



Never Say Never

Victoria Christopher Murray

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In this emotionally charged and inspiring novel, a passionate and dangerous love affair threatens to destroy both a marriage and a friendship.

When Miriam's fireman husband, Chauncey, dies in a school fire, Miriam feels like her life is over. How is she going to raise her three children all by herself? How will she survive without the love of her life? Luckily, Miriam's sister-friend Emily—and Emily's husband, Jamal—are there to comfort her. As Chauncey's best friend, Jamal is happy to step in and help Miriam with the funeral and her children, and he gives her hope that she has a future. But all the time that they spend together—grieving, sharing, and reminiscing—brings the two closer in ways they never planned, and they soon find themselves in the middle of a heated affair.

Lost in the fog of grief and lust, neither is even sure if their passionate affair is real. While Jamal is filled with guilt, sure that this new relationship is all about loss, Miriam believes that she is in love. But then, Emily finds out, and Emily and Jamal have to deal with this woman scorned—and her hunger for revenge. In this tangle of love, longing, and loyalty, can any of the relationships survive?

Never Say Never Details

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From Reader Review Never Say Never for online ebook

Sophie Sealy says

This is a non-spoiler review. I don't know where to start. I did not want to like this book. I heard about it and had an idea of the topic but came to the book kicking, screaming and full of anxiety. I do not handle infidelity well at all, on TV, in songs and yes in my books. Yes I judged it before reading it. I was making up reviews in my head and ranting silently and out loud to myself saying I would not like it and there is no way I will ever recommend this book. and I was so so WRONG. This is Victoria's best book thus far. The development of the characters endears you to all of them and you feel the pain, the grief, the exhaustion, the love, the betrayal in this book. You become one with them. Its hard to find fault, place blame and yes I ended up saying I don't condone it but I understand. The writing comes across so effortlessly, I doubt another writer would have been able to pen the same topic and get the the same effect. VCM is one of kind and a genius in how this story unfolded. I couldn't wait to get to the end and now I'm so sad I rushed there. OMG This book is Exceptional.

Patricia says

This book is about a man repeatedly lying, manipulating and completely disrespecting his wife and marriage, with the wife's 'best friend' doing the same. This was an ongoing affair, one involving the heart, mind, and body, of each of the two people involved. It was not a 'one night stand', that maybe could be called a 'mistake'. The callousness of the husband when he tells his wife that he is sure she will understand once he explains, blew my mind. The way in which the spiritual leaders blamed the betrayed wife, and wanted her to forgive, right away, struck me as cold and unrealistic. There can be no true redemption, without personal accountability, and the only person in this book who took responsibility, was the wronged wife, and she took too much!

Natasha says

Oh did this book pull at my heart strings from the beginning or what?? Wonderfully written story of love, loss, friendship and betrayal. Usually there's a character that's deemed bad guy but the way these characters were written I found it hard. You were disappointed and felt bad for them but anger wasn't a high emotion for me. I've been a Victoria Christopher Murray fan so this was just added to seal the deal even more. Definite recommend!

Reader says

I think this was meant more as a story about the ups and downs of friendship and not cheating. It switches pov from Emily the wife and Mirian the widow other woman. They are a group of friends, Emily married to Jamap and Miriam married to Chauncey. Jamal and C are best friends and firemen. When C doesn't survive a fire and Emily needs to help the survivors get over their loss of their loved one, she can't really be there for either Mirian or Jamal to help them get over their loss. She thinks that Jamal is strong enough to wait for her

and she thinks Miriam has enough support in Jamal and Cs family. It is sad, she gave up so much to be with Jamal and for him to do this. I understood the reasons the affair happened but still no. Likee they said, the first time i could get but the times after that was a choice althe choice to have an affair. I get that its a christian book, i knew that going in but i can still not imagine having a pastor THAT involved in my life or marriage. There is a happy ending for Emily and Jamal but again this is more about the woman than the men so it doesnt really show you the grovel Jamal has to do. It was a comfort affair. They were grieving and he was helping her cope with the loss of her husband and things happen. This part i did not like. Repackaging shit in a nice paper does not take away that its still shit. An affair is still an affair even if you did it because you were depressed, grieving or worst yet you fell on love.

I did like it more than i expected so thats good.

Reading in Black & White says

Chauncey and Jamal are best friends who share the same profession of being firefighters and happen to have wives that have been best friends (more like sisters) since their college days. This foursome has a strong bond and friendship that is quite solid until Chauncey dies in a school fire. Miriam, Chauncey's widow, turns more towards Jamal for comfort than her girlfriend Emily and the issues begin.

"Michellelee asked me if we were sleeping together and I didn't tell her anything. She asked if you were the one who was here the other day and I told her no, but she didn't believe me and I think she knows. She knows it was you and..."

Obviously as a reader, I already knew that Miriam and Jamal were having an affair but to read this is how Emily finds out still brought emotion out of me. Can you imagine you're riding in the car with your husband, you see your best's friend name come across the Bluetooth screen so you answer, and she immediately starts saying these things??? Boy, oh boy! And, I will leave it at that!

Never Say Never by Victoria Christopher Murray truly makes you think is there a time/situation when adultery, infidelity, and deceit are acceptable. Is there sometimes a justified explanation for our behavior and choices? Or, is it right and wrong without the possibility of wrong but I really have a good reason?

Victoria Christopher Murray is one of my most favorite authors because she consistently makes the reader think and there is always an element of Christian principles to her writing. Her characters are always memorable and will stay with you long after putting the book down. And, she does not disappoint with Never Say Never as it is one of the BEST books I have read so far in 2013!!!

DISCLAIMER: I received a complimentary copy of Never Say Never from the publisher in exchange for an honest review.

See full post including interview with author at: <http://tiffanytalksbooks.com/book-rev...>

Kiera says

Victoria Christopher Murray's thought provoking book, Never Say Never, had me riveted from the very first

page. It takes a very unfortunate incident, and wraps it up in an extenuating circumstance. It had my mind whirling so fast, I didn't know what hit me. We're always saying, "I would NEVER do this, that, or the other!" But, unless we're in that exact situation, at that point in time, who are we to say what we would or won't do? It's always easy to be on the outside looking in, but when you're the one trying to look out, it's not as easy then.

At first I really wanted to be angry with Miriam and Jamal for what happened, but as I got deeper into the book, I could understand why and how it happened. My anger became dissipated with understanding; although I don't condone what happened, I now see that they were victims of their circumstance.

This book had me smiling, crying, angry, and cheering at the end; it picked me up, engaged me, and when it was done with me, threw me back in my chair exhausted yet deep in thought. The book guide questions were also very thought provoking, and will make a great topic of discussion!

Victoria, you've done it yet again; this is why I'm such a fan! *Great job!*

M.C. Walker says

I am a huge fan of Victoria Murray's. Never say Never was a book club selection. I was excited to read the novel from the great reviews and previous work of the author. I think Never Say Never is a good story overall. However, I think there were some stereotypical/cliche moments that I could have done without. I felt diluted with so much back story that some moments I had to put the book down. I wanted a little more action and instead I got slow to medium build up. By chapter thirty-two I wanted to strangle Emily and slap Miriam and Jamal. Midway through the book I could already predict the ending. I felt sorry for the protagonist and I could empathize with her grief of losing your spouse. However, I felt like the flashbacks were a bit over kill. I felt like the author rushed the intimacy between Miriam and Jamal. Like her husband is still fresh in the ground and already you're sleeping in the same bed with his best friend in a matter of weeks. I didn't feel the connection between them. Like did Miriam like Jamal all along? I felt like the author was trying to reference the 9/11 tragedy and friendship with a diverse group of women. In my opinion it didn't feel natural.

Michellelee. Who? She was very annoying. Emily is this well respected psychologist yet you can't save your husband from his grief so you pour yourself into a six year old girl. I felt like the girl could've been a little bit older. Also, I felt like Emily was blind to the way her husband and friend felt and kind of blindly forced them together. The only enjoyable thing I loved about this book was Pastor Ford and the fact that Jamal and Emily salvage their marriage. I've read Murray's books before...this one is probably among one of my least favorites. Maybe grief makes you do some unthinkable things. Definitely something to think about. Note: Never trust another woman around your man, know matter how close she is to you.

reneenDaBomb says

It was a different type of story by the writer, Victoria Christopher Murray, but I liked it enough to finish listening to the audible version. I really noticed the difference in the narrator's voices and appreciated that at least one did a good job. The other did not, IMO, because I couldn't visualize the younger characters with that strain in the narrators voice...too high pitched. So unlike a child voice or the language a youngster would use. I gave it a 3*** rating.

Jackie says

2.5 In her author's note at the end of the book, author Victoria Christopher Murray writes that the novel's roots lie in the real-life post-9/11 phenomenon of firefighters leaving their wives for the widows of their friends who had been killed during the horrific events of that day. What Murray writes, though, is the story of two best woman friends whose relationship falls apart after one's husband dies in a fire at a school and who then ends up in an affair with her friend's husband out of shared grief. Complicating matters is the fact that the cheated-on friend is white, while the widow and both husbands are black.

Murray's writing style is straightforward, with alternating chapters from each of the two women's POV. Her characters are flat, without distinct personalities. They have backstories, but those backstories seem not to influence their present action very much (for example, one character's childhood sexual abuse is mentioned in one brief sentence, then never referred to again). The lack of distinct personality allows the characters serve as placeholders for the reader, allowing the reader to imagine herself in each woman's position. This seems to be Murray's purpose, as the opening and closing chapters, written from the widow's POV, addresses readers directly, asking them not to judge, asking if they would have done the same thing that Miriam, the widow, had done.

SPOILERS:

The plot struck me as predictable, and overly determined; actions stem not from character, but from plot needs. All the plot events inevitably lead Miriam and Jamal into each other's arms, particularly psychologist Emily's need to always be away from her husband in order to help the grieving children affected by the fire. The narrative is clear, though, that the cheating is NOT Emily's fault, which I appreciated. Although for a psychologist, she seemed utterly unsympathetic to her friend and her husband's actions, unable to think about it in terms of psychological processes.

I'm certainly not the audience for the book's inspirational/religious messages, either. Emily wants to dump Jamal after the affair comes to light (through plot contrivance, of course): "I will never be one of those women who allows herself to be walked over by a man" (315), she declares, as if her unwillingness to attempt to understand the pain that led her husband to turn to Miriam is a feminist move rather than an immature turning away from pain. Through the intervention of her pastor, she eventually comes to grieve her own loss, and accepts Jamal back. Miriam and her children move away, banished from the scene of the crime, while Jamal gets to remain, implying that we should forgive straying husbands but not straying friends: not a message I appreciated.

Keyandra Ariyo says

Never Say Never ♥♥♥♥
(SPOILER ALERT)

First of all, if you're looking for: weave pulling, b**** you slept with my man, 'Jerry Springer' fighting; Now don't get me wrong every now, and then I enjoy these types of storylines, but if this is mainly your type of storyline, I'm sorry to inform you, this is not the story for you.

Yes, I am going to be truly honest, I pre-judge this book solely based on the synopsis before actually reading the story, and that is something I try my hardest not to do beforehand. Just reading the book summary, (eye rolling), (sucking of the teeth); white woman marries black man, black man sleeps with black woman, and then begs for his wife forgiveness; white woman breaks & ultimately forgives, the end.

In all 'my' visually reality, this is how it was usually played out, and yes this is actually how it went, but it was done in a suitable, true Christian faith base that truly open my eyes.

Now my dollar and two-cent plus tax review.

Ooh, sookie sookie (in my Kim Fields, character Regina from Living Single voice)! Who would sleep with their wife, 'sister friend', who would sleep with their, 'sister friend, husband', that is just wrong in every level. Oh Hell No (in my Golden Brooks, character Maya from Girlfriends voice)! Downright disrespectful from both parties involved, but I was ready for the journey.

There were some parts in the story that seem to be drag out, but it didn't in no way stop my attentiveness in the outcome, and the message this author does a delightful job always penning for her readers.

Throwing away my pre judgment and flushing down the loo (toilet), I started to read the book with an open mind, open heart. Throughout the story my opinion of each lady changed, back, back, forward and forward (dropping a little Aaliyah, Back & Forward on ya!); First I was #TeamWifeScorn and then I was #TeamBestFriendTragic; I was on an emotional rollercoaster with them (now why am I humming Vivian Green song, Emotional Rollercoaster). Two (2) days later, as I came to finishing the story, I was still torn in between the two (Yeah, I know the lyrics to LaToya song, Torn), but in all honesty, in a weird way I felt the challenge that each woman face.

Regardless of ethnic background, we all want the same in our relationships: God, trust, honesty, commitment, loyalty, good loving, and laughter along the way.

Some may read, Never Say Never, and say this can't ever happen, or I wouldn't ever do that to someone I loved and cared about. If you feel this way, (please forgive me, don't take this to heart), but you have some maturing to do. We are so quick to judge a person situation without getting all sides of the story. There always, his side, her side, and the truth. This is the fact I think the author was trying to create.

I had wish, the author would have had a few chapters captured for character (Jamal, Emily's husband), but overall, again, lesson learned.

'Lifetime', tearjerker, pointing fingers, talking back to the television, conversations about this for weeks, movie in the making.

Monique says

Never Say Never by Victoria Christopher Murray - 5 Stars

Three friends - Miriam, Emily, and MichelleLee - met in college and have a sisterly bond that seems unbreakable. So who are they? Miriam is living her dream life in love with her soulmate (Chauncey, a fireman) and stay-at-home mother of three boys. Emily is a well-known child psychologist that gave up her wealthy family connection when she married Jamal (Chauncey's best friend and also a fire fighter).

MichelleLee is living it up as a single award winning TV journalist living large in LA. They were enjoying their weekly lunch when MichelleLee got a breaking news call that would change their lives forever.

Murray has outdone herself with this multicultural storyline. This story has it all - romance, sorrow, love, friendship, and deep connections with family. The flashbacks offer background to the story illustrating how they came to enjoy the lives they live. The initial drama happens in the first few pages and left me next to tears throughout the entire novel. I believe the idea of dealing with the death of a spouse is overwhelming and you can "Never Say" what you wouldn't do. This is a must read for anyone with a heart. Thanks VCM for sharing your love of writing with the world.

Lawrence says

VCM's books keeps getting better and better. If you like VCM's writing, then you will love this book. I highly recommend it and see if you would say....."Never Say Never".

Camille says

This book really makes you think...

In reading the notes at the end, I appreciate VCM for stepping outside of her comfort zone and penning a character from a different race. She will go on to do this again in "Stand your Ground", another book centered on race relations.

This novel makes a good book club read because the topic itself is hotly debatable. Is there ever a "good" time to have an affair? How are the different ways to deal with grief?

Shavonna Futrell says

This was a true book about forgiveness, I know they say Never Say Never , but I am not sure if I could forgive that easily, I might could have understood the first time a little more easier than several times. But this was a very good book.

OOSA says

Complex Loss

Miriam and Emily have been best friends since college, where what started as a roommate situation turned into something more like sisterhood. Marriage, children, careers and years later their friendship is as strong as ever. That bond is tested when Miriam's husband Chauncey, a fireman, loses his life in a fire and Miriam and Emily's husband, Jamal who is also a fireman and Chauncey's best friend, turn to each other for comfort and understanding.

In Victoria Christopher Murray's "Never Say Never," loyalties are tested. The inevitability of change is examined. The harsh realities of life are faced. From start to finish, it maintains an emotional tone swinging from the joys of friendship to its aches and pains. Murray's characters do not live in a world of simple choices and answers. The storyline unearths the gray area.

Murray weaves a moving tale as each woman tells her story. Readers can't help but become emotionally invested and divided with their empathy. While written in simple and concise language, it's the events and people that make this story a complicated and layered one.

Engrossing, compelling and memorable, "Never Say Never" is one of the best books of the year so far.

Reviewed by: Toni
