either designed to excite readers or the author I'm not quite sure.

Audrina and Sylvia bathing together and then sharing a bed "entwined like lovers" just comes across as cheap and nasty. There is no need for it and rather than exciting had me rolling my eyes.

Now, I've got my die hard Virginia Andrews fan opinion out of the way I will concentrate on the book itself, but have to note that in order to enjoy the book I have to separate it from its predecessor.

The plot itself is very good, although you can see what's going to happen a mile off, you have to keep reading as the story really does grip you. It pulls you in because as a reader you can see what's happening whilst the narrator has no idea.

Sylvia is a compelling character and your heart breaks for her vulnerability and the prison she is in inside herself... her fragility and childlike qualities working against her. And how easy it is for her to be manipulated.

Of course, Arden is very easy to hate and plays the villain part to the extreme, even if it is rather blatant. Reading it, you hate him more every time he speaks and just, well, any time he's on the page you feel the need to vomit.

Audrina, as the narrator, is a hard character to like, you literally want to slap some sense into her, she's so blind to what's happening.

Truthfully, I'd have to say this is ghostwritten VCA at its best, fans of the Cutler, Landry and Logan will love it. Full of secrets and lies, this would have been a good novel in itself, it didn't need to tie itself to an already established book and leave itself open to criticism in doing so I'm afraid that there will be a backlash just like Secret Brother which also, if it hadn't been tied to the Dollangangers, was an intriguing story in itself.

It feels like vintage vca from the early '90s - a sign I hope that the brand is returning to that format rather than keeping in the young adult category.

Its much more appealing , story wise for the more mature VC Andrews fans who have grown up and would rather read a narrator who is in her 30 s rather than a teenage girl. If this is the future of VCA then I'm definitely buying.

Thankfully there are no unnecessary diversions from the main plot which the Christopher Diaries had with unlikeable and unnecessary characters.

It has a timeless quality to it , provides real food for thought in its subject matter

Whitefern in my opinion is the best VCA book that's come out since the ending of the Logan series, this is the kind of story fans want. Compelling, gripping, heartbreaking, family drama.....no attempts to keep up and struggling to in a young adult section. No, annoying teenagers , no over dramatics .

However, it should never ever have been billed as a My Sweet Audrina sequel ... to do so it discredits both the original but also this story itself

Julie says

Whitefern by V.C. Andrews is a 2016 Gallery/Pocket Books publication. I was provided a copy of this book by the publisher as an XOXpert, the official street team of XOXO After Dark.

After a long gap between books, V.C. Andrews has written the sequel to 'My Sweet Audrina.' Fans of this author have been super excited about 'Whitefern', and rightly so. After reading 'MSA', recently, I too found myself looking forward to this book.

Sadly, this long awaited sequel falls a little flat, and I picked up on a few oddball errors, and things that were clearly out of place for the time and atmosphere of the story.

As the story opens, Audrina's 'Papa' had just died, and a last minute change in her father's will gave her the controlling shares in his company, a development that sent Arden into a serious rage, and determined to take back complete control. His treatment of Audrina is becoming hardened and manipulative, belittling her and stabbing at her self- confidence, while he struts around like a peacock telling everyone he is now the head of the household.

But, an incredible development involving Audrina's mentally challenged sister, Sylvia, will put Audrina right back into the situation she had lived in as a child, being held prisoner in 'Whitefern', once more at the mercy of a man, and the machinations of others.

It is important to note that the story was set in the past, in a time when women seldom had a great deal of power in the workforce and the husband was the decision maker. These stories often reflect upon this male dominated atmosphere, and the way women were 'handled', told what to do, and treated as second class citizens, too stupid to think for themselves.

But, I think anyone paying attention at all, will have figured out what was going in the ominous and oppressive Whitefern, and therefore, the shock value was very low. The characterizations were off center,

with Sylvia's disabilities ranged from a complete inability to function normally, to being able to carry out household chores, hold conversations, and show talents, such as with her art, and has an understanding of things I would not have thought her capable of.

To say Audrina is gullible is a vast understatement, and even with her background, and her never having been properly socialized, except for a brief period of schooling, she is still way too easily manipulated, and fails to fight back with any real vigor.

The Gothic tones are still present, with a slight touch of the paranormal, but it doesn't pack the same punch, almost becoming a parody.

Unless diehard fans of this author are willing to support this one without too much scrutiny, I'm pretty sure most people will find this one pretty disappointing.

Although I started this book with high hopes, I ended up feeling a little let down. It isn't a truly horrible novel, but it's uneven, doesn't really show the characters in the same light as with the first book, nor do they progress, except maybe for the worse.

However, if you know to keep your expectations from soaring too high, and just have to find out what happened next with Audrina, you will find this one readable and maybe even enjoyable.

Overall 2 stars

Robin says

What the hell happened to Arden?
