



The Dog Who Danced

Susan Wilson

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From the *New York Times* bestselling author of *One Good Dog* comes a novel about a woman's cross-country journey to find her lost dog, and discover herself.

"My name is Justine Meade and in my forty-three years there have only been a handful of people that I have loved. No, that's an exaggeration. Two. Two that I lost because of stupidity and selfishness. One was my son. The other was my dog."

If there's been a theme in Justine Meade's life, it's loss. Her mother, her home, even her son. The one bright spot in her loss-filled life, the partner she could always count on, was Mack, her gray and black Sheltie; that is, until she is summoned back to her childhood home after more than twenty years away.

Ed and Alice Parmalee are mourning a loss of their own. Seven years after their daughter was taken from them, they're living separate lives together. Dancing around each other, and their unspeakable heartbreak, unable to bridge the chasm left between them. Fiercely loyal, acutely perceptive and guided by a herd dog's instinct, Mack has a way of bringing out the best in his humans. Whether it's a canine freestyle competition or just the ebb and flow of a family's rhythms, it's as though the little Shetland Sheepdog was born to bring people together.

The Dog Who Danced is his story, one that will surely dance its way into your heart.

The Dog Who Danced Details

Date : Published March 13th 2012 by St. Martin's Press (first published March 1st 2012)

ISBN : 9780312674991

Author : Susan Wilson

Format : Hardcover 320 pages

Genre : Fiction, Animals, Dogs, Contemporary

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From Reader Review The Dog Who Danced for online ebook

Donna says

I've had Shelties since 1979, so I'll admit up front that I'm the target audience for "The Dog Who Danced" by Susan Wilson. It's about a Sheltie named Mack who becomes separated from his owner, Justine Meade. While she frantically searches for him across several states, he's found and taken in by a retired couple, Ed and Alice Parmalee.

Wilson captures the delightful personalities of Shetland sheepdogs perfectly. To call them intelligent is an understatement. She describes Mack as having not just genius, but "a Sheltie's proclivity for obedience, as well as a superior sense of dignity. He has always prided himself on being a perfect gentleman." They're very vocal, which means much more than barking, and Mack makes all the little noises and comments my four have done. (Mack also loves "stuffies," which, like my Drew, he shakes, squeaks and uses as pillows instead of disembowling. And yes, it is the cutest thing ever.)

Read the rest on my blog:

<http://blogs.knoxnews.com/books/2012/...>

Donna says

This was a feel good kind of book. It was the perfect book for me today, since I've been sick for too long. Even though the title suggests that this is a book about a dog who dances, that wasn't actually the main focus of the story. This book was more about loss and the process of learning to move on. I appreciated that message.

The dog sounded pretty darn cute. I liked that the author told his side of the story from his own perspective. That was fun.

Brenda says

As Justine Meade and trucker Artie made their way down the highway with Justine's gray-and-black Sheltie, Mack between them, her thoughts were turned inward. The reason for this long and uncomfortable trip was to go home to her father – he was dying and though it was twenty years since she'd seen her childhood home, she had forced herself to make the journey. Hitching a ride across the country to Boston was the only way she could afford to get there...

But when Artie drove off from a rest stop and left Justine behind, in the middle of nowhere, her one thought was Mack. He was on that truck – she needed to get him back; but how was she going to do that? Torn between finding Mack and needing to get to Boston, Justine was grateful when a biker named Mitch gave her a lift on his Harley part of the way. Her grief over losing Mack; knowing he was getting further away from her; knowing he'd be confused and alone was devastating. Then there were the conflicting emotions about her father...

Ed and Alice Parmalee lived in Moodyville, a little town in Massachusetts – for the past seven years they had been drifting, together but alone. Their heartache was insurmountable; their grief a mountain they couldn't climb. So the day they saw the hungry, dirty and tired gray-and-black Sheltie sitting by the gates of the cemetery, almost as if he was waiting for someone, was a day their lives began to change.

What was going to happen to Justine; to her father; to Mack? And what would happen to Ed and Alice?

I thoroughly enjoyed this delightful story about a very special dog and his humans. Told in the voices of both Justine and Mack, it is filled with despair, love, devotion, heartbreak and forgiveness. Mack is a wonderful character, smart, intelligent and loving. I have no hesitation in recommending *The Dog Who Danced* highly.

Dale Harcombe says

Justine Meade is used to loss. As a result, she does not make lasting connections with too many people. There is her estranged son whom she loves and her four legged companion Mack. When, because of some mistakes of judgement on her part, Mack, her grey and black Sheltie, disappears, Justine is distraught. Meanwhile her stepmother Adele is expecting Justine to rush to her dying father's side, even though they have not seen each other since Justine left home at seventeen. Justine is torn between what she feels she should do and what she wants to do. Will she get Mack back? Or has Mack despite all attempts to find him, gone beyond her grasp? Will she find closure and be able to forgive her father for what she sees as his betrayal?

This story is told from two points of view. One is that of Justine. The other is that of Mack. I loved reading Mack's thoughts particularly when it seemed humans were slow in understanding his needs. To me that was one of the most interesting and entertaining aspects of the story. Mack especially has trouble at times convincing Ed and Alice, who take him in, to understand what he wants. Ed and Alice Parmalee are in grief over their fifteen year old's suicide years earlier. Though they still live together, they never connect. Guilt and blame keep them apart. When Mack comes into their lives things start to change. But Justine still wants to find her dog and take him home. What will happen to Mack?

Mack was easily my favourite character. Without doubt he is the star of the show. Mitch was a really interesting character. Justine, I had trouble relating to as I thought she brought a lot of her troubles upon herself with self-centred attitudes and decisions. I felt sad throughout for Ed and Alice with the loss of their only child. I suspect people may have different ideas about the ending and may well have different ideas about the book as a whole depending on how they relate to the main characters.

It is more than just a dog story. As well as being about the effect pets can have on a person, it deals with choices and consequences, family relationships, forgiveness and the different ways people handle grief. It was a quick easy read and I enjoyed it despite not liking Justine.

Diane says

I enjoyed this book, but don't agree it was an "emotional wringer" and didn't think it was as good as most GoodReads readers did, nor as good as One Good Dog. It is the story of Justine (her emotional past and family history and the man she meets along the way as she searches for her dog Mack. Mack is inadvertently kidnapped, then abandoned by the kidnapper and found by a couple who adopt him. The plot was a bit contrived, but the characters are appealing and its worth a read. A good beach book.

Lynn Pribus says

I wanted to like this one, but the narrator was such a self-interested, self-pitying woman who seemed to make all her own problems as well as huge problems for her son, I found her very annoying. The reason she "loses" her dog is that, although she is riding with a trucker who is intent on making a deadline at his destination so he won't lose his job, she not only lingers for an extra five minutes over a meal, she actually goes to take a shower for 10-15 minutes although he has said he will wait five minutes and five minutes only.

The other part that was a bit difficult was how clever the dog was and how well he reasoned things out in English. I guess Shelties are pretty smart dogs, but still.....

And the people who found the missing dog and wanted to keep him -- I thought they were much more sympathetic as owners.

Justine -- the mother-comes-first narrator -- does finally see The Light toward the end, but it was too late to win me.

I did finish it.

Chaos says

My first time with this author--and it won't be my last! Loved this book from the first page and then found myself slowing down toward the end so I didn't have to leave these characters.

Told from several different points of view, this novel captured my imagination and emotions from beginning to end.

When I worry about the characters, when away from the book, I know I have a winner on my hands.

Thanks Goodreads! I appreciate the opportunity to get the sneak peek on this one!!

Debbie says

An unexpected call has Justine Meade grateful for a shotgun seat on a semi heading towards a home she hasn't seen since she left at seventeen because it means that her dog Mack is with her. Mack has been her salvation and made her look at life in a better way than the defeatist, betrayed way she used to when all she could think of was the loss of her childhood then later the loss of her son. The dog who learned to dance with her has been much more than a mere pet which is why she's overwrought as she finds herself abandoned and dog-less by the trucker she hitched a ride with.

Ed and Alice Parmalee have been imitating life for the seven years since the death of their only child, a child that was prayed for then delayed until neither of them thought it was ever going to happen and then took away at fifteen, it was a tragedy that shook them to the core and that has been an invisible barrier between them ever since until the day a stray dog comes into their lives and puts color and connection back into their

world.

In the midst of a family crisis Justine frantically tries to find Mack with the help of a few friends and many strangers while the Parmalees are reconnecting with the help of one small furry miracle and who know nothing about the dog's distraught owner.

There are many dog stories out there, those who heal, those who protect, those who comfort, what makes this story different is the poignant way that Susan Wilson brings it to life with her words. Her characters are all three dimensional, so realistic that I could smell the earth at Stacy's grave and could feel the wind in my face as she takes Justine down the highway on the back of a Harley. The dialogue is a mesmerizing string of monologues that took me into the hearts and souls of the narrator, that made me a fly on the walls of their worlds and that gave me insights that I wish they would convey to each other. And then there was Mack, who Susan gave a voice to as well and who's expertise in translating dog really shines through, it was amusing, it was touching and it was beautifully penned. This is the story of rejuvenation of forgiving of unconditional love. It's the story of one woman's best friend and the lengths she'll go to get him back and it's the unconditional love that one dog has for his human(s).

This is my first foray into the writing brilliance of Susan Wilson but I guarantee it will not be my last. Thank you Ms. Wilson for one of the most heartwarming and inspiring stories I've read for a while.

Be sure and check out my Q&A with author Susan Wilson - here on my blog

<http://thereadingfrenzy.blogspot.com/...>

and here at my book club forum at B&N.com

<http://bookclubs.barnesandnoble.com/t...>

Jami says

I enjoyed this very much. I have been waiting for her next book ever since I read One Good Dog, and I was not disappointed. My only problem is that I was very tempted to take a peek at the end to see what happens....I had to use all my willpower not to do that! I love her writing style, particularly the way she alternates voices of the humans and the dog. Excellent read!

Hannah says

The reason I gave this book 3 stars was because it was about a sheltie. Susan Wilson did an excellent job describing Mack. Every bit of personality she gave him was spot on. As far as the rest of the story...it was just alright. Take away the ridiculous amount of grammatical errors and you're still left with a rather unlikeable main character and a string of awkward events (i.e. the run in with Artie at the service shop). I didn't cry, or laugh at this book, I just trudged through it waiting for the moment with Mack reunites with Justine and even that was slightly lack luster. Oh and also, Moodyville MASS? WTF is that?

Carol says

I usually cry when reading a book about a dog. This time, tears were cascading down my face. Those were tears of happiness instead of sorrow. I don't know how Susan Wilson did it, but she created the perfect ending!

In 'The Dog Who Danced', the dog, Mack has his share of telling the story but it is as the author could get inside the dog and know he perceives the world. Most importantly through the sense of smell and without the benefit of some abilities like place orientation, Susan Wilson excels at portraying a dog's thoughts.

I fell in love with Mack and wanted him to come out of the book and be my dog! I have always admired shelties. I have seen freestyle dancing with dogs in competitions but these books takes you inside what it means for the dog to do this.

This book is more than a dog book though; it is one of mystery, sorrow and forgiveness. There are two central women. Justine Meade is the first one we meet. She lost her mother at a very young age, so young that she couldn't remember very much about her. Her father married the woman next door, the evil step mother and her life felt snuffed out from then on. She lost an emotional connection with her father; her father now loved Paul, her step brother. Paul was the son that her father always wanted and never had. Her step mother, Adele, was cold and demanding. She talked all the time but never said the important words that a step daughter craves.

Justine got married very young and had a son, Tony. She hasn't seen him for years either. Why did this relationship fail?

When Justine gets a call that her father, who she had not seen for so long, is dying, she doesn't want to go but her friend persuades her to go. Since she is broke, she cannot afford to fly there and pays \$300 to a truck driver to go from California to her parent's home out east. When she has to go to restroom to wash the dust out of her hair and body, the truck driver takes off. He has her dog, Mack in the back but he doesn't realize it. Justine panics and is desperate to find her dog. Her dog is her only companion, her only close friend.

An elderly couple find Mack and though they didn't intend that, established a bond with Mack who they called Buddy. Their marriage was lifeless. They had a daughter in the past. What happened to her? The description of their life is done through their actions and lack of actions. They really need this dog to help them learn how to continue with their lives. You will want to push this couple together as Mack/Buddy did. Mack/Buddy is the sheltie that you will love. He is polite, gentle, intelligent and loving. He even knows how to dance.

'The Dog Who Danced' is a page turner and emotional wringer, especially at the end. Who will live/love this book? Anyone who loves dogs has had a broken family relationship or enjoys a great story. This book will make you look at shelties with wonder and think about ways to heal broken relationships.

I received this book from Amazon Vine, but that in no way influenced my review.

Lori says

Wonderful story. about a terrific dog named "mack" A sheltie that likes to dance with his owner Justine. when Justine "hitches" a ride to get to the east coast from Washington the scummy semi driver drives off

with her dog { when they stop at a rest area} and tosses him out of the semi onto the interstate. Mack is found by a kindly couple going through a heart break of losing their daughter a few years ago. Mack brings happiness to their life and they call him Buddy. meanwhile Justine is trying to find her dog. since she has no idea where the dog was left this will take awhile. she is on the east coast to see her dying father. Mack/buddy is loved by both families. will not give away the ending. a very touching story. I love how a dog can change a person' life for the better. as Mack did.

Tara Chevrestt says

They say some people handle grief in bad ways...I think this couple does. First, let me say this is a good story, not so much about a dog, but about handling grief and loss and a how a dog can help people heal.

Justine's dog is dog napped, basically and then abandoned. While she struggles with bitter feelings with her step family and her father dying AND searches for her dog, an older couple picks her dog up and replaces their lost daughter with the dog. The dog brings them together again. No longer are they sitting apart, but together in order to pet the dog who lies on both of their laps. No longer are they spending days trying to avoid each other, but bonding as they walk the dog, take the dog for rides..and so on.

My problem with this book was solely: I can't stand any of the characters. I thought the heroine, Justine, was irresponsible. I have three adorable dogs and I would never EVER leave them in the cab of some truck driver's truck, especially not a man I barely knew or knew from a bar. She also packed up her little boy and left her husband. Not a smart move. Wasn't like he beat her.. and she could barely provide for the kid.

The couple: The whole, "Let's not find his owner/let's place an ad but be half-witted about it/No, of course he doesn't have a chip.." stuff didn't fly with me. I get they loved the dog and I personally felt the dog was better off with them than Justine, but they struck me as so corrupt, I had a difficult time stomaching the whole situation.

Good book and well written, but I don't think it will agree with everyone.

Favorite quote from the dog: "Humans have this nee to express themselves through their mouths, and he supposes that this is because they are so poor with their noses." LOL

Alice says

I was attracted to this book because I have a Sheltie. However it was the accounts of people who face difficulties in their lives and how they work through them that made this a special book. The unconditional love of the dog for his owner(s) and the bond of the owner(s) for the dog was the icing on the cake for me.

Brenda says

This is another rating that I have rounded up. The book was okay but it did make me cry at little at the end even though I wasn't heavily invested in or very sympathetic towards any of the characters. The characters were made up of a middle-aged woman trying to get to the east coast before her estranged father dies but she

can't afford to fly and if she could she wouldn't be able to take her dog with her. The trucker who frequents the bar where she works who offers to take her and the dog. He then leaves her stranded because she slowed him down only to discover later that the dog was still in the truck. He then proceeds to dump the dog at the side of the highway. The grieving couple who find the dog. The men who come to the aid of the woman. And the dog who makes the best of the situation and tries to bring the grieving couple back together all while waiting for the woman to come get him. The story line of the woman and her estranged father and family didn't seem that important to me but I guess she had to have a reason for traveling.

It was pretty good but for a good dog story, I prefer "A Dog's Purpose".
