



Stages of Grace

Carey Heywood

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Denial, Anger, Bargaining, Depression, Acceptance...

When facing death a mourning period is to be expected. But what if it's not a person but a relationship that dies? Grace and her boyfriend Jon have been together for three years. They live together and have shared many beautiful memories. Those memories are what keep Grace from admitting Jon has changed and is no longer the man she fell in love with.

Afraid of being alone and holding on to something that no longer exists Grace is a shadow of her former self. Her daily objective is to hide her pain from the world. Then, an unexpected letter sets off a whirlwind of potential life changes. In life sometimes the hardest thing to do is let go.

Stages of Grace Details

Date : Published January 9th 2014 (first published April 19th 2013)

ISBN :

Author : Carey Heywood

Format : Kindle Edition 236 pages

Genre : New Adult, Romance, Business, Amazon

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From Reader Review Stages of Grace for online ebook

Gareth Young says

Grace is a beautifully rendered character whose life is changing in increments around her. There's no "flash of lightning" moment, just each stage in a continually evolving life, realistically conveyed through Miss Heywood's sensitive prose. Stages of Grace could've become bogged down in the sadness of a love that breaks down and the loneliness that comes with it but, Grace is not a bitter character, her quiet strength guides her. She's a warm heart in the chilly Ohio landscape, following the possibilities as they are presented to her.

Stages of Grace is an emotionally honest story about a woman who wants what everyone wants: family, love and maybe a little sunshine to go along with it. Her journey is well worth following.

Rachael Orman says

I will admit the first chapter was really hard for me to get through and I put it down a few times because I kept getting frustrated with Grace (the main character) because she was letting her boyfriend (Jon) walk all over her and treat her horribly. And I don't like DoorMats.. I like my women to have a backbone. But then we got to the next chapter, I couldn't put it down. Grace started standing up for herself and putting Jon in his place for being so rude to her.

Watching their relationship change and develop was really heart tugging for me. I've been in a relationship that became loveless like that so I just had to read where it was going. Were Jon & Grace going to be able to find what they'd lost? (I'm not telling you, you'll have to read to find out)

Grace gets a letter from an unexpected person and this brings on HUGE Changes in her life..

Parts made me laugh, parts made my tear up, parts made me want to scream, but all in all.. Loved it.

Heather says

(This review can also be found on my blog [The \(Mis\)Adventures of a Twenty-Something Year Old Girl](#)).

When I first heard about Stages of Grace by Carey Heywood, I was definitely intrigued especially when the blurb mentioned something about a letter setting everything off. I had to kill my curiosity, so I decided to join the blog tour for this book. I'm super happy I had the chance to read this book.

Grace's relationship with her boyfriend of 4 years is ending. Grace knows this but doesn't want to admit it. She doesn't know how to live without her boyfriend, Jon. When Jon starts taking her for granted and talking down to her, she knows something's got to give. When she receives a letter in the mail, it changes Grace's life immensely. Will she be able to find love and happiness again?

I love the title for this book. I love how the book's chapters really are written in stages of Grace's life. Stages

of Grace is an excellent title and is very straight forward.

I love the cover of this book. I love how softly the cover is done if that makes sense. The colors also work very well together. I know I've said in the past that I'm not really a fan of putting just faces on covers, but it works with this cover. I think anything else being on the cover would've been overkill.

I enjoyed the setting and world building. I'm sure many of us can relate to Grace's world and what all she went through. Everything felt so real!

The pacing in Stages of Grace, for the most part, was spot on. There were a few paragraphs where I felt the pacing slow down a bit, but within the next paragraph, it had picked up again. I stayed up late most nights reading this!!

I loved loved loved the characters!! I love how vulnerable Grace was to begin with. It was also a believable vulnerability that is absent from many books. I also loved how Grace started standing up for herself. I though Jon was so mean to Grace! He's a well written character when it comes to the inattentive and mean boyfriend. Many times I wanted Grace to just tell him how it is and kick him to the curb. Oh how I loved Kate!! I found myself wishing that I knew someone like her. She was so sweet and loving. I was sad when I finished the book because I couldn't read about Kate. I felt like she had touched my life too. (It's a wee bit silly, I know). Ryan sounded pretty hunky! I loved his personality and the way he treated Kate. I'm a stickler for men who are nice to the elderly. I also enjoyed the way he treated Grace by not pushing her.

The dialogue between characters was very enjoyable to read. I especially enjoyed the dialogue between Kate and Grace. I also enjoyed the dialogue between Jon and Grace. I didn't like the way he treated her, but I just thought that the author did an excellent job of catching an argument between a boyfriend that jut doesn't care anymore and a girlfriend who wants to make things right. As for the language, there are a few swear words in this book.

I must comment that the sex scenes were done tastefully. I was worried that they were going to become too graphic for my liking, but Miss Heywood didn't let me down. There was no graphic, lewd sex at all.

The only thing I didn't like too much about this book was the fact that sometimes I felt like I was being fed pointless information. For example, I thought there was too much about knitting in Stages of Grace. Saying that, it was just a minor flaw and possibly just a personal preference.

Overall, Stages of Grace by Carey Heywood is a very enjoyable read. It's one of those books that you can just pick up and read no matter what you are doing.

I'd recommend this book to everyone aged 17+ due to adult themes and language.

Keren Hughes says

When Carey Heywood said she was looking for reviewers, I jumped at the chance. I have never read anything by her before but she came highly recommended by a friend. So it was a chance for me to meet a new author and be introduced to her world. I can tell you now, I am so very happy that I did. If I hadn't, I wouldn't have known what a fabulous author she was and what she would bring to my life in the form of Stages of Grace.

This book made such an impact on me for a couple of reasons, one because it's written so beautifully but it also resonates with me on a deeper level because I suffered similarly to Grace. So much so it could have been called "Stages of Keren" instead.

Denial... Anger... Bargaining... Depression... and finally Acceptance.

These stages of grief are more prominently associated with death. But what happens when it's the death of a relationship not an actual person?

At first, Grace and Jon were blissfully happy. She'd been out on a blind date with someone and had seen Jon across the bowling alley - he was gorgeous, kind, funny... all the things you'd want in a boyfriend. They were always stealing kisses and sharing happy moments. That was until they'd been together for 3 years and Jon wasn't the easygoing man she had come to know and love. He became distant and cold, snapping at her for the slightest thing.

They used to have a morning routine of sharing a coffee and then seeing each other off to work, then Jon lost his job. For a short time, he kept up with the routine, seeing Grace off to her job as a doctor's receptionist but then one day he just stopped.

Every little thing Grace did seemed to annoy him. She was permanently walking on eggshells. She got to the point where she would put her clothes for the following morning in the bathroom the night before because getting dressed in their bedroom had Jon shouting at her for making too much noise.

This resonated within me because I once had a partner who was much the same, only he hit me too.

Fortunately for Grace, Jon never physically hurt her, but the mental abuse was just as bad as physical abuse.

Grace would go to work, and that would be the only reprieve she got because she worked with her friend Nikita. But when she got home on a night, she never knew what she'd be walking into.

There were no more tender moments or romantic gestures. Jon would wait until Grace went to bed and then he'd have the cheek to take her car out (because he now couldn't afford the upkeep of his own car) and he'd stay out until all hours doing lord only knows what. If Grace had asked him what he was up to, he would have gone ballistic. So she never asked.

Grace was an orphan, her parents having died recently. Jon had seen her through those times with a tissue for her tears and a shoulder to cry on. So what had happened to the old Jon? Where had the sensitive guy she'd fallen in love with disappeared to? What could she do to bring him back? Was it her fault?

One day, an unexpected letter has Grace shocked. She has a grandmother who is alive and living in Florida. Why hadn't her mother told her this when she was alive? She had always believed her mother when she said that her grandmother was dead. But here, now, she was reading a letter that confirmed this to be a lie.

Upon visiting her grandmother Kate in Florida, Grace has time to reflect on what her life is like. She sees it through fresh eyes. Of course, it helps that her grandmother's next door neighbour Ryan is hot. Not that I condone cheating to any degree, but with what she had suffered, I was silently encouraging her to at least kiss Ryan.

Kate asking her to stay with her in Florida makes Grace reassess her life. Is she happy? Does she love Jon anymore? Is there anything keeping her in Ohio? She could get a job in Florida. She could live with Kate. She could do anything with her life. But could she leave Jon or would she stay and try to make the relationship work?

Well these are questions you must endeavour to find out the answers to for yourself.

This book is an emotionally fraught journey for sure. The first stage, Denial, I was right there with her. I kept leaving the partner that beat me but I kept returning. He had a way of emotionally blackmailing me into staying, promising he'd never hit me again. I kept believing he could change. Lesson to be learned from that? A leopard never changes its spots.

The next stage, Anger. I could feel this emotion probably just as strongly as Grace. How could Jon turn from someone so loving to someone who shouted and screamed at her for the slightest of things? She felt the anger rising inside her because all the times she thought she was in the wrong, she wasn't. There was nothing wrong with the way Grace acted. It was Jon who was in the wrong and how dare he assume to take it out on her.

Then there was Bargaining. Well, Carey Heywood knows how to play with my emotions and she had me here too.

I was all too quickly thrown into Depression and so I totally felt Grace's plight. I was hurt that he mentally and physically bullied me into staying by his side. Calling me whenever he was on a break at work. Not letting me have a job because he was jealous that I might find someone else. Well in the end, I did find a job and I did find someone else. Someone like Ryan. Someone who treated me as an equal. As a person to loved, desired, cherished. not beaten and destroyed. It was in this stage that I must admit, I cheated. Looking back on it, it wasn't the right thing to do... BUT... he had beaten all the love out of me and I craved someone to put the pieces of me back together.

Lastly, we have Acceptance. For Grace, it was acceptance that it was time to make a change in her life. She had to stand up and be counted as an equal. She had to accept that it wasn't her fault that Jon had taken his problems out on her. He tried making her think that it was her fault for rubbing it in that she had a job and he only got "an allowance" like a child. Well she finally succeeded in standing up and making herself heard. Acceptance for me was realizing that it was not okay for [bleep] to beat me or mentally abuse me. I finally took that step to leave him, permanently!

So I felt Grace's every moment, cowering in case anything she did set Jon off. But I also felt every moment when her smile started to shine through. The moments she felt happiness being with her grandmother or being around Ryan.

Even if you've never been through a similar situation, I truly believe that you will have a hard job keeping yourself from empathising with Grace. She is such a beautiful character, both inside and out. She craves the love she used to have, but with the finality of the death of her relationship, a butterfly emerges from the cocoon. A stronger woman who can finally get what she wants from her life.

The writing style of Carey Heywood sucked me in. She pulled at my heartstrings at every turn. A tumultuous journey from beginning to end, Stages of Grace shoots right toward the top of my Best Books of 2013 list. I am now looking to get all of the books Carey has written and I believe she is writing a sequel to SoG, I truly hope she does.

There aren't enough words to describe this story without totally ruining your own first-hand experience of it. All I can tell you is that you won't be sorry you bought this book and spent a wonderful few hours lost within the pages. I smiled when Grace smiled, I laughed when she laughed, and I even cried a couple of times. People who know me know that I can't resist a book that makes me feel this much emotion.

If my review gets even just one person to read this book, then I will have done my job.

If you are in a similar situation to Grace, it may even help you take stock of your own life and get out before getting too hurt.

Thank you Carey for providing the e-copy of SoG for review. Thank you for hitting every emotion on the

head. But thank you most of all for creating Ryan for me to swoon over.
Ryan... how I long for a second book... maybe from his POV?... A girl can dream!

Miranda Whore says

I was pleasantly surprised by this book. I didn't really know what to expect from Heywood since I had never read anything by her in the past, but Stages of Grace stole my heart from the beginning. Heywood did a fantastic job making Grace a relatable character. I absolutely love the snarky voice inside her head, sense of humor, and the amount of courage she has to take life by the horns. She became content in a life that wasn't what she wanted, instead of taking the easy route she made a tough decision and followed through. She had doubts along the way, but stuck with her choice ending up all the happier for it.

As likable as Grace was, Jon was the opposite. I loathed Jon from the start; his character is very easily the villain in this tale. He has every quality as a high school bully. Again, his character is fully developed and is consistent throughout the story. I won't say anymore about him as I hate spoilers, but if I could I would go on and on!

The other characters are written just as well, Ryan is total book boyfriend material. (Be still my beating heart, seriously!) Kate is a hoot of an old lady and everything anyone would hope to be when they "grow up." Again, no spoilers so I'm just going to reiterate how wonderfully complex these characters are, not only the main characters, but even the supporting characters are exactly what they need to be.

Stages of Grace is an emotional roller coaster that will have you riding right along with Grace as she traverses this thing called life. It will make you mad, sad, happy, sad, mad, then happy again... this is real life personified. Six stars for Stages of Grace!!

Review by Mommy's a Book (W)hore.

Kendall {Book Crazy} says

I have read one other book by this author and I liked that one so I was really looking forward to reading this one! I was really looking forward to seeing where it went and to connect with the characters! This book really was amazing! I wasn't really sure what to expect when I started reading as the synopsis is pretty vague but after reading the book you realise how well it actually suits the book! Stages of Grace is a wonderful book about a range of emotions and about finding love again! I found it strange as the book just continued and it didn't have any chapters in it! This is the first book that I have ever read like this and I do have to say that I loved it! I also loved how the author did split the book up! The plot was amazing! I was intrigued by it from the first page! I do think that it started a bit slow but it soon picked up and I couldn't read it fast enough! It was completely different to what I was expecting as I sort of had my own idea of what to expect but the author completely surprised me! I thought that I knew where the book was going to go when I first started reading and I actually didn't think that I was going to enjoy it but the author soon completely changed my mind as the book developed into something that I didn't think it would! The characters were amazing! Grace was the main character and I loved her! I felt so sorry for her at the start of this book as she was stuck in a relationship that she didn't want to be in but she didn't have anywhere else to go so she tried to act happy when inside she was crumbling! I think that she was brave and I loved that I connected with her the whole

way through the book! I kept hoping that she would just leave her relationship but I can understand why she didn't! Ryan was the love interest of Grace and he was so cute! I loved his relationship development with Grace and also how gentle and loving he was towards her! I adored Grace and Ryan as a couple! I loved how their relationship developed and the pace that it developed at! I can definitely say that they are my favourite couple from any of Carey's books! I can completely understand why this book is a standalone but I would love another book to Grace and Ryan's story! The cover is also stunning! It is beautiful and it really suits the book! Big thank you to Carey for an ARC of Stages of Grace and also for mentioning me in the Acknowledgements and also to Supagurl Tours for having me on the Blog Tour!

Amy Cox says

I loved this story! I loved the struggle and the monologue. A lot emotion and watching Grace find herself was captivating. She lived with Jon and they had such happy memories and loved each other but life happens And sometimes when things change it changes you. Grace and Jon both changed and when Jon couldn't handle how life had handed him a crappy hand he took it out on Grace. Whether he meant to or not and you could see the hurt and indecision in Grace while coming to terms with the fact that the old Jon no longer existed. After finding her grandmother who is awesome btw and meeting her amazingly hot neighbor Ryan, Grace moves to Florida and starts over and finds exactly what she needed. Carey Heywood did an amazing job!

Black Rose says

Como que empezó bien pero, con cada página, con cada interminable sección, la historia se fue tornando cada vez más aburrida.

Me llamó la atención la idea de nombrar los capítulos con las reconocidas etapas del duelo. Sin embargo, esta también fue una acertada idea que se fue desdibujando con el paso de las páginas.

Pero hay algo que si no me gustó. Nunca nuestra protagonista admite o se toma en serio el abuso al que estuvo sometida. Las cosas por su nombre señoras y señores. Y esto es un caso típico de abuso, de violencia de género. Ok, aceptó que muchas veces las víctimas excusan lo que les está sucediendo y niegan su condición de víctima. Pero, que nadie en el entorno de nuestra supuesta heroína lo señalé? No se, me parece que puede ser nocivo para una sociedad en donde estos reprochables comportamientos no son discutidos con seriedad.

Es por esto que de 3 regulares estrellas bajemos a 2 negligentes estrellas contra la violencia de género.

Kirke says

I received a copy from the author in exchange for an honest review

Once in a while you read a book and when you finish it you wonder what have I just read? Not that it's a complete absurd story, it's just the opposite. It's nice and mellow. There are some sad parts, but there also fun and happy parts. A nearly perfect balance between everything. No extreme highs or lows.

Stages Of Grace is a couple of months taken out of a woman's life. She could have been anybody, at any point in her life, so we get Grace. She is living together with her boyfriend Jon, but she's not sure she still loves him and wonders if he feels the same about her. First she is in denial and still hoping everything can get back to the way it used to be. After denial comes anger, she's sick and tired of it all etc. During the whole story Grace has to go through the stages of grief, to mourn her relationship and to be able to be happy again.

I do like that idea. Indeed when a relationship ends you can be in denial, then you often get mad, depressed, acceptance and eventually moving on. No matter what you lose, a relative, a friend, a pet or even a relationship, these are the stages we go through and Carey Heywood did an excellent job of describing everything. Some stages were more subtly played out than others, but I really liked it.

Now this all happens when Grace receives a letter, that makes her put everything in action and she has a decision to make. Will she stay with Jon? Or will she let him go? Will she keep fighting for them? Or will she choose her own happiness?...

This is a book you're either going to love or hate. It's not filled with extreme conflicts. It's rather a peek into someone else's life, see what's on the other side of the picket fence or what happens behind closed doors. Excellent if you want to escape your own life for a while.

For more reviews and other book news you can always visit my blog :)

Elle says

LINK TO REVIEW: <http://storiesandswag.blogspot.com/20...>

In college, I minored in Psychology and when I saw in the synopsis where this story tied in to *The Five Stages of Grief*, I was intrigued. Carey Heywood brings a new twist to the rise and fall of a relationship.

Stages of Grace introduces you to Grace, a twenty-something who is stuck in a relationship rut with her long-term boyfriend, Jon.

The story is told through her point of view and is mostly done through Grace's inner monologue. I typically prefer books to have a fairly equal balance between dialogue and narration (or what I call "showing and telling"). To my surprise, I found Grace's narration enjoyable. Heywood won me over by incorporating thorough imagery and detail, with a moderate amount of dialogue, amongst characters that are either easy to fall in love with or very easy to hate. When all of the elements combine in *Stages of Grace*, the final product is a heartwarming story about building relationships and finding closure.

Grace and Jon's relationship starts just like any other. They are absolutely smitten with one another. Through flashbacks in Grace's narration, the author highlights the happier moments between the couple.

Locked in the gaze of the bluest eyes I had ever seen, Jon leaned in to kiss me. I had felt lit from within, as though every nerve ending on my body was emitting heat.

These tender moments are a stark contrast from Grace's relationship in present day.

I used to live for the weekend, for curling up with a good book or taking a day trip somewhere fun. Nowadays, weekends seem like staring contests until Jon finds some reason to scream at me.

“Don’t worry Grace. You have nothing I want to see.”

The author takes you on Grace’s journey through the Five Stages of Grief (Denial, Anger, Bargaining, Depression, Acceptance) as she tries to cope with her failing relationship.

Now all I feel is as though I am walking a tightrope suspended over a deep canyon with no hope of making it across.

As Grace progresses through each stage, her character adapts and changes. She forms new friendships, embraces new experiences, and is given the opportunity at a fresh start, all while trying to mend the broken parts of her life. The transformation Grace’s character undergoes within these pages makes her relatable and likable.

With each paragraph, I could see Grace’s confidence grow, as she was one step closer to finding her place and purpose in life. I never stopped rooting for her to reach the final stage of Acceptance.

Overall, I found Stages of Grace to be a delightful journey through the ups, down, and sometimes new beginnings of a relationship. The story is a quick read that’s easy to follow and you can’t help but fall in love with the characters. I recommend adding this book to your TBR list as well as becoming a fan of Carey Heywood’s on Facebook and Goodreads to keep up with what she is publishing next.

Jenni says

This was a story of a woman who was in a 3 year loving relationship until things go sour. Grace still being in love with Jon thinks it’s a phase that will pass one day. Watching Grace put up with the way Jon treats her and how she let him walk all over her, had me climbing the walls of frustration. During the stage of Denial I understood her hopes were for things to get better, I was just hoping she would have grown a backbone and voiced her feelings instead of going through each day walking on eggshells. Finally when Anger kicked in, she does something about it and I did a big ‘phew...finally’.

When she receives a letter from an unexpected person and decides to take a chance on them, things seem to turn Grace’s life around a little. This is when Bargaining comes into play. Her new found family member offers her an opportunity which leaves Grace conflicted because she’s hoping she and Jon can find their love for each other again. Shortly after returning to Cleveland she makes her choice and that’s when Depression hits her. Depression is an unkind emotion that leaves you constantly unsure of things, sad and questioning yourself over and over until finally Acceptance takes place. And what a relief of an emotion that is.

My life is so different now. My path to where I am today was not easy, but sitting here, next to the man I love, the man who has become my partner and who challenges me to go after what I want in life, I know I’m where I’m supposed to be.

“Is this real?” I tease.

He leans down, kisses my forehead, and says, “Yes Grace, very real.”

Through this book you watch Grace adjust, process and grow as she goes through the stages of Denial, Anger, Bargaining, Depression, and Acceptance. I truly appreciate when an author takes their time and uses their skill of being descriptive to give the reader a clear image of what's going on, I just felt this story was a little too descriptive for me with the sentence structure being mundane. Since I am a reader who requires much dialogue, the long moments of narrating made the reading slow for me but this is a story that can honestly hit home to most people. Overall, it's a special story which readers can relate to, including myself.

Angelica Juarez Gonzalez says

Es tan pero tan malo, que terminé odiando todo lo que tenga que ver con tejer.

Abbey Davies says

From page 3 I was hooked. The depiction of the characters are amazing. There is not a part of you that can not feel part of the scenes, emotions. Beautifully written and supplying of emotions. I went from pissed off to "You Go Girl," to excited/ fearful to happiness. As an avid reader and Author myself, I am impressed with this author. Her writing style is fluid, captivating and wanting for more. Grace is just that...Grace. She is normal like any other girl and the plot is so real to so many. I felt an immediate attachment to the book and I encourage all to read and see for yourself. What I liked most about this book is the mere fact that it was reality based. I read this book in a day and into the morning, it was that good, I couldn't put it down. The simplicity of Stages of Grace was fantastic. So many lessons in this book, AH HA moments. Fantastic read and I will hurry to read more by this author. Don't miss this one, it's one I could read over and over again!

Disincentive/Feta says

On my blog

Stages of grace caught my eye with a beautiful cover. It gives me kind of calm feeling and I felt it while reading the book, in spite of all the emotions that were going through me. It was the weirdest feeling ever.

Denial, Anger, Bargaining, Depression, Acceptance are stages after loss of someone important. Grace is going through them, but she's missing feelings she had rather than a person. She's ending a long-time relationship that was happy at the beginning but then got toxic.

I didn't only like Grace. I felt her. I felt like going through all of the stages with her, sharing all of the emotions. She and her psychology are pictured perfectly, but the rest of characters sometimes felt... Flat.

There are no big surprises in Stages of grace, no big plot twists, but a lot of emotions. I would recommend it to every contemporary-lover, even one like me - who doesn't enjoy romances really. This one is different.

I think a lot of people, me too, can relate to what Grace has gone through.

And everyone likes to read about things that happened to them too.

Helen says

Facing up to being in a tough life situation takes courage. And acting on it to make a big change in your life takes even more. Carey Heywood's *Stages of Grace* will take you through a journey that starts off with the main character, Grace, in one of those tough situations. I thought the concept of the book was unique and compelling as soon as I heard about it: a contemporary romance in which Grace journeys through the five classic stages of mourning as her relationship with her long-term boyfriend, Jon, begins to wilt and die.

My thoughts as I read: I was honestly tormented as I watched Grace struggle with her denial over this fact - yep, I wanted to yank her out of his controlling grasp, take her on a long walk, and tell her that Jon was no good for her and that she deserved better (and I wanted to punch Jon in the face, REALLY). But as she was truly in denial at that point, I doubt she would have listened to me. And THAT, I think, is the beauty of Carey's writing - she makes her characters so real by infusing them with details, emotions, and thoughts so that you feel like you know them, can relate to them, and as though you can feel for them. And as Grace progressed through the rest of her journey, I was very much ready to root for her and wish for her a happy ending. I won't include any spoilers as to what happens, but suffice it to say that I am totally on Team Ryan (adorable Kiwi, he is) and not because there was any sort of love triangle - anyone who knows me knows that I do NOT do well with love triangles. ;) I give this book a 4.5 stars!

I was provided an ARC as part of the *Stages of Grace* blog tour in exchange for an honest review.
