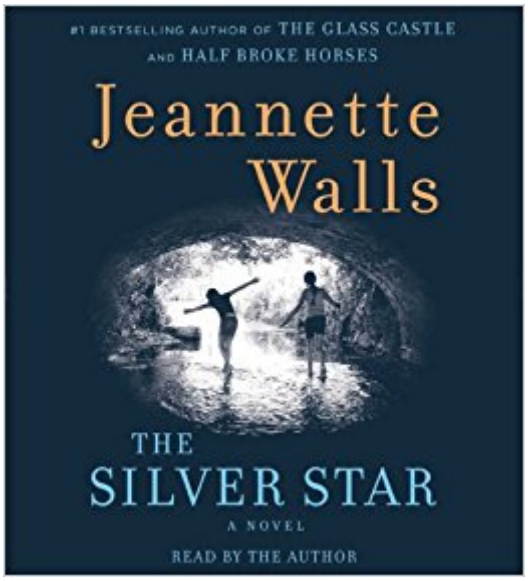
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The Silver Star: A Novel



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Synopsis

From one of the bestselling memoirists of all time, a stunning and heartbreaking novel about an intrepid girl who challenges the injustice of the adult worldÃ¢â ¬â •a triumph of imagination and storytelling. It is 1970. Ã¢â ¬Å“BeanÃ¢â ¬Â• Holladay is twelve and her sister Liz is fifteen when their artistic mother Charlotte, a woman Ã¢â ¬Å“who flees every place sheÃ¢â ¬â„¢s ever lived at the first sign of trouble,Ã¢â ¬Â• takes off to Ã¢â ¬Å“find herself.Ã¢â ¬Â• She leaves her girls enough money for food to last a month or two. But when Bean gets home from school one day and sees a police car outside the house, she and Liz board a bus from California to Virginia, where their widowed Uncle Tinsley lives in the decaying antebellum mansion thatÃ¢â ¬â„¢s been in the family for generations. An impetuous optimist, Bean discovers who her father was and learns many stories about why their mother left Virginia in the first place. Money is tight, so Liz and Bean start babysitting and doing office work for Jerry Maddox, foreman of the mill in town, a big man who bullies workers, tenants, and his wife. Bean adores her whip-smart older sister, inventor of word games, reader of Edgar Allan Poe, non-conformist. But when school starts in the fall, itÃ¢â ¬â„¢s Bean who easily adjusts and makes friends, and Liz who becomes increasingly withdrawn. And then something happens to Liz in the car with Maddox. The author of The Glass Castle, hyper-alert to abuse of adult power, has written a gorgeous, riveting, heartbreaking novel about triumph over adversity and about people who find a way to love the world despite its flaws and injustices.

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Customer Reviews

Being a single mother is never easy, but for Charlotte Holladay, a wannabe folk singer in 1970,

raising her 15- and 12-year-old daughters, Liz and Jean (aka Ã¢â ¬Å“BeanÃ¢â ¬Â•), is more than she can handle. Known for dropping out when things get tough, CharlotteÃ¢â ¬â„¢s latest spell of parental abandonment attracts police attention and the girls flee California rather than face being placed in foster care. A cross-country bus trip lands them on the doorstep of their only relative, the previously unmet Uncle Tinsley, and their arrival proves to be as much of a shock for the reclusive widower as it is for the girls themselves. As the trio learns to coexist, Liz and Bean try to fit into the small southern town. With money tight, they land jobs with mill foreman Jerry Maddox, an overbearing brute who runs roughshod over the townÃ¢â ¬â„¢s residents and takes advantage of LizÃ¢â ¬â„¢s trusting nature, with devastating results. Readers familiar with WallsÃ¢â ¬â„¢ backstory from her luminous memoir, The Glass Castle (2005), will recognize elements of her personal history in this captivating, read-in-one-sitting, coming-of-age adventure. --Carol Haggas --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Walls has written yet another gripping story of a courageous and sensible girl surviving the adults around her.Ã¢â ¬Â• (Holly Silva St. Louis Post-Dispatch)Ã¢â ¬Å“Walls writes with the paired-down incisiveness of a memoirist looking for the significance of every incident, but itÃ¢â ¬â„¢s the way she draws Bean, so strong even in the face of all the additional challenges that come with her age, gender, and innocence, that will make this book a hit with readers.Ã¢â ¬Â• (Nicholas Mancusi The Daily Beast)Ã¢â ¬Å“At heart Walls is a wonderful yarn-spinnerÃ¢â ¬Â¦This is a page-turner, built for hammock or beach reading.Ã¢â ¬Â• (Karen Valby Entertainment Weekly)Ã¢â ¬Å“Walls is adept at steeping her characters in some intense, old-fashioned dramaÃ¢â ¬Â¦> is a lovely, moving novel with an appealing narrator in Bean.Ã¢â ¬Â• (Carmela Ciuraru USA Today)Ã¢â ¬Å“Walls writes with easy assurance about Liz and Bean, proving in fiction as she did in her memoir, >, that she knows childrenÃ¢â ¬â„¢s heartsÃ¢â ¬â •as well as the evil that can lurk in the hearts of grown-ups.Ã¢â ¬Â• (Parade)Ã¢â ¬Å“A polished work of fictionÃ¢â ¬Â¦EngagingÃ¢â ¬Â¦Fans will find echoes of her coruscating family chronicle that first struck a chord with readers in 2005, but The Silver Star is the novel of a more confident, mature and calculating writerÃ¢â ¬Â¦[an] atmospheric bildungsroman of adolescent passage, changing times and bent but unbroken family bonds.Ã¢â ¬Â• (Jane Sumner Dallas Morning News)Ã¢â ¬Å“Great writingÃ¢â ¬Â¦An absorbing, unsentimental tale of childhood.Ã¢â ¬Â• (Chelsea Cain The New York Times Book Review)Ã¢â ¬Å“A great spirit comes through >Ã¢â ¬Â¦Jeannette Walls knows how to make characters pop off the page (and tear your heart out in the process.)Ã¢â ¬Â• (Angela Mattano Campus Circle Magazine)Ã¢â ¬Å“With immense charm and warmth, Walls, the author of >, has

created a lively account of kids finding a way to thrive in the absence of reliable parents.Ã¢â ¬Â• (Real Simple)Ã¢â ¬Å“Jeannette Walls transports us with her powerful storytellingÃ¢â ¬Â¦Using BeanÃ¢â ¬â„¢s expertly crafted, naively stubborn voice, Walls contemplates the extraordinary bravery needed to confront real-life demons in a world where the hardest thing to do may be to not run away.Ã¢â ¬Â• (Abbe Wright O, the Oprah magazine)Ã¢â ¬Å“Jeannette Walls is a master at her craft. In the same way she spoke candidly of her own parentsÃ¢â ¬â„¢ shortcomings in >, in >she lends this candid voice to Bean, and captures the inner workings of an adolescentÃ¢â ¬â„¢s mind perfectlyÃ¢â ¬Â¦.> stands strong as its own story, wholly unique and wholly captivating.Ã¢â ¬Â• (Kristin Fritz EverdayEbook.com)Ã¢â ¬Å“WallsÃ¢â ¬â„¢ writing is lively and her dialogue crips, and the girlsÃ¢â ¬â„¢ struggles with their mother ring true.Ã¢â ¬Â• (Margaret Quamme The Columbus Dispatch)Ã¢â ¬Å“[The Silver Star is] an examination of bad parenting and resilient children in a rich and complex setting. Bean is a compelling character, and it is fascinating to watch her ideas about both her mother and her sister change as the book progresses.Ã¢â ¬Â• (Sarah Rachel Egelman Bookreporter.com)Ã¢â ¬Å“Walls writes with equal tenderness for her most beloved characters and the least among them. It takes a compassionate soul to find the beauty in despair and thatÃ¢â ¬â„¢s what Walls does best.Ã¢â ¬Â• (Amy MacKinnon The Patriot Ledger)Ã¢â ¬Å“Jeannette Walls jumps off the memoir train and hitches a ride on the novel form with >.Ã¢â ¬Â• (Elissa Schappell Vanity Fair)Ã¢â ¬Å“[A] captivating, read-in-one-sitting, coming-of-age adventure.Ã¢â ¬Â• (Booklist)Ã¢â ¬Å“When Bean reads > in school, she seems like a long-lost cousin to ScoutÃ¢â ¬Â¦She makes for a strong and spunky protagonist.Ã¢â ¬Â• (Publishers Weekly)Ã¢â ¬Å“Walls turns what could have been another sentimental girl-on-the-run-finds-home clichÃƒÂ© into a fresh consideration of both adolescence and the South on the cusp of major social change.Ã¢â ¬Â• (Kirkus Reviews (starred review))Ã¢â ¬Å“By turns witty, warm and provocative, this all ages read by the author of > is a perfect choice for your high school mother-daughter book club or to throw in your beach bag this summer.Ã¢â ¬Â• (ReadingRants.org) --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Not a bad read. Enough to keep turning the page. Kind of like watching a Hallmark movie. Always a fair and just ending. Read two of Jeannette Walls books so far. Sort of the same theme. Makes you think she didn’t care much for mothers!

Yes, this review contains spoilers, but if you don’t guess what’s about to happen many pages before it does, you are not good detective material or you weren’t concentrating. First, the good stuff. This

woman can write some dialogue, no doubt about it. She has a wonderful writing style and there is something sweet and nostalgic about this novel. Her narrator is a spunky young girl, a combination of Nancy Drew, Scout Finch and Flavia de Luce, the heroine of a wonderfully literate series written by Alan Bradley. Unfortunately, it is one dimensional and predictable in every way.I agree with other reviewers who thought this book was better suited for a "young adult" audience. For one thing, it is doubtful that teens or even college age readers would have read The Glass Castle and, therefore, the book would not seem to be the novel version of that excellent memoir. If you have not read "The Glass Castle," get it and read it and forget this book. The Glass Castle was the real deal and this is the discount store version.Two young girls, half sisters, in 6th and 9th grade when the book begins, have been dragged around the country by their mother who believes she is destined to become a success as a country singer. Narcissistic and probably schizophrenic, already in her mid-thirties and without any evidence to support her belief, she is undaunted in her quest. In a bungalow in the California desert, she leaves her children alone for days at a time as she goes off to Los Angeles in pursuit of her dream. Once, enough time goes by without their mother’s return that the girls, who have been subsisting on chicken pot pies bought from a mini-mart, take all their remaining money and buy bus tickets to Virginia to visit their uncle, the only relative they know that actually exists as their mother is prone to fantasy. The bus trip begins in California and without missing a beat, the same bus arrives in New Orleans. They change buses once between eastern California and Virginia. And not much happens.There is a bit where the girls outwit a "pervert" but otherwise, the trip is uneventful. The uncle is what one would expect: a hermit living in the family plantation house gone to ruin, surrounded by relics of ancestral glory days. Predictably, he is unhappy to see his nieces but they soon worm their way into his heart and are moved from sleeping in the barn to the "main house," where they take charge and clean the place up and generally act like responsible adults.The girls now live in the home of the former first family of Tiny, Virginia (not its real name)and everyone knows about them. They meet extended family and the younger daughter locates her father’s family who are the goodhearted locals you’ve heard tell about in other books. At about this point is where this book lost me... Their uncle is so lost in the past that he doesn’t understand why the girls need money for new school clothes - and, they are so afraid to hurt his feelings that they try to find jobs. Now, remember, this town is so small that anything of interest that happens is known by every resident in about fifteen minutes. So... SPOILER...Everyone in town turns them down except.... yes, you guessed it, the town villain. And, it’s a big secret although the older sister is driving all over town with "the big villain" as his personal assistant. What happens then is so predictable I wanted to skip to the part where something actually happens. If you are waiting for a

twist, a big reveal.. you won't get it. Every single thing one might assume would happen, does. Villain tries to molest daughter. Daughter resists. Driver for villain sees all and swears to tell all in court - but... and so on. It was a diversion for the couple of hours it took to read it but that's about it... so disappointing for a book so highly anticipated.Again, this is not a bad book. It is a simple fairy tale, well told, but probably much more appealing to a teenage audience.

The two girls in Jeannette Walls' novel, "Bean" and Liz Holladay, are extremely likable characters, and we cheer for them throughout. They've been stuck with a bad lot in life.Their mother, Charlotte, who may be a manic-depressive, considers herself a singer songwriter and is prone to take off on a whim, a little "me time" as she would put it. At the beginning of the book they live in a small town in California and Charlotte leaves the girls with enough money to subsist on chicken pot pies, but when she doesn't show up in a reasonable amount of time, the girls decide to take a bus to Virginia and live with their uncle Tinsley, the former owner of a textile mill in another small town. He lives in a big house that's going to seed rapidly, and he's somewhat of a hoarder. He cares me about rocks and geneology than people, tut he soon grows attached to the girls.THE SILVER STAR can be funny at times, especially when Liz teases "Bean," whose real name is Jean, which Liz couldn't pronounce as a little girl. When Beaner is sick; Liz refers to her as "green Bean," when she's really sick she calls her "greener Beaner." Liz also takes after her mother in that she writes poetry and eventually learns how to play guitar. She also writes "emu" poetry, which gets a little old. A farmer near her uncle's place owns a pair of emus, and Liz grows attached.Okay, here's the plot. Liz and Bean's uncle was forced out of the mill by an efficiency expert-type foreman, Jerry Maddox, with absolutely no people skills. He rides the workers hard. Uncle Tinsley really doesn't have much money left from his share of the sale of the mill, and the girls need school clothes; they take a job working for the psychotic Maddox. He hires Liz as a right-hand girl, but he has ulterior motives. Bean is hired to help his wife Doris take care of the kids. Maddox isn't a very believable character. Even in rural Virginia he wouldn't get away with what he does, not matter how many people work for the mill.Liz and Bean also have different fathers. Bean's father died in Vietnam and she has cousins in the area that she rapidly connects with. The mother eventually shows up, but when things get tough she usually runs for the hills.The ending also seems a bit far-fetched. We want Jerry Maddox to get his comeuppance, but the way it happens is suspect, and the ramifications of the event are about as believable as Jerry Maddox's previous bullet-proof behavior.

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