

Where the Crawdads Sing by Delia Owen

5 Stars

Reminiscent of A Girl of the Limberlost

What a delightful read and it certainly lived up to the hype. The story reminded me of a favourite childhood read 'A Girl of the Limberlost' that had me enthralled as a young adult and the same themes run through this book.

An abiding and profound love and respect for nature is at the heart of this story and the unlikely heroine, Kya Clark, is brave and resilient in the face of adversity. Abandoned by her mother and siblings and left to fend for herself in a rundown shack with only her drunken father to provide for her, Kya turns to the marsh and the sea and lagoons that surround her. Eventually, even her father fails to return from a bender, and she is all alone. With no money to buy food, she starts selling oysters to buy her necessary provisions and learns to forage and hunt and fish to survive.

The natural world around her becomes her classroom and her source of income, and she resists all attempts by the locals to get her to attend school. She has a deep mistrust of the local people, and they never try to earn her trust; instead they call her names and vandalise her shack and treat her with contempt.

Only a local boy called Tate And Jumpin and his wife Mabel go against the current and befriend Kya. Tate teaches her to read, and this opens up a new world to Kya, and Mabel teaches her the facts of life and how to cope with growing into a woman. The book covers so many relevant themes - small-town prejudice, child abuse and child neglect, resilience against all the odds, love and betrayal and racial tensions, all set against the backdrop of a wild and untamed landscape.

The author, Delia Owens, is a wildlife scientist as well as a writer and her love of nature comes across vividly in the book. The beautiful descriptions of the marsh and surrounding lagoons transport the reader to another world.

Kya's journey from childhood to adulthood is beautifully written and a joy to read.

Gillian

Breakaway Reviewers received a copy of the book to review