



Amaryllis in Blueberry

Christina Meldrum

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In the tradition of Sue Monk Kidd and Julia Glass comes a stirring and soulful novel about an American woman accused of murdering her husband in Africa and the series of events that led her to that point, compellingly told via the alternating perspectives of her four teenage daughters.

Christina Meldrum has already won praise from critics and fans with her young adult novel *Madapple*, which was an ALA Best Book for Young Readers in 2009 and earned starred reviews across the board. Now, in *Amaryllis in Blueberry*, her first adult novel, she tells the gripping story of the seemingly ordinary Slep family—who fled their Midwestern town to do missionary work in a small village Africa. Meldrum has been an aid worker in Africa, bringing an authenticity to this richly atmospheric novel which explores many universal themes including family, religion, and culture.

Meet Dick, his wife Seena, and their four daughters, each named Mary: Mary Catherine, Mary Grace, Mary Tessa, and their youngest Amaryllis (aMARYillis). Seena has felt unloved and unvalued most of her adult life, so she escapes into her books, particularly Greek mythology, to satisfy her desire to find meaning. Her life has been built on secrets and lies and she wants to protect her daughters from the truth she knows will destroy their happy home. Mary Catherine seems to be the strong, faithful one, who in deference to St. Catherine, cuts off all of her hair, but she's also a lost soul who desperately needs love and attention. Mary Grace is the eldest and the most beautiful—the one who easily seduces but is also easily seduced, especially when she's faced with an exotic and fascinating culture so unlike her own. Mary Tessa is the inquisitive one who claims to be the most reliable when it comes to the facts of her mother's case, and then there's Amaryllis, who was born with an extrasensory gift of seeing things other can't see, of knowing when bad things are about to happen, and of telling when those who profess to know the truth are the biggest liars of them all...

Opening with the dramatic scene of Seena on trial for murdering her husband Dick, this engrossing and lyrical novel flashes back to the year before her family left for missionary work in Africa—and how the buried secrets of their past came back to haunt and heal them all.

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