



Daisy Chain

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The abrupt disappearance of young Daisy Chance from a small Texas town in 1973 spins three lives out of control?Jed, whose guilt over not protecting his friend Daisy strangles him; Emory Chance, who blames her own choices for her daughter's demise; and Ouisie Pepper, who is plagued by headaches while pierced by the shattered pieces of a family in crisis.

In this first book in the Defiance, Texas Trilogy, fourteen-year-old Jed Pepper has a sickening secret: He's convinced it's his fault his best friend Daisy went missing. Jed's pain sends him on a quest for answers to mysteries woven through the fabric of his own life and the lives of the families of Defiance, Texas. When he finally confronts the terrible truths he's been denying all his life, Jed must choose between rebellion and love, anger and freedom.

Daisy Chain is an achingly beautiful southern coming-of-age story crafted by a bright new literary talent. It offers a haunting yet hopeful backdrop for human depravity and beauty, for terrible secrets and God's surprising redemption.

Daisy Chain Details

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From Reader Review Daisy Chain for online ebook

Sharon Olson says

Mary DeMuth is a master storyteller. The characterization and plot of this story pulled me in and compelled me to a deep empathy and compassion for what the characters experienced. It changed me. By the end of the story, I resolved to reserve judgment of people and situations because, really, what we see on the outside is a shell with so much more going on underneath. What might it be like if we all were a little slower to come to conclusions and a lot more compassionate?

C. says

I had trouble getting into this story. Not sure what it was that made it difficult for me. It seemed to move slowly and that may be all it was.

The characters certainly had their flaws. Hap actually gave me the creeps. I knew someone like him years ago and he was not a nice man.

The overall mood of the story seemed quite somber. I guess I was hoping for more, especially towards the end of the book. I was disappointed overall. I'm sure others may find this novel enjoyable. It just wasn't for me.

Jill Williamson says

Review by Gretchen Hoffman

Mary E. DeMuth's latest book, *Daisy Chain*, is a coming of age story about fourteen-year-old Jed Pepper. He lives in Defiance, TX in 1977, a time of small towns where parents didn't have to worry about their children running around. At least they didn't until young Daisy Chance goes missing.

Not only is Daisy Jed's best friend, but he was the last one to see her. Jed faces guilt over the disappearance of his friend and struggles with hidden hurts from his seemingly picture-perfect family. Through his pain, Jed must learn to overcome his guilt and find redemption.

This novel has been compared to Harper Lee's infamous book, *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Let's just say I can totally understand why. It's the newest coming of age story that is so well-written. *Daisy Chain* has beautiful prose, off-beat but very real characters, and a delicate story. It's one of those books that stays in your mind long after you've finished reading it. The story is a little sad, and I couldn't help wishing things would have turned out differently, but alas, life isn't always happily-ever-after. I would recommend it.

Delia says

A small Texas town. A missing teenage girl. A highly dysfunctional family. A pubescent boy with a heart full of pain, a conscience pricked by guilt, and a life packed with trouble.

Where's Daisy? When Jed Pepper's best friend disappears, the boy blames himself – for her disappearance and for a myriad of other wrongs in his life. It's hard to find answers when everyone he knows has a passel of dark secrets and hidden vices. In his search for truth, Jed comes to question God – His existence, His love, His power to change anything – and just about every other authority figure in his life. But two special people, who might just be angels on earth, set out to help the young man find himself.

Daisy Chain is a hauntingly beautiful soul-searcher of a novel. I find most coming-of-age books touching and tender, but Mary DeMuth brings a heart-wrenching story to amazing life in this all-too-realistic southern tale about a hurting boy who longs desperately to be a man. Children who've seen too much sorrow. Abuse and dysfunction in families ...and in the church. A small town reeling from a shocking act of violence that takes one of its own and leaves a gaping wound of questions and suspicions.

First in the Defiance Texas Trilogy, Daisy Chain is an undeniable masterpiece. Full of grit and grace, hurting and happiness, love and longing. Packed with all-too-human faults and failures that bring to shining light those breathtaking touches of glory the author tucks away here and there for the reader to find, treasure, and never, ever forget.

Beautifully done!

Shane says

I absolutely LOVED this book. In fact I have pre-ordered the second book in the series from amazon due to come out in the fall. The characters are believable and not overly churchy like some Christian fiction. I met Mary recently which made the book even more interesting.

Dawna Bentley says

This was a free kindle book that I came across. The synopsis sounded good so I gave it a try. It took my a while to get through this book. It had a great beginning, but was slow moving through the rest of the book, with a disappointing ending. It's the story of 14 year old Jed, whose best friend, Daisy, goes missing one night. Throughout the book poor Jed struggles with the guilt for not walking her home and protecting her, trying to stand up to his abusive father (who is a well respected preacher), wanting to protect his sister and mother from their father's abuse, all the while trying to find out what happened to Daisy. It moved really slow until ****SPOILER ALERT**** poor Jed finds Daisy's body hidden under some brush in the woods. At this point I think it will pick up and unveil who harmed Daisy.....but it doesn't. The book kinda goes off in another direction until it comes to a close -barely mentioning that the news of what really happened to Daisy was too painful for Jed to want to remember. It leaves the reader hanging and having to speculate on their own of WHO DID IT? There were some good discussion questions at the back of the book that would be good to chat with someone else about. It looks like there is a second book that focuses on Daisy's mother and her determination to find the killer. However, if you're like me and need some type of closure at the end of a book, I wouldn't recommend it.

Linda says

Dreadful

I kept waiting for this book to move, flow, improve and make a storyline. This isn't about child neglect, abuse, poverty, or life generalizations. It's plain depressing, boring, and not worth reading. It's not my habit to get 80% through a book and stop. But I did. Not recommended.

Ashlee says

UGH! So beyond terrible. My sister gave me this book and just raved about it- said that it was SO good and I had to read it immediately.

Probably the worst day of my life. The book's synopsis makes it sound like a great book, full of mystery and suspense. None of that. Basically, it's about two best friends (a boy and a girl) that live in Texas in the 70's. The girl goes missing and the best friend, Jed, is trying to find her (along with the entire town) but THERE IS NEVER any progression as to where the girl is. The majority of the book is about Jed dealing with his abusive preacher father. Okay, great. What happened to the girl? I know that it's part of a trilogy, but I got to the point where I didn't care. There was no grip. I didn't even finish the whole thing. Nothing was happening. *SPOILER* The novel does do a pretty good job of keeping you in the dark as to whether or not Daisy is alive, but then close to the end Jed finds Daisy's body and we find out who killed her oh wait. NO WE DON'T. We don't find anything. NO closure.

Maybe there was a giant twist at the end that made the novel bearable, but I didn't even care anymore. I just wanted my life back.

I HATED this book.

Kim says

I won't continue this trilogy. I feel bad giving an author who obviously has a talented way with words only 2 stars, but this book was almost a dnf for me. I'm not really sure why I did finish, there were so many terribly uncomfortable scenes, and the story progressed so slowly. Probably, if I had not been listening to the audio version I would have quit because actual reading takes more effort than listening, and I wouldn't have been willing. This was supposed to be a book included in the Christian genre, but I did not see much of a Christian message (maybe by the end of the trilogy that would resolve?) The main character, Jed, has a father who is a pastor...but he is portrayed as the stereotypical fire and brimstone evangelical preacher who tries to present the perfectly pious face to the outside world and his congregation but abuses his family behind closed doors. If you read this book you will endure scenes of him yelling, slapping, breaking glass, using a belt to beat, and holding his young son's hand in a door frame so that he can purposely slam the door on it, as well as plenty of psychological abuse. There is all of that to contend with and cringe over, as well as a flavor of trying to be more of a literary work than a book with an uplifting message. There was no uplifting message in this novel, lots of doubts and wrestling with the mysteries of God and why He allows the sufferings of this life on earth, but no actual sense of connecting with Him or realizing you are not suffering the path alone. If I could stand to read two more books with these particular characters, and in this depressing atmosphere, maybe I would see that Jed does experience conversion and develop a relationship by the end, but I won't be along for the journey.

Sandra Guzman says

This book was so good! It had my feelings all over the place. Can't wait to read next book.

Deanne says

This was a good book until about 3/4 of the way through. I enjoyed the lyrical prose, but it got to be a bit much when there were at least two comparative phrases per page. I can only read that something was like something else so many times before it gets annoying. Near the end of the book, I counted the word "like" at least 5 times on 2 pages. There are so many other ways to get a point across and I felt that the author gave up near the end - which made me feel like just putting it down and not finishing it.

There were so many loose ends in this book and not many positives. I realize this is a trilogy but at least the author could have given us SOMETHING positive and bring closure to at least one thread in the book! Not sure I will spend time reading the next two in the series.

Ruth says

One reason I like Christian fiction is that the books are usually light happy reads, and everything wraps up with a bow at the end. That may not be indicative of a sophisticated reader, but it is me. I read for entertainment and generally speaking, I choose happy books. Daisy Chain is not a happy book. Daisy Chain is the story of Daisy, the daughter of a single mother, and her best friend Jed Pepper. They live in the town of Deliverance, Texas and in 1977 they are thirteen years old. He is afraid of his father's wrath if he is late for supper, so he doesn't walk her home one night. She never makes it home; she is missing and the rest of the book is a search for her. While she is found before the book ends, how and why she disappeared is suggested, but never completely determined. Since this is the first book in a trilogy, I have to wonder if the ultimate resolution will be different.

Domestic abuse is a major part of this book. Jed's father is a minister, a pillar of the community, and his entire family is physically abused. The book is Christian fiction and faith is a part of the story, from both a good and bad standpoint. The abusive minister preaches about the sins of his family and is in all ways nothing like what a Christian should be. Jed wonders whether prayer really helps. For people of faith, trying to figure out the power of prayer vs the Santa God is part of growing up, and in a lot of way this is a coming of age novel, so I'd say the faith elements are important to the story, but not preachy.

Since one thing I often do when reviewing Christian fiction is point out where books misrepresent or paint a poor picture of Catholicism, I have to point out how well Mary Demuth depicts it in this book. Jed's father is pastor of what seems to be your basic generic Protestant church. However, he hates Catholicism and has preached against it. He forbids his wife from being friends with Muriel, a Catholic woman who is dying of cancer. We learn that Muriel, who befriends Jed, was raised Catholic but had no faith until married a man who was the pastor of one of these small independent survivalist "we hate everyone but us" Christian churches. He was abusive, but did preach about Jesus and through him she learned about Jesus. She said when she really learned about Jesus, it made her want to return to the Catholic Church, but her husband stood in her way. When he died, she returned to the Church.

The book is well-written. While it wasn't a "fun" read it was enjoyable in its own way and I recommend it.

Beth says

Disappointed

I kept hoping this would get better but it never did. The characters were unlike able and their motivations and emotions never really rang true. It is the 1st of a trilogy but I have no interest in reading the next

Donna Shepherd says

I heard one time that from the first page, a good writer grabs you by the throat and doesn't let the reader go. Mary DeMuth does this effectively in Daisy Chain. Right from the start when a little girl goes missing, the tension builds. The mystery of her disappearance intertwines with the coming-of-age story about Jed, a 14-year old boy who saw Daisy last. To say Mary writes multi-dimensional characters would be an understatement. No person is ever painted black or white, good or evil, but with many shades of gray with the promise of good prevailing and bad will get its due punishment.

At times, this book so gripped my heart I had to lay it down, but could not forget the characters who had also made their way into my heart. In short order, I picked it up again to cheer Jed on in his quest to find Daisy and to find hope in spite of his father's hypocrisy and abuse.

Mary is a down-to-earth writer of realism, dedicated to truth and authentic living, and this book rings authentic and real. Although there is a secondary character who serves as a loving father figure, I would have liked to have seen a pastor in that role, but perhaps that's because I am a pastor's wife. The only other note – this is the first novel in a trilogy, so plot points are not tied up in a neat box. But then again – when is life ever so sweetly packaged? (Rated PG)

Lanette says

Loved it. Good mystery

Wow. First fiction I've read of Mary DeMuth's and thought it was very well written. Kept me interested and engaged. Fairly intense mystery with some disturbing themes but not without hope. Finished well although not all squeaky and unrealistic clean. Looking forward to continuing the trilogy as the story unfolds and hopefully fills in the blanks to unanswered questions.
