



Fiona

Catherine Gaskin

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Desperate for work, Fiona McIntyre goes to the West Indies as governess of her young cousin. However the passions of the white masters and their restless slaves, on the brink of emancipation, are at boiling point. As hurricane winds and forbidden drums sweep the island, all secrets are laid bare.

Fiona Details

Date :

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Author : Catherine Gaskin

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From Reader Review Fiona for online ebook

Cphe says

Historical romantic suspense by the always reliable Catherine Gaskin, an author whose body of work hasn't received the recognition it has deserved IMO.

Agree with some of the other reviews in that the story did wax and wane in places but I appreciated the ending. It wasn't your typical romantic ending and that is always a plus in this genre.

All the characters were well presented, enjoyed the gothic overtones and the lush tropical setting. A little dated now but not overly so.

Zartasha Abid says

Im in love with this novel. I read it almost 10 years ago and its still stuck in my mind and in a good sort of way. The ending always makes me sad though...

Sarah Mac says

This relatively short gothic romance feels longer than it is -- partly because of tiny typeface, & partly because the pacing is off. It starts with a bang & then putters around, kicks into higher gear before idling in neutral, & then sets off the fireworks with a pair of great climaxes, but splutters between said explosions with a long, LONG reveal of the villainy herein. It also lacks sufficient follow-through on Fiona's 'sight'; while the opening lays groundwork for her discomfort with this unwanted perception (& given the era, her worries are legit re: shabby single ladies who flaunt their specialness), her burden is barely mentioned during her time on the island except for a very brief scene.

Spoiler paragraph below.

As for the hero, Fergus... *facepalm* His actions in the finale are too extra for belief. My jaw dropped, because not two chapters after literally throwing the secondary hero away from Fiona's cot when he tried to WIPE FEVERED SWEAT OFF HER FOREHEAD during a hurricane while everyone was trapped in the same room, Fergus suddenly runs into a burning building full of murderous, rampaging slaves to rescue the cheating, bitchy villainess after she screws everyone over...& did I mention he used to sleep with this woman? All after proclaiming Fiona his salvation from said villainess leading him around by his dick, because now Fiona herself has the direct line to said appendage?! But nope. He dies while trying to save his bitch ex who didn't deserve squat. *headdesk* If you ask me, Fiona's better off with the other dude.

End spoiler paragraph.

...Anyway. I did enjoy it, despite my gripes. The setting -- historical island plantations -- is a favorite of mine. Something about sticky, oppressive tropical life lends itself to gothic fiction. :D Despite Fergus' failings, I cottoned to other characters like Andrew, Charity, & Samuel, & also liked that the touches of

paranormal (Fiona's sight, Juanita's voodoo) weren't just explained away. And while consistent suspense is lacking, there's still a thick haze of tension that permeates the story as a whole.

4 stars for atmosphere, strongly written setting, & overall concept.

Rachel Harper says

Slow to start, but richly textured and, once it started, the story was great. Lots of twists and turns right up the end. I recommend this one, if you can find it.

Juliet24 says

This book was pretty good. There was romance in it so it was good. I thought it was sweet how Fiona and Fergus were going to end up together, but I thought that Fiona and Alister were going to end up together (which they did) because Fiona felt more comfortable and he made her feel safe. I'm sad that Maria ended up with Fergus, but happy that Fiona and Alister got together and they get to parent Duncan together. Fiona is like the perfect wife for Alister because she is strong and all the things that Alister had wanted in a wife because he was going to be a politician. Fiona could support Alister like what he wanted. I'm sad that Samuel had to die. He was nice to Fiona and the African slave had to kill him when he was getting Duncan to safety.

Charybdis says

This book has a lot of the requirements of a gothic romance, but I missed the most important one: suspense. However, there are a lot of dangers: from the main characters, from the weather in the form of a giant hurricane and finally from a slave uprising.

It's 1833 in Scotland. The heroine, Fiona, is a governess who at 23 already has been fired from three positions because she cannot hide the fact that she has the second sight. Even though she prevented the death of one of her charges, her employers couldn't handle her gift, or curse as it's also called. Then Fiona gets the chance to travel to distant relatives who have a sugar plantation in the West Indies to take care of their 7 year old son. The family situation is explained early on and doesn't add to any kind of mystery. The mistress of the house does behave like perhaps she's having an affair, though. Both the older, illegitimate son of her employer and a visiting family relative present possible love interests for Fiona.

The first half of the book was decidedly boring. I almost put it away unread, but fortunately it picked up its pace in the second half. A huge amount of text was spent on the revelation of the bad person and his/her motivation, not unworthy of Mr. Hercule Poirot himself.

I wondered why the author needed this second sight for our heroine and assume it's her way of making us curious. Victoria Holt tantalizes the reader all the time with just a few well-placed words, which is so much better. But who can equal Ms. Holt?

I've got a few other complaints. The author should have picked her names better. While reading I usually don't spell out the names all the time, just seeing its shape is enough. But having Andrew and Alister and

Fiona and Flora together is confusing. Why the book was called Fiona is beyond me, as well. If she wanted to name the book after the most intriguing person, it wouldn't have been Fiona's but the name of the mistress of the house she should have picked, which unfortunately was Maria. Bummer. Maria is from a proud Spanish family and has two sisters: Katarina and Joanna. Ummm... Joanna? Shouldn't that have been Juana? No, but one of the house slaves is called Juanita.

I also came to hate the repeated use of the word "sweat" in the book. Thirtythree times it appeared. (Perspiration: five times). One morning the heroine arises early to leave her sweat-soaked bed. Gross!

The book could have used an epilogue. The ending isn't very happy and it would have been nice to learn how the heroine fared in, say, a year or ten.

Dr.J.G. says

One of those that one distinctly remembers having read some over three decades ago, but has no clue as to which particular story it is that one may remember as well! Do remember liking it, for some reason -

Lisa Greer says

I finally hunted this book down. I loved this one-- very spooky, and I learned a lot as well. I loved the characters and the whole story. I need to read more by Gaskin. It has been years, and this one stuck in my mind. I have finally tracked it down again. :)

Mona says

It my favorite book of all times. Closest to my heart. priceless.

Jane Ainslie says

This is my favourite book EVER! When I get really depressed with my life, you will know, because I will have this by my bedtable, reading it. My Mum gave me this book when I was about ten years old, and through the years I have read it, and re-read it, over and over again. I love, love, love the story (even the ending). Why has it never been made into a movie??

Josie says

Well I enjoyed this up until the end, when I felt a little cheated. But I wasn't devastated about Fergus dying - clearly I wasn't really that invested in him as a character (though he was hot, phwoar!), and Fiona didn't really react that much, so I took it rather well. The character of Maria was great, not likeable, but awesome, she positively leaped off the page with all her poise and beauty and scheming. I did think though, that the whole 'sight' thing wasn't utilised very well. It was all that was talked about at the start, when Fiona was still

in Scotland, and in the space of a week Fiona 'sees' things at least twice, and then not again for the rest of the story.

Marlene says

Wonderful - set in the West Indies during the time of slaves, their uprising and the resulting chaos. Deals with a woman with "second sight" which she is trying to hide, in that time and place.

Diane Wachter says

Catherine Gaskin, RDC-B, V2, 1970, 6/87. Fiona travels to the West Indies to become governess to her cousin, but feels danger immediately with the restless slaves striving for emancipation from their white owners and hurricanes threatening the island. Good.

Anne O'brien says

This was the first book I ever read by Catherine Gaskin and it is still my favorite. I read it when it was first presented as a Reader's Digest Condensed Book and then I had to get my hands on a hardback copy. That started me on gothic romances--Gaskin, Victoria Holt, Phyllis Whitney, etc. Great story that I like to pick up every now and then.
