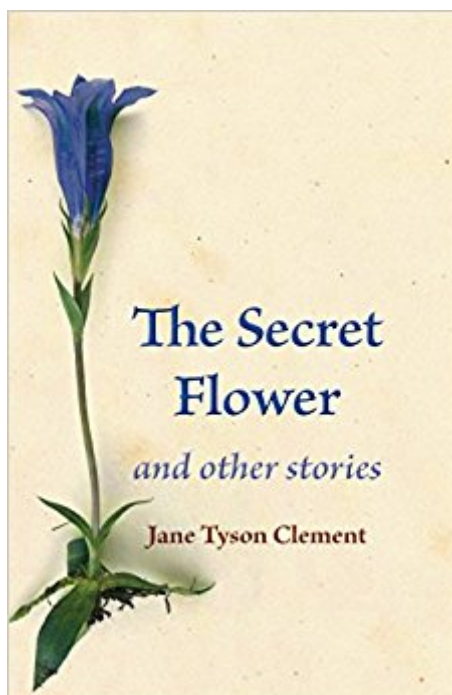


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The Secret Flower: And Other Stories



Synopsis

It won't take you long to see why Jane Tyson Clement's short stories have become perennial favorites for adults and children alike. Written with a measured beauty that recalls Tolstoy and Tolkien, these tales are rich in allegorical symbolism and evocation of mood. They are infused throughout with the thrill of expectancy, a sense that something new is on the way, and a certainty that God is seeking us, just as we seek him. In an age where cleverness often counts more than substance, Clement's stories offer a break from all the noise.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Clement writes with simplicity and directness, probing insistence, and conviction. One lays down the book in thought, and with a thankful heart. (Friends Journal) Beautiful offers quietude in the midst of cacophony and literary cynicism. (Poughkeepsie Journal)

Written with a measured beauty that recalls Tolstoy and Tolkien, these short stories offer a break from all the noise.

I found these brilliant and sensitive stories so moving and spiritually uplifting.

This author has a unique style of using fantasy to convey a message of truth. Both entertaining and inspiring.

"And so I travel homeward, though I have never seen that city- yet I will know it, and its fair meadows are even now green with winter wheat before my eyes, and I hear its children singing in the streets, and its quiet bell proclaiming God's love."~The Secret Flower

Jane Tyson Clement's volume of poetry "No One Can Stem the Tide" overflows with both reflection and contentment. Her verse convinced me to read her prose, as collected in "The Secret Flower: And other Short Stories." This book is made of six tales, five short and one lengthy. The first five are beautifully mythic, according to the old definition of myth... a fable that seems to be from an imagined world, but tells us truth about our world. One tells of three brothers who each take shelter during a night of terrible storms, stoking their fire and supping alone. Each brother locks out the weather and the cold, only to hear a child's cry through the wind and rain. And each man must decide whether he will risk his life and venture out into the wild darkness to rescue the child. One tells of a King who rules a land where there is always abundance and never rebellion, where a soporific peace lies over everyone. He and his people never feel pain or suffer, but they never feel joy or celebrate either. Work has no satisfying meaning, and there is no true need to serve anyone. All is lukewarm and acceptable each day... there is no variation to make you more glad or more regretful. The veil is torn away from the King's eyes the day a young traveler arrives, coming from a land in famine, and the King burns himself on his coffee. One tells of a troop of schoolboys who love a robin that is pure white but tease a boy whose skin is deep black. When a fire rages through the village, will the test of heart bind them together as brothers? The final tale, The Secret Flower itself, is the longest, and it is a story that sings and grows and overflows in joy. Her writing is so pure and precise in her descriptions of the created world and the converted heart. Whether she's telling us about a great beech tree losing its leaves in a wind, or describing the tears of a man who realizes that love is all around him, her word pictures remind us what language gives us when we use it right. The Secret Flower is like a small version of the Narnia stories. In a way, it is the story of every soul that God ever entered. I love this passage: I am... "fit for nothing but to serve the beggars or be one. But over the years I have found it a grace to serve the poor for I count no man, neither myself, better than they, and we are all poor in God's sight, those who sleep on silk or on the cobbles of the street. And I will help thee all I can, if thou wilt send back to me, if thou findest that city, God's city, for such there must be! Surely Christ came to earth to change this miserable earth, as well as promise the hereafter!" I hope more people discover this book. Unlike so much "moral literature" that used to be produced for children, these are not short stories with a lesson hidden in them. They are little snippets of fable and tale, that say something genuine and real. They remind me to look at everyone

the way Jesus did, and he often told people they were "not far from the Kingdom of Heaven," and then he bid them follow to him there. Thank you to The Plough publishing for giving me a review copy.

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