

LoveReading Reader reviews of The Tea Planter's Wife by Dinah Jefferies

Below are the complete reviews, written by LoveReading members.

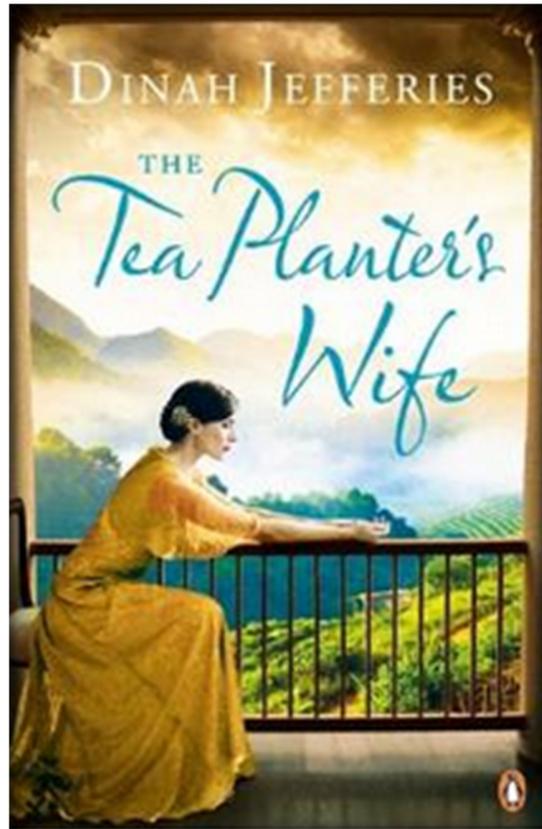
Sarah Harper

The sights, smells and sounds of 1920's Ceylon are brought alive in this evocative and absorbing read. Highly recommended.

Finding herself isolated and alone on a tea plantation in the remote hills of Ceylon, life on the other side of the world for newly-wed Gwendolyn is not at all as she expected. The caring husband whom she knows so little about, yet loves so much, seems to be slipping away from her day by day, only to be replaced by a distant and brooding stranger. Bemused by her husband's strange behaviour, Gwen is left feeling uncertain of herself and second guessing whether or not she is to blame. Inexperienced and ill-equipped to deal with her new

responsibilities as the mistress of the house, she is forced to grow rapidly from a naïve nineteen-year-old into a strong and fair young woman. But this isn't easy, especially when she doesn't understand the language or the customs of the servants and finds it so difficult to fit in. The arrival of Laurence's sister, who could have been so supportive of Gwen, only makes her position more difficult. And then there are the unanswered questions which started coming to light almost as soon as Gwen arrived in Ceylon. Why do people react so strangely to her and who is laid to rest in the small, overgrown grave which she discovered in the house grounds? When Gwen gives birth, her whole world starts to fall apart and she is faced with a life-changing decision which no new mother should ever have to make.

I was transported to 1920's Ceylon, with it's unique sights, smells and sounds,



from the very first page. I thoroughly enjoyed the writing style and found myself rapidly and totally immersed in Gwen's world, with mysteries drawing me in leaving me wanting to know more. An evocative and absorbing read which I can highly recommend.

Janette Skinner

A well written book which is paced just right and keeps you reading till the very last word. There are gems of description of a Ceylon tea plantation and the seasons, the wild life and the rain.

This book is a story of a young woman, married to a tea planter in Ceylon, who is struggling to live her life as a wife and mother in a strange land and is trying to fit in with her new husband's family and friends. The Husband, Lawrence has a past full of mystery and there are major misunderstandings between the newly-weds. Gwen, the new wife is faced with extremely difficult decisions, in which she is aided by her loyal woman servant.

This is a well written book which is paced just right and keeps you reading till the very last word. There are gems of description of the plantation in Ceylon and the weather. The changing seasons are also mood changing, and this gives the writing an ethereal feel to it. The writer is able to portray a sense of isolation in Gwen, who is repeatedly being told she does not understand the business, the people, the politics, and the workers, but actually she has a strong sense of empathy with the poverty and conditions of the pickers.

A couple of criticisms would be that the prose is not concise enough and not much is left to the reader's imagination. The book could be shorter by about forty or so pages and still be a very full story. Having said this it is an enjoyable and very original book

<https://www.facebook.com/bestbookreview>

Victoria Goldman

In 'The Tea Planter's Wife', I was well and truly transported back to 1920s Ceylon. The sights, sounds and aromas all come alive in this well-written emotional and tragic story.

Newly-wed Gwen travels to Ceylon to join her husband Laurence on his tea plantation. She is ill-prepared for her new life, with little knowledge of this exotic country's people and culture. While her husband works hard to build up

and expand his business, Gwen is left much to her own devices. She takes over the running of the household but struggles to cope with her husband's sister Verity, a difficult and spiteful young woman with no plans to make a life of her own. No one talks about the past. When Gwen falls pregnant, tragedy strikes, leading to secrets and decisions that haunt and torment Gwen over the years.

When I started reading 'The Tea Planter's Wife', I was expecting a straightforward saga with a few family secrets. But this book is so much more than this. It's a story of jealousy, greed, love, exploration and tragedy. I wasn't prepared for the revelations at the end; under different circumstances, the story could have been so different. This was a lovely read and the story stayed in my mind for some time afterwards.

<http://off-the-shelfbooks.blogspot.co.uk>

Lisa Wise

I was captivated with this book from the first few pages. It follows the life of Gwendolene Hooper who at the age of 19 marries Laurence the owner of a large tea plantation, she arrives in Ceylon as the story begins. 1920's Ceylon is beautifully described throughout. ***The story twists & turns & pulls you in, so much so I could not put the book down!*** There are lots of hidden secrets surrounding Laurence & his family that slowly unfold.

Gwen becomes pregnant & from there on in the story becomes gripping. Gwen has a secret to hide from her husband & the rest of his family. The only person she confides in is Naveena the family's house maid. You feel as though you are taking the journey with Gwen, her emotions & feelings are so well depicted. A sense of love & compassion exude from Laurence throughout, he is a very likeable believable character, as is Gwen.

I would highly recommend this book

You can follow Lisa on Twitter: @lisaclairewise

Caroline Mathews

A beautiful, sweeping novel set in colonial 1930s Ceylon with characters you'll really grow to love. Very atmospheric.

Set in 1920s colonial Ceylon, the descriptions of time and place by the author were first class. She obviously researches well and this comes through as the reader is swept away to the tropics with the vivid descriptions and atmospheric

writing.

The characters were well-written - particularly Gwen, who I absolutely loved and was really rooting for by the end, and Laurence.

The storyline was OK - sometimes it verged on the slightly unbelievable, sometimes it dragged a little. I don't want to give any spoilers, but let's just say my eyebrows were raised on more than one occasion by some of the actions/conversations that took place.

Overall a solid read and an author that I shall revisit if I get the chance.

<http://mrsmsmeanderings.wordpress.com>

Suzanne Millar

The year is 1913...

Newly married Gwen Hooper arrives in Ceylon to join her husband at the tea plantation. Soon his scheming sister arrives.

Just when Gwen is getting use to her new life disaster strikes, resulting in guilt betrayal and unknown secrets.

I enjoyed this sensitive yet provoking narrative which was beautifully told.

Dinah Jefferies tells a good story, so good I felt I was in Ceylon.

Brilliant story, a must read. Look forward to more from Dinah Jefferies...

Janet Gilliard

*I really enjoyed this book and read it over a weekend. It us the story of Gwen an innocent 19 year old who marries Laurence a tea planter in Ceylon in the late 1920s. You almost believe you are in Ceylon living the story. The relationship between the Tamils and the Sinhalese is something I knew nothing about and the struggle between them is interesting. The story is a little clinched in places- a wicked sister-in-law and a beautiful predatory American woman, but **the story is well written with a secret at the heart of it. I couldn't wait to find out what happened. I highly recommend this book.***

Alli Batten

*Have just finished 'The Tea Planter's Wife' and found it **a sad but interesting***

read.

Set in 1920's Ceylon, a time of great change and unrest, this book certainly had me hooked from the start.

Gwendolyn travels out from England to join her husband on his tea plantation, she soon falls pregnant and gives birth to twins.

In the delivery room Gwen is faced with a heart breaking choice.

Jacki Moorcroft

A beautifully written book set in 1920's Ceylon. The story of a young wife, her husbands sudden moodiness, his overbearing sister and a secret which threatens to destroy everything.

Gwendolyn Hooper leaves England behind to join her new husband at his Tea Plantation in Ceylon full of hope and excitement about a perfect future ahead of her. However things are not as Gwen expects and the appearance of an overbearing sister who seems determined to undermine her at every opportunity, a rich American woman who seems intent on stealing her husband away, disgruntled workers, a small grave hidden away, her husbands sudden moodiness and reluctance to share her bed, all have Gwen wondering if she made the right decision to come. However, what happens after the Golf Club's Annual Ball tears Gwen's life apart and she is forced into a decision no woman should make, can she continue and act as if nothing has happened?

Dinah Jefferies weaves a magnificent, atmospheric tale of life in 1920's Ceylon, richly detailed and so vivid you can actual smell the spiced air when reading. A thoroughly enjoyable story to be read outdoors on a sunny day whilst sipping iced Tea.

You can follow Jacki on Twitter: @jackimoorcoft

Sandra

A sweeping story of love, loss and secrets set in Colonial Ceylon.

19 year old Gwendoline Hooper is newly married and joining her husband Laurence on his tea plantation in Ceylon. She meets Savi Ravasinghe on board the ship, an attractive portrait painter.

Gwen finds the racial tensions between the owners and workers hard to take and tries to help the tea pickers as much as she can. She comes across a trunk

full of clothes and a grave in the garden...Laurence refuses to open up to her.

She discovers early on she is pregnant and when it is time for her baby to be delivered she discovers a secret she must hide from Laurence....

A really great read.

You can follow Sandra on Twitter: @Beauty_Balm

Barbara Goldie

Treat yourself to a trip to Ceylon, smell the spices and feel the heat as secrets unfold.

The cover of this book is so evocative it made me want to open the book and get straight into the story. The cover says that there is Guilt, betrayal and untold secrets in 1920's Ceylon and this is certainly true, the book delivers these at every turn. Characters are well drawn and so individual; they grow on the reader very quickly one way or another, not always as friends. A vivid and very picturesque scene of Ceylon is set and I could almost feel the heat and smell the spices, and relaxed in the slow meandering tale that drew me in very quickly and then the tension and the unease set in, starting slowly then moving along at quite a pace. Relationships started to change and so did the characters. They started to frustrate me, they become devious, they were not what they seemed. It was great storytelling, with a simple plot that had twists and turns that made it more complex as it unfolded. The prose was very descriptive and the dialogue believable, a great sense of time and place was crafted. Gwendolyn tried to be a good wife and lived under great pressure to keep her secret living with a husband who almost became a stranger, tied to his family and his plantation.

Linda Hill

A perfect book for the beach or curled up by the fire, I thoroughly enjoyed 'The Tea Planter's Wife'.

Set in Ceylon in the first part of the twentieth century, the book is incredibly well researched with all aspects of history, geography and politics absolutely convincing but subtly woven into the narrative so they serve to underpin an interesting and exciting story.

The plot flies along and is totally engaging. I really wanted to know what would happen next.

I found the characters believable and human, and had a particular empathy for

Gwen. They flirt, argue, love with a passion, sulk and hurt so that they feel real to the reader.

One aspect that made the novel so enjoyable a read was the attention to detail; the senses are fully explored through the scents of cinnamon, the steamy heat of the monsoon season, the whisper of silk, the colours of clothes and the sound of drums. Dinah Jefferies paints a vivid and convincing picture of colonial Ceylon.

I'd thoroughly recommend reading 'The Tea Planter's Wife'.

You can follow Linda on Twitter at @Lindahill50Hill , and visit her blog at <https://lindasbookbag.wordpress.com/>

Jane Macleod

From the very opening pages you are transported to early 1900's Ceylon, becoming part of young Gwen's adventure in this foreign land when she goes to live with her new husband. There are secrets between husband and wife that seem to grow more complex and intriguing throughout the story - whose side can you take?

The story moves with a swift pace and you really feel all the uncertainty and anxiety for Gwen. Everything is new to her and the culture of dealing with the workers at the tea plantation is delicate. Generations of Ceylon families have worked in the same conditions – all to pick a real sought after commodity – tea!

The story gripped me from the start and I couldn't wait to finish it to find out if the mystery and secrets were resolved in the end. A brilliant read.

Tracey Copeland

I enjoyed this saga, beautifully written atmospheric book. You are transported back to 1920's Ceylon, sounds, sights and smells.

Gwendolyn, newly married travels to meet her new husband Lawrence on his tea plantation, but life isn't as she expected at all. I felt sorry for her, she felt real and I wished she would leave Lawrence and find someone to treat her differently.

Vicki Sharman

What a beautifully written, atmospheric book. It takes you back to

the sights and sounds of 1920's Ceylon- you can see the rich colours and imagine life alongside Gwen.

Gwen joins her husband on a tea plantation after they marry- but life isn't how she'd imagined it would be. Secrets and tensions are all around her and sadness pervades. The characters are so well drawn you can imagine sitting down to 'tea' with them.

It educates you on a different culture and era and expectations of the time. I love books like this. The covers are also absolutely stunning and would draw you straight across the bookshop.