



Butterfly Weed

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This is the life story of the colorful physician of Harington's acclaimed Stay More novels, Doc Swain: how he becomes a physician without benefit of medical school education, how he winds up as a high-school teacher of hygiene and enamored of a pretty student, how his love for her ultimately leads him to face some heartbreaking choices. Bawdy, rich in language and detail, and very funny.

Butterfly Weed Details

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Author : Donald Harington

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From Reader Review Butterfly Weed for online ebook

Mike says

I read this some time ago and never took it off my to read list. Hmmm, I remember that I enjoyed it enough at the time, but the book did not live within me like a really good book does.

Bud Mallar says

Again, one should start with Mr Harington's first book in the Stay More series to pick up the running narrative of several characters.

But, like most of them, this will work as a stand alone.

This, like all the others, are full of Arkansas rural characters, folklore, stories and bits and pieces of reality.

But this story, like the others, touches us all. It is about life, and love, and choices, and acceptance and is a wonderful break from all the grit lit I go through. Perhaps the 'sex scenes' - although some are funny - are a bit more prevalent in this book, but they seem to work without being overly pornographic. In some cases they are more medical descriptions than something supposed to read a erotic.

If you haven't read Mr Harington, you should

Tom says

I got caught up in Donald Harington's world of Stay More, Arkansas years ago, with his book *Architecture of the Arkansas Ozarks*. I've read a number of his books since. *Butterfly Weed* is not my favorite, but it was an enjoyable read nonetheless. Very funny, bawdy, just a little too "self aware" for my taste.

R.L. says

The best one of the series yet. I'm tempted to annotate the book in terms of historical fact. Couple of examples:

The frame story is told by Vance Randolph, who really was a folklorist who specialized in Ozarkian folklore.

Automobiles really were manufactured in Arkansas in the early 20th century by the Climber Motor Company.

Artificial pneumothorax and thoracoplasty(!) really were used as treatments for tuberculosis. There really was a tuberculosis sanitorium near Booneville Arkansas. In one way, the book is about tuberculosis.

Autumn says

Another beautiful story from Donald Harrington. This time he tells the story of Doc Swain, one of my favourite Stay Morons. I was surprised to learn after reading it that the character Vance who narrates the story to Harrington in the book (yes, it is meta) was a real-life folklorist.

Heidi says

A good Harrington starter. Harrington has more humor in his little finger than most have in their entire arm. He transfers his humor and personality to the page. His latest comes out in May 2008...more from the town of Stay More, where most of his novels take place. You get to know an entire community when you digest one of his books.

Veronika Suess says

That was just lot of fun! A great book indeed!

D'face says

'Butterfly Weed' takes the form of a novelist speaking with a retired folklorist at his nursing home. The folklorist stumbled into Stay More with typhoid and was nursed back to health by Doc Swain. Doc Swain was cut from the womb of his mother by his biological father who killed his parents and gave the baby to reclusive healer in payment for learning the trade of healing from the recluse. The recounts the story of Doc Swain a doctor taught by his adoptive father in their remote cave. Without formal schooling Doc Swain becomes a recognised doctor capable of not only the most advanced medical diagnoses, but also surgery, raising the dead and curing the sick in their sleep through the 'dream cure'. The doctor marries one of his patients but finds his true love many years later in a 16 year old student Tenny. Their love is frustrated by the interference of a lusty female teacher Venda Breedlove who has her designs upon Doc Swain. Tenny contracts tuberculosis and dies in a very poignant passage at the end of the book, visiting the Doc after her death in his dreams. There are many graphic sexual scenes throughout the book, including the sexual awakening of two male characters through incest.

This is the first Harrington book I have read. Each chapter is a session with the folklorist in the nursing home and the writing style is conversational making this a very comfortable read. I was introduced to Harrington through *'The Writer's Almanac'* where he was described as "America's greatest unknown writer." Harrington's novels are difficult to place, they are magical realism in a small town he has richly created and populated. He died in 2009.

Jae says

I picked this up as light reading after finishing Lonesome Dove. It was perfect. Harrington knows how to tell a story. I laughed every single time I picked up this book. It is rife with Ozarkian folklore, folk medicine, folk humor, and folks. It's a bit fantastical as Doc Swain cures people in their dreams, meets his lover in their dreams for their first romantic liaison, and sets up a student who is endowed with two penises with another student who's got two vaginas, but this aspect is buffered by the telling of more than you ever want to know about tuberculosis. Harrington has written a bunch of other books about the Ozark town of Stay More, and I think I might need to read one or two of them.

Noelle says

Okay. I didn't finish this. I tried to because the writing is interesting and unique--folklore of the Ozarks. However: I simply couldn't stick with it.

Oldcoach says

Any book by Harrington is always a good read, but I was just a bit disappointed about one aspect of the book. Most of his books tell a great story, have interesting characters, and have wonderful twists and turns to the plot line. Sex was just a natural part of the story. With Butterfly Weed I felt that sex drove the plot rather than events or the characters. This has not been the norm for other books by Harrington.

Bridget says

I never tire of this author.

Jim Krotzman says

I enjoy the folklore scenario of the novel.
The Ozark dialect is entertaining if not accurate. I don't know if it is.
There are many sexual situations in the novel.
The character of Colvin U Swain is well developed.
The superstitions and medical therapies of the mountain folk are entertaining.

Mike says

Just amazing.
