

## Ain't She Sweet? *by* Susan Elizabeth Phillips



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**Author:** Susan Elizabeth Phillips

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## Reviews of the *Ain't She Sweet?* *by* Susan Elizabeth Phillips

### Reddefender

This was a fantastic book, in fact this is the third time I read It, and I love it more each time. By the time I finished I felt as if the Residents of Parrish, Mississippi were my neighbors, and friends, and family, and at one point, my enemies as well. I laughed with the characters and at then, and I cried and sniffled and chuckled along with them as well. And i cheered for our heroines (plural) and bet is (plural as well) too. I recommend this book to anyone and everyone. It's a great time.

### Fordrellador

AIN'T SHE SWEET is a dangerous book. I started reading it at 11pm intending on only reading a chapter or two...next thing I knew it was 4:30am and I wanted to read it again. The story was complex and deeply satisfying with characters that were original and fascinating.

It is the story of dealing with pain and loss, complex motivations, revenge and forgiveness and how we all change. It is also the story of how the past changes depending on your perspective. Amazingly, it is also an incredibly funny book with witty dialog and one of the most amusing dogs.

Colin Byrne's world was destroyed when he was in his early twenties. He had come to the US to write a novel and so he got the job as a teacher at a high school in the small town of Parrish, Mississippi. While he wasn't the best teacher, he felt acceptance in the town for the first time in his life. Unfortunately, his life was destroyed by the queen bee of the high school who lied and accused him of sexually accosting her.

Ten years later, Colin returned to Parrish and now he has found a place in the community. He is a writer and is writing a series of non-fiction books about the history of the town. Everything is going well until the queen bee returns.

Sugar Beth Carey seemed to have the perfect life growing up in Parrish. She was the richest, most popular girl in town. She had the best looking guy. All that has changed in fifteen years. She has returned to town having been married three times. She is broke and is desperate to find a painting that is her only inheritance. The people in town who loved her now despise her but she is too proud and guilty to let them defeat her. Worst of all, her childhood home has been sold to Colin Byrne.

Colin begins the book wanting revenge. He hopes to humiliate Sugar Beth. As he gets to know her, however, he begins to begrudgingly respect her. There is no easy resolution to the pain that Sugar Beth caused others especially Colin. Colin's character is the real center of this story. While Sugar Beth has changed through the years, it is Colin who has to accept and acknowledge her change. Sugar Beth cannot get on with her life without the forgiveness that Colin gives. The scene where Colin works his revenge upon Sugar Beth is the true turning point in the book. The subtle transformation of his thoughts in that scene make it a powerful moment in the book.

The complexity of this book is centered upon the characters. In order to see that Sugar Beth is not a bad person, we also need to see that all the other characters react, act badly, have their own prejudices and bad experiences that make them react in fearful and hurtful ways. Just as Colin has to forgive and understand what the driving forces are that form Sugar Beth, the reader goes on that same journey.

Honestly, I've had this book on my to read list for several months and while it was highly recommended the synopsis of the story repelled me. Sugar Beth sounded just like the type of character that I hated in high school and I really couldn't imagine that I would be sympathetic to a character like her. I was so wrong. In many ways, my journey as a reader mirrored those of the characters in the book. I was introduced to a strong woman who had been hurt so much that she only knew how to protect herself from more pain. She hurt other people, but they had hurt her as well.

The secondary characters are essential to this story. The nice thing about the book is that ultimately all of the living characters are likeable. Many of them hurt each other and so they journey mirrors that of Sugar Beth and Colin. The book for me is about perspective. The more we understand others, the more their actions make sense. There is no justification of behavior. Sugar Beth knows that she had done horrible things. Colin knows that his revenge upon Sugar Beth is wrong. The secondary characters also have that journey to take. It is a redeeming book to see that all the characters can recover from mistakes and make a better life for themselves.

My ultimate determination is that this book is one that instantly is on my all time favorites.

Sometimes I read a book that I keep thinking about and that I want to reread instantly. This is one of those books. When I awoke from my much delayed sleep, there were scenes and sections that just drew me again: Colin's dinner party revenge, the repartee between Sugar Beth and Colin, Colin's unfortunate marriage proposal, Colin's ultimate plan to win Sugar Beth, and the wedding and honeymoon (which is at the same time both the saddest and the funniest ones I have ever read).

### **Dark\_Sun**

This is one of Susan Elizabeth Phillip's best books (it's a stand-alone), and it's a book that can be read over and over again without ever getting old. Although it can be considered a romance it definitely falls into the category of Women's fiction: writing that focuses on the issues of being a woman and the life experiences of women (and the men who love, and try to understand their needs). The life experiences in this book focuses on the main character of Sugar Beth Carey. Sugar Beth grew up the only child of wealthy parents, with an overly indulgent mother, and a father who had no time for her. I don't want to give too much away about the storyline, but Sugar Beth finds herself back in her hometown of Parrish, Mississippi dealing with her past, and her past mistakes (of which there are many). It's a story of a woman finding her truth, understanding her power, fighting for her life, and fearful of love. This is a brilliant book, and I can't recommend it highly enough.

### **Sataxe**

I loved how this book included every person in this town. I read this in 2 days. This book goes back and forth from Sugar Beth's childhood to later life. There is the heartbreak of being a teenager. The love of friendships. A little mystery with laugh out loud scenes. Also a few tears. But good ones too. Totally awesome

### **Natety**

This is one of my favorite books!! I have read it three times, and find myself thinking about the main characters all of the time. If you love all things Southern, handsome and complex men, witty repartee, then this book is for you. It is wayyy more than your average romance novel, and I will probably read it for the 4th time one day (embarrassingly) soon!

### **Still In Mind**

After a year of waiting, I opened my Amazon box and dove into SEP's latest. Reading the reviews, blurbs, book jacket, I was ready to indulge in a good few hours of heart-tugging, laughter filled hours with yet another new bunch of characters I felt like I knew.

Boy was I surprised. There's nothing funny about Ain't She Sweet. It's a fantastic book, and the characterization is as good as ever, but this book is heart-wrenching. More Dream a Little Dream than Breathing Room. I don't mind reading a book with a powerful punch, but I want fair warning when it's going to happen. Every bit of publicity on this book promised comedy. By the end, the humor is there, but it's almost bitter-sweet. Reading this book reminded me of when I went to see Step Mom expecting to laugh my way through the movie and left needing a box of Kleenex. With SEP's latest, I was blindsided by a poor publicity job on all parts: SEP's, the publisher and the advance reviews.

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