



# Christy

*Catherine Marshall*

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The train taking nineteen-year-old teacher Christy Huddleston from her home in Asheville, North Carolina, might as well be transporting her to another world. The Smoky Mountain community of Cutter Gap feels suspended in time, trapped by poverty, superstitions, and century-old traditions.

But as Christy struggles to find acceptance in her new home, some see her — and her one-room school — as a threat to their way of life. Her faith is challenged and her heart is torn between two strong men with conflicting views about how to care for the families of the Cove.

Yearning to make a difference, will Christy's determination and devotion be enough?

## Christy Details

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Author : Catherine Marshall

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## From Reader Review Christy for online ebook

### Bekah Porter-Sandy says

Some books grab you by the heart and never let you go. For me, there are three: "Gone With the Wind," "The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe," and then "Christy." I try to annually read each, although in recent years (with a new marriage, new college focus, and cross-country move), I have failed in that effort. This year, I decided to rectify that situation, and I am ever so glad that I did, especially with this particular novel.

I first read it as a teenager, and it captured my soul then. I loved the idea of a grand adventure to better people's lives and institute social change. But that was then, when I was still looking for my own grand journey and purpose. Now, as an adult, this book spoke to me in a much deeper way on many various levels. First, there was the historical aspects. Before, I was all caught up in the subtle love triangle and the story line. This time, I noticed how Ms. Marshall wove the culture and the dignity and the grace of the mountaineers throughout the entire novel. It was like seeing a new world through a subtle sociological perspective, and I appreciated the novel all the more for this almost academic approach.

Second, Christy's spiritual journey really resonated with me. She was asking the big, overarching questions that I recently found myself pondering, and I loved how the book coaxed out an answer from a mixture of characters who all approach their faith in their own ways. While before, I thought that Christy and her relationships provided the heart of the story, this time, I recognized that it was her inner coming-of-age that really makes this book shine.

And third, I recognized with renewed respect the wonderful literary ability of Ms. Marshall. She painted vivid pictures of these homes, these people, and what was in their hearts. Every paragraph, every description, every piece of dialogue -- they all served a purpose, and in an age of "Twilights" and "50 Shades of Grey," I find myself craving good, solid, real writing rather than pandering to the popular mood of the moment.

I imagine I will read this book dozens times over in my coming years, and I imagine I will be just as touched with each new reading. And THAT's what a good book is supposed to accomplish. Hurrah for Ms. Marshall for doing so.

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### E.F.B. says

I listened to this on audio, so pardon any misspellings!

Okay, this is going to be a complicated review. In my opinion, Christy is a good book, just maybe not for all audiences. I'm giving it a solid 3.5 stars for "didn't-love-didn't-hate-but-liked-it-more-than-3 stars-but-not-quite-4-stars". There were things I liked and things I didn't like and things that simply were. Things that were uplifting and things that were depressing. I liked Christy herself for the most part. She was lively, and an entertaining narrator, making me smile several times with her reactions to things. It was good to watch her grow and mature, both emotionally, and spiritually, her faith journey being especially touching. The thing I disliked about her was her romantic journey. She was probably the most immature in that area, and while it wasn't at all like modern day YA in which it's often "get physical first and ask questions later," she still had that immature attitude of, "If I'm not in love with him, then why do I have all teh tingly feelings when he kisses me?" Just guessing here, but that might be...wait for it...hormones, maybe? Love should be so much more than physical attraction and tingles, dear. I also really didn't like her main love interest hardly at all,

which brings me to my next point.

David, her love interest, didn't seem like a bad guy at first, but the more she got to know him the more I disliked him. First of all, when she started trying to take small steps of faith to help the community, he put her down and acted like this wasn't a response from God, this was just a happy happening. Though not always, he could also be condescending towards her when she asked questions for which he didn't have answers. And finally, the man was in the ministry, not because he felt God was calling him to be there and he genuinely wanted to help the people of Cutter Gap, but rather, he was there because other people thought the ministry would suit him, other people had assigned him to Cutter Gap, and he was basically just there to do a job he was assigned to do, with no real love for the people. On top of that, he would preach fiery sermons to the people about how they needed to change their ways, using Scripture to back himself up, and then we find out that he doesn't even believe everything in the Bible, and is so unsure of his own faith that when Christy starts asking him questions about what he believes and why, he gets all defensive and condescending saying she's "diving into deep theological waters" and he "doesn't want to confuse her". Um...who was the one who was just saying how unsure he was about the existence of heaven, Jesus' miracles being true miracles, etc. and keeps referring to debates back at the theological seminary rather than his own solid beliefs You, not her. And that wasn't the only thing he was condescending to her about. To give Christy credit, she did pick up on these issues and it did cause her to hesitate, but in my opinion, it took her way too long to put the brakes on the relationship. If it were me, he would have been dropped like a hot potato the minute he proposed. To give David credit, he too came to realize his shortcomings by the end and decided to take his life in a different direction.

Then there was the other love interest: Dr. McNeill. To be honest, I was pretty neutral about him throughout most of the book. I never thought he seemed as arrogant as Christy thought he was at first, though he did have a strong personality. And while I didn't agree with what he believed, at least he knew WHY he believed it, unlike David. My main issue with the idea of Christy and him together was the contrast of his atheism with her growing faith, because I do feel that people who are considering a relationship, much less marriage, need to be in a similar place with their faith or you're opening up room for conflict that doesn't have to be there. However, that contrast changed by the end (albeit, last minute!) at which point I was okay with the idea.

A character I was not neutral about was Miss Alice, who may have been my favorite side character in the whole story. She was a woman of integrity and strong, unwavering faith, who made for an excellent mentor and friend for Christy and others, and her personal story held some interesting surprises.

There were other likable side characters as well, Fairlight and Ruby May coming to mind first. I also liked several of the school children and enjoyed reading about Christy's school times in general and the difference she made in her student's lives by actively showing love to them even when it was difficult. As for the side characters I felt neutral about, I still felt that they were all characterized well and unique enough that I never got confused about them, and it was interesting to see them function as a community.

For the story itself, as I said at the start, it's a good story, but not necessarily suitable for all readers, due both to differences in personal taste, and for younger readers, a little bit of content issues. It could be very uplifting seeing Christy's accomplishments and the sweet personal connections she made with individuals in the community, and ultimately, the change she brings to the community is the heart and point of the story. At the same time, the story didn't pull punches when it came to thematic elements and there were a number of things that happened that could be considered depressing, and some things that aren't appropriate for readers of all ages. The mountain community lived in desperate poverty and ignorance, and just like back in the day when their ancestors lived in Scotland, there was little in the way of traditional law enforcement, and family

feuds and acts of revenge that sometimes resulted in murder were the norm. There were other illegal acts as well, like the making and selling of illegal moonshine, the discovery of which could also lead to murder. This is all historically accurate, and in all reality my own Appalachian ancestors (nearly all of them!) probably experienced some form of this sort of poverty and ignorance in their lifetimes, so that was an interesting glance back in time for me. It's just not one of the happier historical accuracies to base a story upon, and not everyone will find it enjoyable, even when taking the more uplifting moments into consideration.

On top of this, there were medical things that some could find icky. (One time in particular, I was listening while eating breakfast to the part where one character gets double pneumonia and...ugh...I wish I hadn't.) There was only one doctor for the entire community, though the people from the mission tried to help as much as they could, and some descriptions of illness and one surgery, which I'll cover in further detail in the content section of this review, while not graphic to an extreme, could be more than some people want to read, especially as nearly the entire last third of the book centers around an epidemic of typhoid in the community, and that is one nasty disease that, sadly, did cause a number of deaths, thus adding to the depressing depressingness.

And finally, and probably the most problematic were a mention of rape and the discovery that rape is part of the backstory of one prominent side character. When this character made this revelation, this was probably the one place where I thought a description went farther than it should have. The sex act was not described, but the character did mention where the wicked, evil, DESPICABLE excuse for humanity initially touched her, and I thought she should not have included this detail as it went from the simple knowledge that he touched her inappropriately to, okay, now we're picturing \*where\* he touched her, and that's not something that needs to be pictured, especially as the mere knowledge that it happened was sickening enough to begin with. I will also address this further in the content section.

Now, having said that<sup>^</sup> I will make note that hearing about the positive way that the community supported this character when they found out what happened was very touching and uplifting. The individual's parents and the Quaker community, one older woman in particular, rallied around her and protected her from gossip, ensuring that she and the child felt loved, not rejected. Her experience also taught them that they've been so focused on their teachings about the "inner light" that they've neglected other things such as educating their girl children about natural bodily acts like sex so they are not ignorant lambs among wolves if an evil person was to come into the community again with the intention of taking advantage of them. They also made changes related to a number of other things like how they had some ideas about modern day revelations from God but were actually considering rather silly things like indigestion or bodily aches as messages from God. So they enacted change so there would be checks for such things.

So, all things considered, Christy is a complex book. I can see why those who have loved it over the years loved it, as it is very uplifting in some ways and minus a little confusing moment, I liked the way it ended. At the same time it is depressing in places, and with the hatred, revenge, icky medical descriptions, and one instance of a remembered rape, I was unable to completely fall in love with it, hence my rating of 3.5. Still, there is definitely a reason this is a classic, and I think the right audience will enjoy it very much.

#### **Content for those who want to know:**

Due to the following content, particularly the part that touches on rape, I would not personally recommend this book for anyone under the age of 16, maybe older depending on the individual.

**Violence:** There are many instances of violence in this book, though generally, it is not described.

As stated in my review, the part of the Appalachias where the story happens is so isolated there is not a lot in the way of traditional law enforcement and we discover that even when the law is enforced the courts can be biased because families plot and plan to get a certain people elected as judge. Therefore, families get in feuds and may even shoot each other and sometimes get away with it. Many don't seem to think twice about threatening others with guns and knives. One Quaker woman who is normally against violence even taught herself to shoot better than the men just so they would respect her enough to listen to her when she tries to act as peacemaker. (We never actually see her have to use a gun during the story.)

Early on in the story an in-home surgery happens that will involve the need to drill a hole in a man's skull to relieve pressure, but Christy walks out before it starts.

Christy sees the remnants of an animal that was killed by another animal. Blood and fur on the ground described briefly. One character recalls how another character was raised to have no respect for animal life and would often kill animals, not for food or fur, but just simply for the sake of killing, and was often unmerciful about it. She recalls how he broke the leg of a baby deer, just because he could, and was about to bash its head in, but she stopped him.

Miss Alice makes brief mentions of having met a crippled child who was later beaten and raped and died, and once walking into a house to discover an insane man had hung his wife. Neither of these things are described any more than what I said here. (Note: Miss Alice tells Christy these things to explain to her that yes, she will run into some great evils being committed in this region, but she believes God has placed the two of them there to use them as tools to bring that evil to an end.)

A baby dies and it turns out it was from internal injuries caused by something the mother did out of ignorance and superstition to try to cure what she thought was wrong. The babys' dead body is briefly described, but there is no external injury, so it's not icky just very sad.

Brief discussion of Indian scalping, how some pioneer doctor's helped those who survived a scalping via a procedure in which a hole is bored into the skull. This makes Christy wish her imagination were not so vivid.

Some pranks the older boys play in the classroom have potential for physical harm. A rock is wrapped in cloth to look like a ball and thrown at a young girl's head. She is bruised but otherwise okay. Hot marbles are left on the floor with the intention that Christy will pick them up and get burned. (She's warned ahead of time.) A much later prank involves someone putting something in the school furnace(?)that spits out sparks when Christy goes to stoke the fire. Holes are burned in her dress and her neck is burned enough to raise a blister.

An older boy beats a younger boy unconscious. The beating is only barely described by the witnesses. (We later discover the reason for the beating is because the younger boy got too close to the place where a bunch of moonshine was being hidden.)

Christy acts as assistant during one surgery on a child. It is generally not described but there is brief mention of a large pocket of puss caused by infection.

### **Sexual:**

An older boy in Christy' s class uses a written assignment to tell her he has trouble focusing on lessons because she's so pretty. (This is the only instance, and nothing ever comes of his supposed attraction to her.)

Some non-described kisses on the cheek, lips, and eyelids at varying times.

When Christy is preparing the dead baby's body for the "laying out" some men come in to see the baby and they are drunk. Christy notices one of them staring at her and then winking to his companions. She ignores it. But the man of the house is concerned enough about the drunks that when he walks the ladies back to the mission he brings his gun.

Later we discover that the man<sup>^</sup> actually didn't bring his gun because of the drunks, he brought it because some strange men no one knew had followed Christy out there. David warns her not to leave the mission without him again at least not until they find out who the men are.

Some men (most likely drunk) try to break into the house where Christy and two other women are staying by themselves. The women end up having to barricade the doors and look for things to use as weapons because the men are out there looking to possibly kill a man they think is staying in the same house (he isn't) and whether or not they get to the man, they imply they might take advantage of the women as well, shouting through the door things like, "We don't want to hurt ye we just want to 'enjoy' ye," and offering the women alcohol that is probably moonshine. The women can hear them discussing which man gets which woman. The men never get in, though, and are eventually chased off by a sudden rain storm.

In the last third of the story Miss Alice reveals to Christy that she was raped as a teenager. It is not described in extreme or titillating detail, but enough is described that it's not appropriate for younger readers (and could possibly be a trigger for those who have experienced this horrible thing), so I'm going to put this is spoiler code. (view spoiler) Miss Alice was so ignorant about the act of sex she didn't even have the words to tell her parents what happened until she realized she was pregnant (pregnancy was something she knew about because of raising farm animals, she just didn't know what caused it) and was able to tell them about that. Miss Alice says a sadness fell on her family worse than if they were mourning for a death. Unfortunately, by that time, the evil, wicked, excuse for humanity who did that to her had gone back to England, and the family couldn't find him in order to bring him to justice.

There's a wedding ceremony with some rather old traditions, including "putting the bride to bed" smack in the middle of the festivities. The loft where they take the bride and groom is directly above where the dancing is happening and Christy is embarrassed to hear "bawdy" noises coming from up there.

**Language:** Terms like "devil take ye" and "swear" are about as close to actual swearing that is heard. There's mention of Christy hearing some drunk men use swears so raw she hasn't heard most of the words before.

**Other:** A boy is said to have been born "half witted" and has epilepsy. He is only half dressed (though the essential areas are covered Christy can tell he is wearing nothing under the long sweater) speaks in grunts, drools, and smells very bad. Christy is so upset about him that she later gets sick to her stomach and it's implied (not described) that she vomits. When Christy tells Miss Alice where she went that it upset her so much Miss Alice understands and says "that's the worst place of all."

The majority of the descriptions of illness come in the last third of the book where many people fell ill and dying from typhoid. Victims of the disease have high temperatures, swollen, furry tongues, delirium, diarrhea, and Christy personally tends to several of these people and has to clean them up and realizes she'll never forget the distinctive stench. One of the worst descriptions was when someone who had typhoid also got double pneumonia and finally, after much treatment, coughed up whole bunch of phlegm and pus.

Sadly, some people we've come to know during the story die of the typhoid.

People drink and get drunk, mostly on illegal moonshine.

**Spiritual:** Miss Alice is a strong Christian woman trying to reach out to the Appalachian folks, and her fellows in the mission house.

Christy spends much of the story grappling with topics of faith and figuring out what she believes but by the end, comes to a much stronger faith of her own.

The people living in the mountains have a rather backward and works-based idea of the Christian faith. Among other things, they think anything that makes you too happy is probably sinful, and that even if you're a believer you've got to constantly worry about "backsliding" and ending up in hellfire anyway. There's also big emphasis during funerals on preaching of hellfire and damnation in order to try to scare people into repentance. (This is a tradition David refuses to carry on when he performs funerals.)

As stated, David, despite being a minister, doesn't seem sure of all his beliefs and actually comes to realize this by the end of the story and starts looking at doing something else with his life.

Right at the end of the book someone nearly dies and we're given a glimpse of heaven where there is much bright, beautiful light, radiating love, green grassy fields, flowers, streams, and some characters who were believers and passed on earlier in the book.

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### **Noel Branham says**

I read Christy in two days. Not only was it a beautifully written and timeless narrative of Appalachian culture, it was also a most refreshing romance. There are two main men in this book, the young Pastor, David and Dr. Neil MacNeil a self-proclaimed atheist. What strikes me so thoroughly is the fact that both men are a perfect foil for one another. In a sense, I feel that the Rev. David is unknowingly an atheist and similarly Dr. MacNeil a devout Christian by the book's end. This is the power of the writing at display. Christy is asking deep questions about the meaning of life, the hindrance of restrictive patriarchal cultures, and the impact poverty has on some of the most vulnerable members of society. Both of these men offer her answers to her questions and in her own way she accepts and rejects these answers forming her own opinions in the book. Among these questions is discovering for herself what constitutes love and what relationships look like both in the mountain culture and beyond. I wish books were regularly written with such depth and profundity as is modeled in these pages. Simultaneously the depth is complemented with colloquial mountain culture showing that these people's values and traditions are much more than just a bunch of ignorant hillbillies. With mountain expressions like, "But that way is so up-tilted, you could stand straight up and bite the ground" thrown in it was hard to put down. Catherine Marshall's descriptive sentences were a treat as well. Here is my favorite that I now have begun reading every spring:

"The evergreens were tipped with vivid green and the willows overhanging the streams were a whisper of green lace. Here and there in the fields of the valley, spicewood bushes waved yellow plumes. It was spring and I felt light and carefree."

Please read this timeless coming-of-age story. I feel that every young girl should read this if only to know the beauty that comes from being immersed in other cultures and the self-discovery that follows.

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### **Kate Quinn says**

I am not normally a fan of evangelical novels, but "Christy" is an exception. The titular heroine is an idealistic young girl in the 19th century who finds herself moved to volunteer as a teacher in an impoverished Appalachian town. Christy struggles to understand her pupils, their insular mountain culture, and ultimately her own faith and what it means to her. Unlike many evangelical novels, faith is not the character's sole concern: Christy spends plenty of time worrying about how to get new books for her students, how to afford that beautiful black hat on a teacher's salary, and how to choose between the handsome minister and the gruff Scottish doctor who both appear to be courting her. Disease, death, weddings, moonshine whisky, and lethal clan feuds all have their place, painting a marvelous portrait of the vivid Appalachian culture.

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### **Jeanette says**

It's a classic read from both "eyes" of the era it was written and also the place/time that encompasses the copy of Christy's tale of coming to the mountains to be teacher.

It's very long- at least 2 books length. Yet because it embraces so many myriad aspects of Christy's life, schoolhouse and entire mixes of associations in Cutter Gap locale- it still delights.

Because I did not read this when I was young, I was surprised at the reviews which some specify as "romantic". I didn't feel that was the core of this at all. Hardly a finalizing sideline either.

But it was written in the style of inspiration, faith, respect, aspirations for good intent, and overwhelming affinity for kindness (sour language/ foul wording/ angry ire as common "attitude" in speech either missing altogether or defined by characters as "mean" and unacceptable which would be accurate for what they are).

Some of the defining characteristics of the hillbilly populations of poorest mountain side and holler folks are more considered and evaluated to purpose and habit here (even to defined sociology, anthropology or economic based terms or measures) than in the supposedly "excellent" self-identity based non-fiction tracts of the post 2010 era. Especially one or two from the most recent 2016-2018 years.

Regardless of the travails, the wildness, the hardships and conditions described in this book- it is still always a positive directed voice. For me, essentially cored in a peaceful role model, and entirely entertaining to read.

I will probably read some of her others now, like A Man Called Peter.

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### **Sarah says**

I wondered if this book would hold up to how much I loved it as a fifteen to twenty-two-year-old when I was frequently rereading it. This is one of those rare books that seems to grow with you and always have new things to discover.

The heart of this book is about God's love for us and how it is reflected in his people. With realistic characters with different motivations and approaches, you can see so many different aspects. I could write a

very long post just about the different kinds of love.

This is not an easy book to read; there is death, hard questions asked, and some very uncomfortable topics. They are the reason that this is a powerful book.

I'll be rereading this book. It still is at the very top of my favorite fiction books of all time list.

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### **Carrie Schmidt (Reading is My SuperPower) says**

What a delight to reread this favorite book from my adolescence as we celebrate its 50th anniversary!

When I first read this book as a young teenager, I fell in love with the characters, the setting, and the call to be a teacher. This was Christian fiction before the distinction became part of our vocabulary. Reading it as an adult, I fell in love with it all over again. This time though, I bring a new set of life experiences and heartbreaks and joys to the table and in that way the story came alive in a whole new way for me.

Oh how I love these characters. Fairlight. Little Burl. Ruby Mae. Miss Alice. Dr. Neill MacNeill (I love saying his name too lol). Mountie O'Teale. And a host of others, including of course Christy herself. And the setting? Such a stark, unforgiving, lonely place to live but at the same time it's filled with such beauty, such melodies, and such a fascinating history. Here in Cutter Gap you grow to trust God more than you ever have before – because you need Him more than you've ever needed Him before.

Bottom Line: Christy is a story of courage, of faith, and of friendship. It's about cherishing our differences while embracing our commonalities. It's about trusting God for every step on a journey that literally can be uphill in the snow both ways. It's about loving God and loving your neighbor, no matter how they talk or dress or what they believe. There is heartbreak and grief on these pages, but there is also inconceivable joy and love. (Some of that heartbreak and grief takes the form of events that might be too much for children or even young teens.)

(I voluntarily reviewed a complimentary copy of this book)

first seen at Reading Is My SuperPower

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### **Victoria Lynn says**

3.5 stars.

I liked this story. having seen the tv show first, then read the book once I was old enough, I found it a very accurate, picture of the place and time. Be forewarned, it can come across as depressing, and in my humble opinion, the story line was better in the tv series.

There was a bit of graphic material and depressing things in this movie as well as one or two scenes that were a bit out of place and inappropriate. recommended for 16+ because of mature content.

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### **Natasha says**

This was the book that spawned adult reading for me. My mom read it aloud on a car trip to the Smokey Mountains. The characters are engaging and could walk off the page. Truly the first experience I had with characters that I would recognize if they walked into the room.

Fifteen years later, this book remains the only book I've ever read that still holds all its charm and wonder with each reread. I make a point to reread it at least every two years.

Cutter Gap and its people are very much alive in Catherine Marshall's writing. A beautiful story of romance, adventure, and coming of age in a time when being true to yourself was the least of your worries.

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### **Celeste says**

#### **Full review now posted!**

This book is billed as the first Christian fiction novel. Before this point, an author's faith might be woven through their work, but that didn't put it in a different genre. Thanks to Marshall's novel, an entirely new genre was born and has now split into multiple subgenres. The biggest awards for Christian fiction remains the Christy Awards in honor of this book. If there is any classic of the genre, it would obviously have to be this book, which meant it was something that I really needed to read.

I honestly expected fluff, because a lot of Christian historical fiction tends to veer in that direction. That was definitely not the case here. There was faith, yes, and it was an incredibly important element of the story. Faith was the binding force. But there was also a level of brutal honesty that was often uncomfortable to read. The lifestyle of the mountain people whose children Christy goes off to teach was appalling. They were in a way trapped in the past, unaware or untrusting of modernity and how life was changing as the country entered the 20th century. As a whole, they are maudlin and superstitious to the point of actually adversely affecting their own health.

Christy is only 19, but she is desperate to make a difference. Not just with the children she teaches, but with the Cutter Gap area as a whole. Her parents are understandably upset by her choice to leave her well-to-do home for the squalor of the backwards mountain community to which she feels called. But Christy wants more than anything for her life to matter, and so she goes anyway. Through her deep emotional involvement in the lives of the Cutter Gap people and the guidance of Miss Alice, the woman who helped start the missions in Cutter Gap and surrounding areas, Christy's faith becomes truly real to her for the first time in her life. Before this, church was what she and her family attended on Sunday. But as she is faced with questions from the people of the area, she has to start figuring out for herself what she actually believes and who God is to her. Her spiritual growth was the most real and genuine such growth I've ever come across in fiction.

Besides Christy, my favorite character was Miss Alice, the Quaker woman who helps run three missions scattered over the area. She takes Christy under her wing, and her own approach to faith was a beautiful thing. She didn't believe in putting any conditions on love, or in trying to change the people of the area as

soon as possible. Yes, she sees the need for change, but more than that she sees a need for a truer understanding of God and His unconditional love. So that's what she offers: love. Miss Alice views God as a Friend and Comforter and Good Father who cares deeply about His people. The mountain people tend to see God as vengeful and His favor as fickle, and that's what Miss Alice sets out to change. She was such a real character, with a real faith that defines her entire life. Her openness was incredibly refreshing.

What amazes me most about this book is the fact that it's based on reality! Marshall wrote this book as a moderately fictionalized account of her own mother's experiences teaching in a one-room school deep in the Smoky Mountains. That knowledge made everything I read more poignant and disturbing in turn. The bitter element of realism in this book, while compelling, is the reason this book was four stars for me instead of a full five. It made me incredibly sad, and was hard to read in places because of that sadness. However, I have a deep and profound respect for both the book and the author, and for how it helped develop an entire genre.

*For more of my reviews, as well as my own fiction and thoughts on life, check out my blog, Celestial Musings.*

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### **Bobby Underwood says**

This warm and heartfelt novel is Catherine Marshall's loving tribute to her mother Lenora Woods' journey to Cutter Gap, in the Smoky Mountains of Tennessee, to teach its children shortly after the turn of the century. The effect it had on her mother's life and faith is captured with warmth and beauty in this fine audio book. It is made all the more special because it is read by Kellie Martin, who starred in the two-hour television adaptation, and the series that followed.

It is rare when an audio book is this good. Though nothing is ever a substitute for reading the book, having both read this fine novel in the traditional manner, and listened to this audio reading, I can honestly say that if you loved the television series, you will love this. Just as she did in the series, Kellie Martin perfectly captures the great beauty of these mountains and the poverty of its people. Occasional and brief interludes of banjo music frame this heartwarming — and sometimes heartbreak — thinly disguised biography of a young and exuberant 19 year old girl who falls in love with the children of Cutter gap.

This seems more like a telling of a story than a reading, and that in itself separates it from many other audio books. Martin captures the joy and humor of Christy's time in Cutter Gap, as well as the conflict and resentment as the school and church butted heads over moonshine. She captures the romance that begins to blossom and her divided heart, as her inner emotions are torn between two very different men.

This may be warm family entertainment but it has substance as well. Those who are fans of the beloved bestseller and/or the fine television series it spawned will not be disappointed. The emotions of Christy and her resolve to stay in this place and teach are lovingly brought to life in Kellie Martin's voice as she reads the wonderful words of Catherine Marshall. Particularly moving is the relationship between Christy and Fairlight Spencer, a strong but delicate woman who offers her friendship. The sadness these mountains could bring upon such a fine and delicate soul is movingly rendered by Kellie Martin. As Fairlight's inner flame begins to grow dim from the blowing winds of hardship and shadows of poverty, we are deeply moved.

I highly recommend this one, even if, like me, you've read it already. It is a loving tribute to Catherine Marshall's mother and the life she chose to live. Filled with love and joy, this is one audio book read by Kellie Martin that you'll savor and enjoy over and over.

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### **Carly says**

For anyone who says that reading fiction is not as edifying and worthwhile as reading a non-fiction book, I say, "Have you read *Christy*?"

I mourn that Catherine Marshall wasn't around in my lifetime, but I feel so utterly blessed that she poured her heart and soul and love into this eternal story! There are more moments of true wisdom tucked away in this biographical novel than in any other book I've read outside of The Book... and it's all nestled effortlessly in a touching, gripping, fascinating, and beautiful story!

Each time I read it I'm reminded of the beauty and awesome power of God's love. I remember and drink in the eternal wisdom in all Miss Alice says and does. I am fascinated by the impetuous, passionate and immature character of Christy that every woman with a kindred spirit can identify with. I am given hope for a world in which God's love can be allowed to work.

What. A. Classic.

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### **Abigayle Claire says**

I. loved. this. book. What more is there to say? Of course I had my dislikes, but that's one of the signs of a well-rounded story in my opinion. The characters were so human, but they all strived to be more and do more. It was enchanting to read while being the same age as Christy (19). Cutter Gap has so many quirks and such personality it's hard not to like it among all the backward thinking and poverty. I enjoyed Christy's journey of faith as it was very blunt and realistic--she didn't shy away from the difficult, ugly, or the lovely. Plus, she was one of the only stubborn, idealist main characters that hasn't annoyed me to death. I loved how everyone was in a different place in their faith and approach to life, but they all had to come together so many times, often just to survive. It gave me lots to think about and I was smiling by the end. I'm so glad I finally read this classic!

I recommend this for ages 16+ due to some graphic details of illnesses, injuries, and crude living conditions, some suggestive and disturbing behavior, and some sensuality. (view spoiler) None of the content takes away from my rating because for me it wasn't too much detail, and it was all written in a forthright but gentle way, although they could have gotten away with less several times.

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### **katwiththehat says**

This is such a delightful book. My mom, sister and I used to love watching historicals together when we were younger, and I remember watching this when it was made into a miniseries. The book is even better, giving a great glimpse of the poverty and lack of opportunity in Appalachia back in the early 1900's when young Christy Huddleston goes into the Smoky Mountains to become a schoolteacher. Such memorable characters and just a great all-around read. 4.5/5 stars.

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### **Majenta says**

Beautiful, beautiful! I am so glad I read it, and I heartily recommend it to anyone and everyone who wants a deep and wondrous read. Featuring a man calling his wife and son "twitter-witted"....

Thanks for reading!

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### **AnnaMay says**

Beautiful, beautiful book.

I absolutely loved the descriptions of the Smoky Mt. area and the people. It was wonderful to know more of their heritage and what contributed to their stubbornness, their 'clan' loyalty and their work ethic.

Marshall is such a GOOD storyteller. The characters and conflicts were so real. The school children were a delight to read about. I can't even begin to understand how she handled 70+- kids in a one-room school. Amazing.

It's no surprise people fell in love with Christy. I certainly did. I love reading (this may sound twisted) of people's flaws and how they grow and sometimes overcome them, but more often just come to understand them and gain a different perspective. i.e. her sensitive nose: that never really went away, but she was able to not be as bothered by it because of her new perspective and feelings towards the people and the situation.

I love love love the ending.

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### **Michelle says**

Okay - so I have read this book about 10 times, most recently 2008. It is about a young women who heads to the mountains to become a school teacher and the challenges she faces. There are two hunky guys she flirts with, too. This book does have religious tones while Christy questions and figures out what she believes. I think this book rings so true to me because I read it at an age when I was asking the same type of questions. I still enjoy the beauty of the story after repeat readings. This may be my all time favorite book.

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### **LemonLinda says**

This was definitely a comfort read or rather a reread for me. It is a Christian-based historical fiction set in the Tennessee mountains around 1912. Christy Huddleston is a young teacher who leaves the comfort of her Asheville, NC home to minister to and teach the children of a cove set deep within Appalachia. I first read this as a teen soon after it was published, reread it in the 80s when a TV series which I loved aired based on the book and now reread once again with great fondness for the characters and for the many messages and themes within.

Family, friends, hardships, endurance, determination, tolerance, understanding of a culture so different from one's own, a strong faith commitment and yes, even a tender and slowly evolving romance are all included. It shows a young girl's determination to fight for her pupils to have basic necessities for learning. It also shows the many facets of deep mountain life of the time - from feuding and bootlegging to traditions and culture carried over many generations back from the Highlands of Scotland!

It is tender. It is sweet. But it is also a real glimpse into life of this time and place as it was loosely based on Catherine Marshall's mother's experience as a young teacher. I highly recommend.

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### **Shantelle says**

Is this the end? Why isn't there more! :'( This was my first time reading *Christy* by Catherine Marshall ... and I loved it! Why didn't I read it sooner?? My only complaint is that the book ended. ;)

More thoughts to come, potentially.

Now, onto *Julie*!

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### **Abby says**

I was skeptical of this book at first, however, I am so glad that I stuck with it. I reached a point where I didn't want to put it down (yes, I did stay up all hours reading it...). This book entails a young woman's sudden decision to travel to the poverty-striken Appalachain Mountains and become a school teacher. Her lifestyle dramatically changes from a normal, safe, and predictable life to one with primitive accomodations (no electricity, telephones, plumbing), surrounded with filth, disease, and the dangerous superstitions of these woodland people. Living among these rough, mountain folks, seeing them suffer in their stubborn ways, and witnessing the death of those she comes to love, she begins to question her faith and doubt the existence of a God who could allow this evil to happen. Her faith is tested to the limit, and she must figure out for herself what truth is--simply accepting the word of others without knowing it for herself is not enough to sustain her.

Marshall's writing is profound and applicable to people's lives today. Because all people come to place where they question reality. You will also appreciate the underlying love story--with a surprising twist that doesn't conclude until the very last page. If you find the first part a little hard to get through, keep going. It is so worth it!

This book will make you question reality. Is your faith really yours? Is what you believe really the one, enduring, TRUTH?

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