



The Chamomile

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Lilyan joins Patriot spies in British-occupied Charlestown, SC, to rescue her brother from a notorious prison ship. She'll lie, steal, kill or be killed she promises Nicholas Xanthakos, a scout with Francis Marion's partisans, who leads the mission. In Nicholas' arms she discovers enduring love...a home. But that home is a long time coming. Her journey requires she save the life of one British officer but kill another to protect her Cherokee friend Elizabeth. In escaping bounty hunters, she treks miles of wilderness and very nearly loses everything before finally reuniting with her true love.

The Chamomile Details

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Wanda says

Favorite Scene:

"Late one evening the first week in May as they strolled the outskirts of the camp, Nicholas stopped and pointed to the sky. "See the three stars, there, in a row?"

Lilyan followed his direction. "Yes."

"That's the belt of Orion, the hunter. If you look closely, you can see his upraised club." He drew an outline with his finger.

Lilyan squinted. "Not really."

Nicholas chuckled. "It's difficult to see." He paused. "Lilyanista?"

"Yes?"

"You do know that I love you, yes?" He faced her, taking her hand in his.

"I believe I do." Her heart raced as his thumb traced circles in the palm of her hand.

"But do you realize how much?"

She leaned back, looking up at his face barely visible beneath the brim of his hat. "If it is only half as much as I love you, then your body cannot contain it."

He sucked in a breath. "The days we spent together traveling here from the DeKruifs, I watched you. The way your body comes slowly away long before you open your lovely green eyes. I wake in the mornings remembering the way you stretch your arms to the side and arch your back. Do you realize how graceful your hands are when you braid your hair? Hair that looks like spun copper by firelight." He twirled a tendril of her hair around his finger. "I lay down at night wondering what it would look like spread across my pillow."

Tension pulsed in the pit of Lilyan's stomach as the effect of his words swirled around in her body like warm honey.

He dropped his hands to his sides. "But what a terribly uncertain time it is to be in love. Yes?"

Lilyan pressed her other hand to his chest. "If I have learned anything over the past few months, it is this. Nothing in this life is certain. God has given us the gift of this day, not the promise of another. And I believe He expects us to live each hour, each moment, acknowledging and enjoying that gift."

He curled his hands around hers. "If that is so, I will wait no longer. Lilyan Cameron, will you do me the great honor of becoming my wife?""

Main Characters:

Lilyan Cameron: Lilyan is an artist who owns her own store where she creates all kinds of artwork including painting murals for the more prominent citizens. Strong-willed and determined, but very protective of those she loves. Lilyan loves with a fierceness seldom seen by many. She sees through an artist's eyes and has great passion for the beauty around her. She is slightly reserved but also knows how to throw caution to the wind.

Captain Nicholas Xanthakos : Nicholas is a Captain with Frances Marion's partisans fighting for lives and freedom. A sweet and gentle man with the prowess of a cougar when those he cares about are threatened. He is dependable and sturdy, solid as a rock in the hard times and gentle as a lamb with the woman he loves.

Andrew Cameron: Andrew is Lilyan's brother. Fighting for the cause, freedom for the colonies. Andrew displays a courage seldom seen and a profound love for his family.

Elizabeth Archer: Elizabeth was born among the Cherokee but when her parents died, Lilyan's father brought Elizabeth to live with them. Elizabeth, Lilyan and Andrew were siblings by every right except birth. Elizabeth had a gentle spirit and a loving nature but she could wield a knife like an expert. She was a very welcome and calming presence in this book.

Angus McCallum: I just loved Angus. I loved his Irish brogue. I loved the few times he made me laugh. I just loved him period. Angus was a friend of Lilyan's dad who swore to protect Lilyan and Andrew until his last breath. I must say, he did a fine job doing just that too.

My Thoughts:

Lilyan Cameron is an artist who owns her own shop in Charleston, SC. Overrun by British soldiers, the colony is ruled with an iron fist but when the citizens get tired of buckling under British rule, a battle ensues. When Andrew is arrested for stealing the powder magazine in the basement of the exchange building, he is imprisoned and sent to live on a ship in horrible conditions. Lilyan vows to free her brother no matter the cost, even going as far as to promise Nicholas Xanthakos (A Captain for Frances Marion's partisans) she would lie, steal or kill if need be. Little did she know Nicholas would turn out to be the thief when he steals her heart. When murder is committed, Lilyan finds she has lived up to her promise and it sets in motion a string of unimaginable events.

Nicholas admires Lilyan's courage and soon finds himself in love with the woman with the fiery hair and gentle spirit. After they flee the "murder scene" he leaves them encamped with several other women whose loved ones are fighting in the war. When she is discovered by "bounty hunters" she must flee again to live with the Cherokee, the family of her beloved Elizabeth. Lilyan is devastated by Elizabeth's death. She feels God has forsaken her and carries the guilt of her friend's murder on her shoulders. But God hasn't forsaken her. He sent help when Andrew was deathly ill and he saved her from certain death when she was kidnapped. With the help of her brother she finds her way back to the God who loves her. And, with God's help, Lilyan and Nicholas find their way back to each other.

The Chamomile was a very poignant story of love and loss. The devastation they suffered was balanced by the love that surrounded them daily. The Revolutionary War came to life in the pages contained in this book. It made me want to learn more about the history of the war and that is a feat in itself since I'm not much of a

history buff. It also touched every emotion and left me feeling emotionally drained. I was literally crying by the turn of the second page. Susan F. Craft is a masterful storyteller weaving together a story that will stay with me for years to come. If you haven't read it (And I'm assuming if you're reading this you haven't) then you definitely should.

Lorraine says

SUMMARY:

Lilyan joins Patriot spies in British-occupied Charlestown, SC, to rescue her brother from a notorious prison ship. She'll lie, steal, kill or be killed she promises Nicholas Xanthakos, a scout with Francis Marion's partisans, who leads the mission. In Nicholas' arms she discovers enduring love...a home. But that home is a long time coming. Her journey requires she save the life of one British officer but kill another to protect her Cherokee friend Elizabeth. In escaping bounty hunters, she treks miles of wilderness and very nearly loses everything before finally reuniting with her true love.

REVIEW: I love books that are set during the Revolutionary War and this one did not disappoint. Written from a very different perspective (a Patriot woman's) as well as including some of the perspective of the Loyalists, Craft builds a storyline and characters that keep your interest from beginning to end. I really enjoyed this book because I had ancestors who fought on both sides so truly understood how Lilyan could find good and bad in both the Loyalists and the Patriots even though at heart she supported the Patriot cause.

Historical research was evident throughout the story yet did not overwhelm the development of relationships and romance. If you enjoy a good historical romance novel that is definitely threaded through with faith and strength, I highly recommend this book. I certainly hope there will be a sequel to this book.

FAVORITE QUOTES:

"My father says it is a sign of true courage; doing what needs to be done, even though you feel like you're going to leap right out of your skin."

'If I have learned anything over the past few months, it is this. Nothing in this life is certain. God has given us the gift of this day, not the promise of another. And I believe He expects us to live each hour, each moment, acknowledging and enjoying that gift."

Lisa Johnson says

Title: The Chamomile

Author: Susan F. Craft

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Lilyan Cameron is somewhat unique in that she runs her own business in South Carolina in 1780. Her parents are deceased and she lives with her younger brother, Andrew. Andrew has been fighting with the local militia against the British, but was wounded and took an oath to be a loyal subject to King George of England. The penalty for breaking that oath is treason, which could lead to exile or death. Lilyan has also

taken the oath in order to save her business, which is her only means of support, but secretly supports the patriots. She soon discovers her brother has taken up arms again against the British and fears for his life. Captain Nicholas Xanthakos, a young Greek immigrant, is also active in secretly supporting the militia. He takes an immediate liking to Lilyan. With the risk of Andrew's life, Lilyan feels she must do anything she can to ensure his safety and so asks to be involved in supporting the militia by spying. When the unthinkable happens, she is forced to abandon her home, business and city to make a run for freedom. The feelings between Nicholas and herself continue to grow, but is the time of war really a time for love? Lilyan constantly worries for the safety of those she loves and faces the reality that she isn't really trusting God to take care of her and her loves ones and provide for their future whatever that may be.

Readers can identify with the struggles of a young Christian woman, who professes her faith, but sometimes has a difficult time living it. Lilyan experiences trials and difficulties any adult would cringe at let alone a 19-year-old orphaned female living in the 1780s. I appreciated all the historical details in the story. I thought the depth of the romance between Lilyan and Nicholas happened too quickly. I would have liked a little more time for them to get to know one another. There also wasn't quite enough suspense for my taste. However, the premise of the story is a good one, and I do look forward to reading the second book that follows Lilyan's life a few years later. This book is titled, Laurel, and I will be posting a review soon, so stay tuned! My rating is 4 stars.

Disclosure of Material Connection: I only recommend products or services I use personally and believe will be good for my readers. I am disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255. "Guides Concerning the Use of Endorsements and Testimonials in Advertising."

Other reviews can be read at <http://seekingwithallyurheart.blogspot.com>.... Also follow me on Twitter @lcjohnson1988, FaceBook at <https://www.facebook.com/lisa.johnson...>

Carrie Pagels says

The Chamomile by Susan Craft

Five Stars *****

I am going to gush. I just finished reading Susan Craft's book. It is not a CBA book, but this is an amazing inspirational book. It is a historical with strong romantic elements, not a historical romance. Susan has a command of South Carolina history that is remarkable and it shows on every page. This book is like a treasure trove of American Revolution and colonial history relevant to South Carolina and unlike anything I have ever read. The closest thing might be The Frontiersman's Daughter, Laura Frantz's labor of love which is set in Kentucky. Laura spent years researching The Frontiersman's Daughter as did Susan in her research for The Chamomile. You simply must read it and if you have not read The Frontiersman's Daughter you need to read that, too.

I was thinking that Susan might be the Liz Curtis Higgs of SC historical (American Revolution) fiction – she gives that much attention to detail. Just a treasure trove of information along with a tight story and excellent characterization. Loved it and did not want to finish this book.

Bravo Susan!!!

Katie says

I wasn't all that sure I'd like this book when I started to read it. It seemed a little too simple and it drug a little bit. However, a couple chapters in the story line really picked up. I was actually impressed with how much happened in the book without it seeming packed with ridiculous events pilled on top of each other.

The story follows Lilyan and is told solely from her point of view. She lives in Charleston with her brother, Andrew, and her companion, Elizabeth. After her brother is arrested for joining the Patriots, Elizabeth begins to work as a spy and pass along information. She meets Nicholas, a Patriot captain, and the two have a slow building, cleanly written love story.

The author did a fabulous job of incorporating some history into the story line. You didn't learn a whole lot of history through the book, but you got enough to get a sense for the time period, learn some interesting tidbits, and follow the story and its place in history. The story line moved at a great pace, not too fast and not too slow. After the first few chapters, which kind of dragged on a little bit, the content really propelled the story along. I can't really say action because a lot of the book was talking and getting information.

The characters were quite complex for a shorter book. You got a real feel for the characters and their personalities right from the start which is somewhat difficult to do. The book also really pulled you in to what Lilyan is feeling throughout the story and you feel what she's feeling and hoping for her dreams. It's also not a book where you start yelling at the characters because they're doing something stupid. You don't really feel that they are acting counter-productively to their wish, which is what happens in some books. The events happen in a logical order and are plausible enough that you don't start wondering if this could actually happen.

I strongly recommend this to people who like historical fiction. It's supposed to be for teens and young adults, but it can be read by adults as well. The story is complex and this would be a great read to start historical fiction. There is a love story wrapped up in the more complex war story line. It's also a clean book, so it would be good for anyone. There is some violence, but it's not over-the-top and it's in a normal context. There are some rough scenes so I probably wouldn't recommend it for below middle school. It was a great book, but probably not a re-read.

Check out my blog: www.bookmouseblog.wordpress.com

Joanreconnu says

Great historical story!

!oved this book! The characters were so real and the historical facts brought it all back to life. My ancestor was a sharpshooter for Marion so I enjoyed re!living the history of this period. A great read! Learned a lot!

J.M. Hochstetler says

This story is set in a period that's very interesting to me, and Susan Craft has written an exciting, absorbing story with sympathetic, believable characters. I'm especially enjoying the details of the locale and the

interaction between Lilyan and Nicholas. The Chamomile is very vividly written and is keeping me turning the pages to find out what happens!

Deborha Mitchell says

Powerful story! Susan Craft does a great job telling this tale of war, hate, sacrifice, revenge, love...the list goes on. I was captivated by the characters in this book, totally felt their pain and struggles. Oh what Lilyan, the heroine of this story, had to endure! She is truly a remarkable character...I found myself holding my breathe at times, wondering how things would turn out for her. Yes, there are moments of joy, laughter and love...but be prepared for heartache and tears as well. A very well-rounded tale that will have you turning pages quickly in anticipation of what happens next. I highly recommend this book.

I want to thank Susan for sending me a copy of her book to read and review.

Even though I was given a copy of The Chamomile by the author, I was under no obligation to give a positive review.

Elaine Cooper says

Where do I begin? I loved "The Chamomile" so much that it will likely be on my favorite list for all of my 2012 novel reading.

From the first chapter, I was totally caught up in the characters and their precarious situation as Patriots in British-occupied South Carolina in 1780. Author Susan Craft artfully wove an intense and realistic story filled with situations that left you breathless and characters that captured your heart. It takes an extremely well written story to move me to tears and I had to grab my tissues more than once.

Throughout the novel is a strong theme of trusting God in the midst of terrible circumstances. The maturing of faith in the characters is inspiring. And each character, whether major or minor, was so well portrayed that I felt I knew them.

Not only was this novel well written but the historical detail was enlightening and enriching. It was obvious that Ms. Craft spent years on her skillful research. She painted a picture of Colonial America that is still playing like a movie in my mind.

Even if you usually don't read historical fiction, I would still highly recommend this read. You will truly not want to put it down. I can only pray that Ms. Craft has a sequel in the works.

Patsy says

This is an inspirational, historical, romance with love, war, family, courage, death and more. Lilyan Cameron joined the Patriots as a spy during the time of the British Revolution in 1780, in South Carolina to save her brother, Andrew from a prison ship. She promised to lie, steal, kill or be killed if necessary for the cause. Lilyan met Nicholas Xanthakos also in the militia, they fell in love but separated due to the war. Each on the verge of death numerous times not knowing when they would see each other again.

A very powerful story with so many trials and twists and turns always facing danger with courage. Lilyan at 19, so young yet she is faithfully holding on to God. I love the characterization of the characters, so believable and fully defined, the scenes were beautifully written in detail. The plot was complex putting the reader in the middle, a well connected story thoroughly researched. I liked the the author's description of the characters and the locations at the end of the book. Thank you, an excellent storyteller, Ms Craft.

Wendy M Williams says

Great book

I am very interested in the history of our country and I like to read books that tell about our history in a story from.

Patricia Kemp Blackmon says

The Chamomile has to be one of the best books I have read in 2012. I believe it had more of an effect on me because of the bravery of Lilyan the heroine in this book. She was determined to stand up against the British to protect her country. It did not matter the dangers she knew she would face.

With the help of Nicholas Xanthakos and many other Patriots she sets out to rescue her brother whom is being held on a prison ship having been charged as a traitor to the British crown. She ends up pretending to be a British Loyal in order to get vital information about the British military movements. Her closest friend and companion Elizabeth was Cherokee which at times got her little respect from the British soldiers. One in particular, a British officer, tries to force himself on her and as Lilyan comes upon them and she kills the soldier in order to save her friend. Now her cover as a spy is in danger and they must flee from sight.

Since her brother's escape from the prison ship he and some of the other prisoners join forces with Nicholas Xanthakos and the "Swamp Fox" Francis Marion in the fight against the British. Lilyan and Elizabeth stay at a camp with other women that are there to care for their husbands, sons and brothers that are fighting under Francis Marion. The battles against the British seem daunting but Marion and his men continue to push the British back.

You know there has to be some romance in this book. Lilyan has fallen for the handsome Nicholas Xanthakos. Whenever she needed rescued he was there to make sure she was protected. He was not happy about her going undercover as a spy. He had no idea what kind of woman her was dealing with. She wanted to do what she could do in order to help defeat the British.

I could go on and on about Chamomile but I want you to read the book. It is action packed and will keep you putting the book down. You may want to be sure to have some tissues handy. The author has done some major research for this book. Even though you know it is Historical fiction you still get some actual facts from history and go away from this book feeling as if you have just had a very good lesson in Colonial History. And the way the author describes the locations and costumes it actually made me feel as if I were an onlooker, a part in the book.

I highly recommend this book.

Disclosure

I won a copy of this book from the author on Colonial Quills blog. I was in no way compensated for this review. It is my own opinion.

Connie Huddleston says

Well-researched history, sweet romance, and an interesting beginning to a trilogy. This first book has just enough of each to entice me to read the next two.

Beth says

Set during the Revolutionary War, The Chamomile is chock full of details about life during that time. For those details alone, it was an entertaining, one-time read for me. The interactions between Patriot and Loyalist was interesting because they were often friends and neighbors and saw each other on a daily basis. I love how the author didn't sugarcoat details of war, sickness and the hardships that they had to go through. It made for a richer, more complex story.

The romance did not work for me; it progressed entirely too quickly and unrealistically, in my opinion, so I couldn't really enjoy the sweet moments between Lilyan and Nicholas because I didn't feel like there was much of a journey getting there. By the second or third encounter, they were suddenly in love. I just like a little more depth and build-up to romance than it was presented here, but it may not bother some readers.

Although I found a few elements that didn't work for me, overall, The Chamomile is an enjoyable read.

Megan says

I hate rating books so low. I know how much love goes into writing a book, but I just didn't care for this one. I see from the rating that I am in the minority and that is ok. Not everyone is going to love every book.

First, for me the romance moved way to fast to be believable. I understand that the relationship between Lilyan and Nicholas was not the focus of this book, but having no time to watch their relationship grow made me not care about it. Also, the amount of cursing in this book was very surprising for it to be a christian book. I expect that from a general market book, but not from a book that is suppose to be christian. It added nothing to the story and I almost stopped reading it.

I can say that I liked the setting and could easily get lost in it. I liked the snippets at the beginning of the chapters although some of them presented spoilers for the chapter. I thought Lilyan was very brave. I cannot imaging going through what she did and I appreciated the fact that she learned to rely on God. That was probably my favorite part of the book and I can definitely relate to sometimes letting fears overcome me. This was an interesting time period to me and I do feel like I came away from this book with more knowledge about it. I loved the author's note at the end of the book and found it informative. I must say this though: Reading about the officer (de Kalb) Andrew was under caused me to look him up. I found that most of what was in the book was true except the part about his horse. Andrew said de Kalb sent his horse to the back of the line and walked into battle with his men. I looked at multiple sites and all accounts say that his

horse was shot under him. But, he was a good man and his men had a lot of respect for him. Aside from that, the book was pretty accurate and I could easily tell the author put a lot of effort into the research.

There were a couple other things I personally didn't care for so this book for me was just ok. I probably won't read the rest of the series.
