

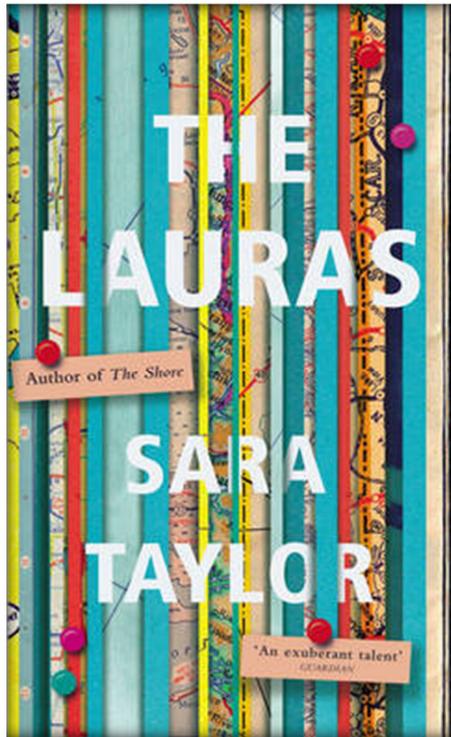


Helping you choose  
your next book



## LoveReading Reader reviews of **The Lauras** by Sara Taylor

Below are the complete reviews, written by LoveReading members.



**Sabine Little**

*A beautiful and sensitively written book that might make us look at the members of our family in a different way.*

*This is a special book. Sara Taylor's writing sensitively conveys what happens once a child realises, as Taylor puts it, that parents are people, and were people long before the children came along. For some children, that realisation never quite happens, as the child grows up and moves out without the family bubble ever being disturbed. For Alex, in the book 'The Lauras', it becomes a journey of discovery – of the self and of the parent.*

*Timed to coincide with the awkward years of puberty, Sara Taylor's writing is always sensitive, but never sentimental. What comes through is that people fight in different ways, cope in different ways, and questioning people's life choices is really tricky to do, unless you found yourself in precisely the same circumstances.*

*I wanted this book to be longer – the months in one place more fleshed out, characters more in-depth. But this is a book written from the perspective of hindsight, a retrospective narrative, suffering – or benefitting – from that selective memory that occurs when we narrate stories decades after they happen. The book navigates both space – crossing a considerable number of US States – and time, passing back and forth between the decades, and it does so very successfully, so that, no matter where you are on the page, you feel “in the moment”.*

You can follow Sabine on Twitter: @sabinelittle

## **Angie Rhodes**

*'The Lauras' is a "road" novel with a difference, the "heroes" are Ma and Alex, After what feels like a lifetime of arguments and fights, Ma has had enough, and after bundling thirteen year old Alex, into the car, with bags that have been packed for a long time, they hit the road.*

*Alex thought Ma was just Ma but how wrong can a child be? Do we all really know our parents? The answer is NO! Our parents are so much more. Yes they are our mums and dads but they have other sides, sides that get lost on Life's Highway, and sometimes they have to re find these other sides. This is what Alex's Ma had to do and as she drives, she tells Alex her stories, stories about her childhood and her friends The Lauras, and of course, just like everyone she has unfinished business, and needs closure.*

***This amusing, tender novel will have you looking at your parents and yourselves in a whole new light!!***

## **Vanessa Wild**

***Well written road trip coming of age story with a twist!***

*A road trip tale about a mother and her teenage child, gender unknown, who set off on a journey across America after an argument with the father. I would describe it as a coming of age story with a twist!*

*This is a well written tale, but sadly it didn't really engage me. I found it quite tedious to read - I wasn't in a rush to pick it up again after putting it down and I often forgot what I'd already read! It also contains some themes which I'm not always comfortable reading about.*

*To me the journey just seemed never ending and, at times, a little unrealistic. However, the tale does improve towards the finish when the action racks up a notch. The ending is quite ambiguous and left very much to the imagination.*

*I notice that 'The Lauras' has been given some positive reviews by other readers. On this basis I've decided I must not be a fan of road trip style stories and this one is just not my cup of tea!*

You can follow Vanessa on Twitter: @Butterflybiblio

## **Dawn Vanstone**

***Alex and Ma leave home in the middle of the night on a journey that***

**takes nearly three years to reach its destination. An excellent story.**

*In "The Lauras" we join Alex and Ma on a spur of the moment but long ago planned journey across America to Canada. They leave in the middle of the night after Ma has a row with Alex's Dad, when Alex is just 13. The story is told by Alex and covers nearly three years of their lives.*

*It was a great story and I empathised with the main characters. Alex has a few issues and we never find out if he is a he or she is a she. Mostly Alex is comfortable in his/ her skin but others are less so. It plays a big part in the story.*

*During the journey, Alex discovers lots of things about Ma's (his/ her Mother) previous life including the identity of the people called Laura and their significance. Ma had an interesting and sometimes difficult life and I think Alex is sometimes shocked but mostly admires her and they have a very good, open and honest relationship overall.*

*As the story progresses Alex not only travels on a journey across America but also travels on a journey through life and he/ she grows and matures into a young adult. Ma manages to tie up a few loose ends along the way.*

*It's well worth a read. There are a few "Americanisms" which went a bit over my head but did not detract from the main story.*

You can follow Dawn on Twitter: @DawnVanstone

### **Suzanne James**

***A mother/child road trip across America that draws you in to their complex relationship and the story of the Lauras that slowly unfolds as they travel.***

*'The Lauras' is a story of a road trip, one that, for me, plays out on three levels: the physical trip across America, the trip back in time as Ma's history is slowly revealed and Alex's trip through adolescence as she makes discoveries about her mother and her own sexuality.*

*The level of detail in Sara Taylor's portrait of small town America - of beaches, rural towns and roadside motels - gives the reader a picture of America that is refreshingly different. The author conjures up some beautiful images and the idea of ocean as a lover really sticks in my mind. But is not just the landscape that Sara Taylor writes about so well. Both Ma and Alex are complex characters that you can't help but become involved with. Their relationship is*

*written in such a moving and detailed way and yet you feel there is still more to know about them.*

*With the ending came a sense of loss - I had really enjoyed the journey with Alex and Ma and it felt like losing two friends.*

You can follow Suzanne of Twitter: @suzanned

### **Dana Captainino**

***'The Lauras' is a road trip and a novel that covers thousands of miles across America and a lifetime intimacy of the relationship between mother and child.***

*Alex was used to her parent's quarrels but when her mum pulled her out of bed in the middle of the night, got in the car and started driving she had idea of what lay ahead. They were embarking on a journey following in her mother's footsteps visiting people and places along the way where something significant had happened. Most of these are inextricably linked with a Laura.*

*Once in a while they would settle in a town for a few months living a quiet, discreet existence with the constant anxiety of being discovered or moved on. The characters we meet on the trip are richly and cleverly portrayed so you feel you are meeting them yourself.*

*As Alex shifts through the teens an urgent need to travel and to discover takes hold. As time goes by Alex explores her own identity and her own needs in a quest to find herself. The relationship with Ma is undefined - free yet caring; independent yet together as they both make their personal voyages. Alex first sees Ma as person rather than simply mother and sometimes exchanges role along the way.*

*Their journey is a long and rich one and as Ma finally finds her way Alex's real journey is about to begin.*

### **Phylippa Smithson**

***Well executed story taking familiar themes of coming-of-age, parental relationships and coming with a journey both physical and of emotional past remembrance.***

*Written in the first person, Alex, now middle age, is reliving a journey she took with her Mum as a 13 year old who is beginning to start questioning life and the actions of others as she matures from child to young person.*

*Her Mum (Ma) is 1st generation Italian who emigrated to the US with her parents and brother and finds herself moving from family home to foster care with an incredible frequency. The restless that her young life left her with is evident when Ma escapes an unhappy marriage and takes an unknowing Alex on a journey across the US to revisit her past and to escape those demons she has been haunted with all these years.*

*Whilst it's the voice of Alex who takes the reader through the journey, the story is largely one of her Mum. A somewhat adolescent sole herself but with a fight that highlights her realisation that only by going back in time can she hope to be the Mother she, and Alex, would like her to be.*

*Absorbing and well written.*

### **Emma Smith**

*Alex's mum walks out on her husband one day after a huge argument. She bundles Alex and a few essentials into the car and drives to a place where nobody knows them. This is how their journey across America starts.*

*From state to state, Alex and Ma visit places from Ma's past, revealing pivotal experiences and people from her life as they go. Alex hears of foster homes, friends and enemies that helped shape Ma, whilst also experiencing Alex's own adolescence on the road. This allows it to be a coming of age novel for them both, without over complicating the story. There are some very raw stories told, but there seems to be a hope that something better is coming, that there is some purpose to it all.*

*Each state they visit has a different atmosphere; from the quiet woods and mountains, to the sunny beaches and bustling towns. A new story is revealed in each one as they travel closer to the truth, and closer to the reason they left in the first place.*

***I loved the meaning behind the title; the sense of hope and belonging each of the Lauras promised, the potential of a different life ahead, and the opportunities that were taken or missed.*** I also found Alex's storytelling as an adult framed the book perfectly. Again, it could have complicated the story, but it was a refreshing take on the problem of teenagers seeming wise beyond their years.

<https://mrsredsreviews.com>

## **Suz Beney**

*An interesting story which takes you on a journey across America with the 2 main characters.*

*Whilst Sara raises some interesting issues along the way, and takes you thousands of miles. I never felt like there was enough detail in each stage of the trip.*

*I love the ambiguity around the characters but it was equally frustrating. At times they feel realistic and I felt invested in them and their issues, at others they felt undeveloped and vague. This could be part of the charm, and what the author intended, but, for me, it meant that I never really got as involved and attached as I personally would want.*

***Parts of this book were brilliantly written and others felt underdeveloped and left me wanting more. Particularly at the end...***

*I'd recommend this book, but I think it could have been so much more!*

## **Ruth Carson-Byrne**

***A novel dealing with identity, the relationship between a mother and her child and a very long road trip. Definitely worth a read if you're after something a bit different.***

*'The Lauras' is a novel about the relationship between a woman, Ma, and her child, Alex. One night Ma decides to up sticks, leave her husband and go on a trip from Virginia to California. Along the way Ma tells Alex stories of various Lauras she has known throughout her life and how they impacted her life. At the same time it is a sort of coming of age tale of Alex who, I hadn't realised until half way through the book, is of undefined gender and confused about sexuality identity. This leads to uncomfortable reading in some parts of the book regarding the abusive behaviour Alex is on the receiving end of. The book seems disjointed at times but Sara Taylor has a wonderful turn of phrase and writes very eloquently. Definitely worth a read if you're after something a bit different.*

## **Rachel Bridgeman**

***Beautiful, literary and elegiac, please read this very important novel. It has so much to say about the role of women in modern, American history.***

*A beautiful, literary journey that chronicles an actual journey undertaken by*

*Alex and her Ma. During the course of the trip they discover and unpack their own histories and their sense of self as women in this.*

*It's a beautifully written novel, I absolutely devoured it, the way that the characters slip under your skin is unexpected and thrilling.*

*Sara Taylor is a writer to look out for.*

### **Paula Dennan**

*Ma is restless and after one fight to many with her husband she bundles Alex into the car in the middle of the night and takes off.*

*Narrated by Alex we watch Ma's story unfold through Alex's eyes. We're one step removed, yet we're in the thick of it because it is Alex's story too. As they make their way across the country Alex learns about Ma's life. A life full of people, places and experiences that have stayed with Ma. We learn about the Lauras and the non-Lauras and are reminded that sometimes the people who are in your life for only a short time have the biggest impact. Ma is ready to confront her past in an effort to heal those wounds and reconnect with her former self.*

*All the while Alex is facing uncertainty. Where will their next school be and how long will they be staying? I've used 'they' as a singular pronoun because Alex does not identify as either male or female. We see some the difficulties Alex faces, particularly at school, but more importantly we see the freedom Alex has to explore their gender identity and learn to feel comfortable in their own skin.*

***'The Lauras' is a sensitive, moving, compelling and nuanced look at gender, sexuality and how the past affects our present.***

<http://cornflakegirlsmusings.com/>

### **Edel Waugh**

*Meet thirteen year old Alex. He and his mother suddenly leave their home one day and his dad, with very little but his mother's car and a handful of belongings.*

*Here starts a road trip to the unknown that is full of surprises and eye opening realisations about his mother. Alex's mother is awesome, a free spirit, strong and independent with an admirable reliable nature and sense of adventure, she became a parent but never forgot the woman inside of her . Through the many miles and rest stops, brief stays and conversations with Alex we get to know the*

*woman behind the mother.*

***This was a cool story about survival, relationships and unconventional life choices that altogether made one awesome story!***