



## Mercy's Rain

*Cindy K. Sproles*

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When your life is built around a father's wrath, how can you trust in the love of Father God?

Mercy Roller knows her name is a lie: there has never been any mercy in her young life. Raised by a twisted and abusive father who called himself the Pastor, she was abandoned by the church community that should have stood together to protect her from his evil. Her mother, consumed by her own fear and hate, won't stand her ground to save Mercy either.

The Pastor has robbed Mercy of innocence and love, a husband and her child. Not a single person seems capable of standing up to the Pastor's unrestrained evil. So Mercy takes matters into her own hands.

Her heart was hardened to love long before she took on the role of judge, jury, and executioner of the Pastor. She just didn't realize the retribution she thought would save her, might turn her into the very thing she hated most.

Sent away by her angry and grieving mother, Mercy's path is unclear until she meets a young preacher headed to counsel a pregnant couple. Sure that her calling is to protect the family, Mercy is drawn into a different life on the other side of the mountain where she slowly discovers true righteousness has nothing evil about it--and that there might be room for her own stained and shattered soul to find shelter. . . and even love.

Mercy's Rain is a remarkable historical novel set in 19th century Appalachia that traces the thorny path from bitterness to forgiveness and reveals the victory and strength that comes from simple faith.

## **Mercy's Rain Details**

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## **From Reader Review Mercy's Rain for online ebook**

### **Tamara Tilley says**

MERCY'S RAIN has to be one of the most provocative Christian books I have ever read.

Mercy Roller's life truly is a living hell. Her father—who is also the town's pastor—rules his household with an iron fist and his own twisted, distorted form of righteous anger. Mercy's mother and the people of Wadalow Mountain seem unable to stand against the Pastor's tyrannical reign, and Mercy herself desires nothing more than to feel the love of a father. But what Mercy gets instead is the deplorable actions of a wicked man, a man who is anything but a messenger of God. When her mother kicks her out of her home, Mercy embarks on a journey that takes her to another mountain community where she is faced with people who love, accept, and care for not only Mercy's fragile heart, but her grieving soul.

MERCY'S RAIN is not a novel for the faint of heart. Though Ms. Sproles does not rely on rough language or graphic descriptions, her imagery sets scenes that are both evocative and haunting. You will find yourself wincing and sighing out loud, wondering how much more Mercy can endure before she is set free from the cruel and harsh behavior meted out by her father. Mercy hates her very name because it taunts her of the one thing both her earthly and heavenly father have never extended to her. I ached for Mercy when she finally found herself surrounded by good people, but her cynical mind and distrust of any man of God would not allow her to receive unconditional acceptance. Mercy's journey is heart wrenching because she feels unworthy of anything good and refuses to acknowledge that God is the epitome of good. It's a difficult process for Mercy to shed the hate that has blackened her heart, but Isabella, Terrance, and Preacher Samuel refuse to give up on Mercy until she finds the true meaning of her very name.

Book provided for review purposes.

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### **DiAnn says**

Cindy Sproles uses her heart to pen this extraordinary story of one woman's search for true mercy and finds God's love in the midst of tragedy.

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### **Susan Snodgrass says**

Mercy's Rain starts out with these words:

"Married and widowed at thirteen, a mother and childless at fifteen. Ain't nobody should have to learn life like I did. No soul should have to claw their way back from the bowels of hell, scared and scraped up like I was. I hate these memories."

I was drawn in with these words the moment I read them, but the reading became harder and harder as I went along. This book was most profound.

Mercy Roller has been abused in the most foul ways imaginable by her father, the Pastor. She is aided by no

one, least of all her own mother. Finally, after the Pastor is sent to his death, her mother turns her out. Mercy is left to wander, trying to find some peace in this world that has treated her so abominably.

Cindy Sproles has crafted a novel, set in late 19th century Appalachia that will tear at your heart and fill you with dread. Mankind can be cruel, but how can a father treat his own child with such horrendous acts? The author transports the reader back in time and you feel every pain, every blow of the wind in the trees, as you hope and pray that Mercy indeed finds mercy as she sets out on her journey.

Chilling, gripping and heartbreaking, this novel was one of the best I've read in a while. One line broke my heart, just broke it. "All my life I've wanted to hear my name called with love. Just once."

Mercy's Rain is a very poignant book, a book you do not want to miss. Watch for Mercy's explanation of how the river begins. This book is guaranteed to stay with you long after you've finished.

God's mercy and redemption shine throughout.

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### **Rebecca says**

"Ain't nobody should have to learn life like I did. No soul should have to claw their way back from the bowels of hell, scared and scraped up like I was."

Mercy Roller is in her own words, ". . . a busted bowl that leaks." Having survived unspeakable abuse from her father, "the Pastor", in the name of the Almighty God, she is finally released from his tyranny, but it costs her the only home that she has ever known and the sting of guilt upon her open palm. Fleeing with only the clothes on her back, she sets out across the mountain to find the source of the river, hoping that life's answers might be found where pure water rises out from among the rocks. Instead . . . . she is found; by an entirely different sort of preacher, a man who demonstrates remarkable kindness coupled with a loving determination to lead Mercy to the One who gave her, her name.

It's an unforgettable story featuring the cries of a tortured soul; "O Lord. My heart is broke. My life is shattered. My soul is lost. Mercy. Lord. Mercy".

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### **Beckie Burnham says**

Mercy's Rain is the debut novel of Cindy Sproles. This book conjured up lots of different emotions inside of me. Hard to read, it is nevertheless a moving, beautifully written book that explores the pain of abuse and the mercy in God's love. I would categorize this book as edgy – the scenes are graphic, the emotions raw. But really, how can you honestly and thoroughly tell a survivor's story without it. This is not a book for those who don't want to be uncomfortable or shocked. But for those who are willing to enter someone else's pain to gain a bit of understanding, then I recommend Mercy's Rain.

Mercy Roller is the daughter of the Pastor, a man who does unspeakable things and rules his congregation with fear. Set in the Appalachian mountains of eastern Tennessee in 1897, Mercy's Rain draws its strength from an outstanding sense of place and well-drawn and exceedingly complex characters. The themes of mercy, grace and forgiveness in the face of horror and depravity are powerful. The madness that surrounds

Mercy's life comes across as both unbelievable and all too real. It's knowing that there are real people out there who face similar lives that grips the reader.

Mercy's questioning of where God is in the midst of her torture is met with love and support by the family she finds in the Johnson's and Samuel, who is ironically a preacher. They help her to tell her story and quiet the noise that drowns out God's message. But it is the relationship between a pleading Mercy and God that in the end speaks to the heart of the reader.

Mercy's Rain is told in the first person voice of Mercy herself. The cadence and dialect of the mountains perfectly fit the story. The book is relatively short — only 260 pages — and was quick to read, yet I felt that a good portion of my life was lived along with Mercy. The story alternates between Mercy's present and flashbacks, which I really appreciated. The flashbacks would have been harder to bear without the assurance that Mercy had somehow survived.

Again, not for the faint of heart or for those who are a bit weak-stomached, I do recommend Mercy's Rain.

Recommended.

Audience: adults.

(Thanks to Kregel for a review copy. The opinions expressed are mine alone.)

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### **Jill says**

Mercy is a young woman who hates her name because it represents what she has lacked her whole life. And when faced with a choice between mercy and retribution, she chooses the latter and pays for it dearly.

I admit this was a difficult book to work through. As I read the last page and closed the cover, the word "raw" is what popped into my head. The book was a raw and painful look at Mercy's abusive childhood. The reader learns about Mercy's history through flashbacks. She was the victim of physical and sexual abuse that went on until the day she took matters into her own hands. The action she thought would free her merely led to another form of torment.

Leaving her childhood home, Mercy sets out on her own and meets a preacher on his way to help deliver a baby. Growing up, Mercy often accompanied her mother and helped deliver babies in their community and so offers to help the preacher. Mercy is rather mistrustful of all men in general and she wants to make sure that the new mother is safe.

**SPOILER:** Mercy doesn't count on finding a friend in this expectant mother. Even more surprising is seeing how much her new friend and her husband love and care for one another. Something Mercy can't quite understand. As Mercy stays on and helps the young family, she is soon faced with the opportunity to return love toward those who wronged her. But with all she experienced, how can she possibly extend the mercy she never received? Escaping a situation is not the same as finding freedom. Ultimately, Mercy had to find out that true freedom can only be found in Christ.

This is definitely a book for adults. The graphic nature of the abuse could leave some very disturbing images in a young person's mind. Not having been a victim of abuse, I can't speak to whether reading about someone

else's pain will help heal one's own, but if the book can help mobilize greater efforts to end domestic abuse, that would be wonderful.

Disclaimer: I received a free copy of Mercy's Rain in exchange for an honest review. No other compensation was received.

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### **Mazzou B says**

This is author Cindy Sproles debut novel, and I must say...I am amazed by it!

Not many Christian novels makes me search my own heart. Not often does Christian fiction leave me in tears. Mercy's Rain is a different kind of Christian fiction. It is a life-changing, healing book. With unusual insight and feeling, the author of this book brings not only the heroine but the reader through a journey of healing and forgiveness. By God's grace, this book will be a powerful tool to those who are grieving, broken and lost. From personal experience, I know it can also help break down a stony heart.

With a heart of thanks, I will mention that I have never been through a terribly abusive relationship. The girl in this story, Mercy Roller grew up in one of the most horrible situations imaginable. My heart grieved for her, and I struggled with her as throughout the book she attempts to reach a point of mercy and forgiveness. I loved how this story developed. From the depths of sin, to the plains of light, He lifted me. That is the hymn which comes to mind. This poor, physically and sexually abused girl who despises her name because it sounds like a joke in comparison with the world surrounding her slowly begins to learn what true mercy and grace and love is.

This story of salvation is masterfully wrought, as are the characters. I think Cindy Sproles did an outstanding job with the man who helps bring Mercy to grace. Ironically and important to the story, this young man is also a preacher which initially causes Mercy much consternation given that her father was a false professor and a wolf in sheep's clothing. However, over time she has to admit that this preacher is entirely different. He has love, compassion and patience. A true gentleman with the love of Christ in his heart, this young preacher helps Mercy break through the walls of bitterness surrounding her battered heart.

I especially recommend this book for women who have experienced abuse. Likewise, I would insert a warning to other readers, especially those who are soft-hearted...this book is graphic and cuts to the heart. It was good for me since I tend to be hard-hearted and selfish. But there are many abusive situations described in detail which caused even me to shed tears. This is truly a life-changing book.

Mercy Roller was raised by a twisted father who wore the collar of a Pastor and chose to be Jesus, judge, and jury by his own appointment. Abused, broken, and bitter Mercy lifts the hand that takes the Pastor's life. In one swift action she becomes what she despises most about the Pastor. Now she seeks redemption. Can the unconditional love of a mountain preacher and his friends, guide Mercy to find peace?

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### **Jettiep Parrish says**

I totally loved this book, Cindy K Sproles did a wonderful job of making this a very believable story, and one that you want to keep reading, even after you finish the last page.

Mercy feels her name is more a curse than a call for Mercy, she's raised by an abusive father, The Pastor, and a mother who is abused, and really does nothing to help her. While reading this, you feel her pain, fear, and

her anger, it is real to you, as it is to Mercy.

I was given a copy of this book by the publisher, Kregel Publications, to read and review. No other compensation was given. All opinions given here are my own, and I am not required to give a positive review.

I'm going to be looking for more books by Cindy Sproles, as I really enjoyed this book. It is different in many ways than most books I've read.

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## **Sandy C. Claypool says**

### **A wolf in sheep's clothing**

Talk about removing old scabs this book did that. I was a victim of abuse by my spouse who claimed to be a preacher. The character even had the same name. I am so glad I removed myself from this marriage. I am also God gave me the wisdom to see the difference between a wolf and a lamb. This was a dramatic tale and a good book.

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## **Narita says**

This book was more than a novel! The setting may be in the 1890's but the social issues that are involved in the story are still very relevant today: abuse, substance abuse, broken relationships, terminal illness and more. It doesn't just stop with the suffering and pain involved. The reader is drawn into feeling and experiencing the affects these things have on the lives of those facing such problems; their struggles and turmoil physically, mentally, emotionally, and physically. The author goes the full circle and also shows God working in such a wounded life. The reader also sees His love, guidance, healing, and comfort.

Mercy in her 20 years of living has faced more heartache and hardships that most people do in a lifetime. Her father is sick, cruel, and abusive to her, her mother, and others. Sadly, he is also the pastor of a church in a small Appalachian community. Everyone turns a head to his evil out of fear and his position, including Mercy's mother. Everything comes to a head when her father dies and her mother confused and grieving kicks the young woman out her home.

Mercy leaves determined to make it alone, no matter what it takes. Even as she travels, God is already preparing to bring her to people that will show her His true love and mercy. On her way, she meets a young preacher, a true man of God. He helps her and takes her to another mountain community where she meets a Christian couple that takes her in. Along with the preacher, they show her patience and conditional love. Her heart is very hardened and she is overwhelmed by bitterness and distrust toward everyone. They tenderly guide her never chiding her for her outbursts or false ideas. They look past her rough and angry exterior and see a much wounded heart. Here she experiences problems of a different kind, not only personally but in the lives of her new family she is growing to love. I found it beautiful how they faced every tragic event with a strong faith in God.

The author does a beautiful job of handling very delicate subjects tastefully and showing that God has power to heal hearts, no matter how devastating the damage is that has been inflicted. She leaves no doubt the influence Christians have on others by allowing Christ to live through them and touch the lives of those in need.

It is one of the most unusual books I have ever read. The reviews may make it sound depressing, but it is

incredibly uplifting and hopeful. I anxiously await the opportunity to read more books by Sproles. I received a complimentary copy of this book from Kregel Publications in exchange for my honest review. The opinions I expressed are my own. I am not required to write a positive review.

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### **Sandie says**

I really enjoyed this book. By the end of the first sentence I was hooked. This is a story about Mercy and her life living with a father who is a pastor of a community in the Tennessee mountains. He was an abusive and evil man, one who uses his cruelty in the name of God.

When she finally puts an end to the abuse and leaves her home, she is "found" by another preacher and a small family that show her kindness and love. She is so scarred from her father's abuse, it's a long journey for her to come to see that there is forgiveness and mercy from others and that she is capable of giving the same.

I loved Cindy Sprole's writing style. It doesn't happen very often for me, but I cared about the main character, Mercy, right away. My heart ached for her and felt her sorrow, anger and joy. I couldn't put this book down, and when I had to, I couldn't wait to start reading again and find out what would happen next.

I won this book on Goodread and highly recommend this to others. You won't be disappointed.

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### **Judy Collins says**

*A special thank you to Library Thing for a complimentary reading copy in exchange for an honest review.*

**MERCY'S RAIN**, by Christian writer, *Cindy K. Sproles*, a chilling, and heartbreakin portrayal of the historic nineteenth century Appalachia mountains of Tennessee—a poignant story of the evils of man, and the mercy of God. A novel of betrayal, faith, forgiveness and redemption.

**Set in 1897** in Wadalow Mountain, Tennessee, Merc Roller, a young woman has lived with abuse most of her life, at the hands of her father, the Pastor. It appears no one will stand up to this man, as he uses his authority and control to ruin lives. He is twisted and took on the role of Judge, Jury, and Jesus.

How will she escape this life? What about God's love? She has only known what she has experienced in her own environment? Abused, broken, and bitter, she takes the Pastor's life. *Now she becomes what she hated about him.*

Sent away by her angry grieving mother, and she meets a young preacher and a different life. Now there was no washing away her sin and guilt. She had made a decision and one she would regret, and one she would have to live with. Until she finds herself on the other side of the mountain, and learns about God's real love through others.

**With memorable characters**, Sproles creates an emotional and captivating story of suffering and damage, and uses God's compassion, love, grace, and mercy to transform a broken life. *A great lesson for us all.*

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### **Susie Finkbeiner says**

This was a tough read. I can take a lot of difficult situations in fiction, but this one had more than I could take at times. That's saying a lot. Not for any readers who struggle with triggers. It's a story of redemption with a satisfying ending.

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### **Veronica says**

I found this to be a hard book to get through due to the tough subject matter. Mercy Roller's father is a pastor who doesn't know God at all. He's abusive in every possible way both to Mercy and her mother and to the community as well. Because of him and her mother Mercy struggles with believing in a good God and doesn't know what love really looks like. When Mercy does something her grieving mother feels is unforgivable, she's kicked out and she decides to follow the river. She ends up running into another preacher and goes with him to help a woman about to give birth and protect her if there's a need. There she meets a loving couple who, along with the preacher, show her what love really looks like and who God really is.

I found it difficult to get through the story because Mercy keeps reliving the horrible memories of her past and what her father did to her and to others. It's not exactly graphic, but gives enough detail so you know what happened and I found myself getting incredibly angry with him and also with her mother for not stopping it. Besides the abuse making me so angry, it really gets on my nerves when God's Word, the Bible, is twisted into something evil, like the way her father used Scripture to justify his evil actions. There didn't seem to be enough goodness to balance out the evil in the story. It's not all bad, though, as she meets a few people who treat her well and love her. There is some hope and it gets better nearer the end. There are also a couple swear words, which weren't needed. I liked the ultimate message of the importance of forgiveness and letting go of bitterness with God's help. I thought it was well-written and definitely gave the ambiance of the Appalachian mountain area. You might like it if you like stories about overcoming abuse and the importance of mercy and forgiveness.

I received this book free from Kregel Publications in exchange for an honest review.

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### **Sheila says**

Mercy's Rain by Cindy K. Sproles is one of the best books I have read in a while. I started it at night which was a mistake, because I literally did not sleep at all! I could not put the book down! It grabbed at my heart strings from the get go and even after I was finished I couldn't stop thinking about it. There is only a handful of books that have moved me to tears and this one made the list.

The author penned this novel in such a way that I could feel the heartbreak and pain that the main character experienced. Some books make you feel as if you are watching a story unfold from the sidelines, but not this book. I felt so connected to the story and the characters that it was as if I was actually experiencing it first hand. Also, if you have read many of my reviews you would know that I am not a big fan of books written from the first person narrative. Mercy's Rain was written from that point of view, but it did not effect my love for this story.

The only thing I feel needs warning in this book is the abuse. Mercy, the main character has suffered terrible abuse in her lifetime and has seen some horrific things. Reading about them is hard. It is detailed and may be difficult for some people to read. I also feel like this is definitely a book for adults. I would not want my teenage daughter reading it. It in no way crosses any lines, but it is a delicate subject and as I already said, very detailed. Those details are what draws the reader in though and I would not of enjoyed it as much if it were any different. The author did a perfect job of penning this great novel and I think most people would enjoy it.

\*\*\*I received a complimentary copy of this book from Kregel Publications in exchange for my honest review.

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