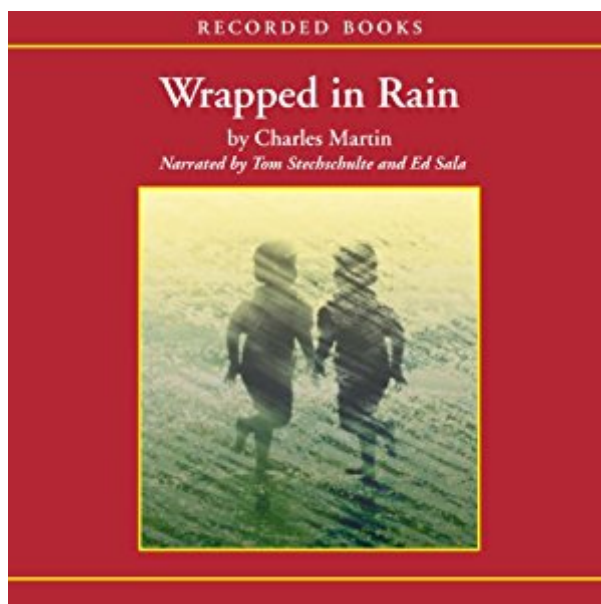


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Wrapped In Rain: A Novel Of Coming Home



Synopsis

"Tucker, I want to tell you a secret," Miss Ella curled my hand into a fist and showed it to me. "Life is a battle, but you can't fight it with your fists. You got to fight it with your heart." An internationally famous photographer, he has traveled the world and seen both the serious and the strange. But when his brother escapes from a mental hospital and an old girlfriend appears with her son and a black eye, Tucker is forced to return home and face the agony of his own tragic past. Back in rural Alabama, Tucker comes to terms with the ghosts he left behind. Miss Ella Rain once loved Tuck and his brother like they were her very own. Hiring her to take care of Waverly Hall and to keep them out of sight was the only good thing their father ever did. And though Miss Ella has been gone for many years, Tuck can still hear her voice. --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 11 hours and 55 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: Recorded Books

Audible.com Release Date: December 31, 2008

Language: English

ASIN: B001OTH5SG

Best Sellers Rank: #349 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Fiction & Literature > Religious Fiction
#349 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Fiction & Literature > Short Stories #92760 in Books > Religion & Spirituality

Customer Reviews

Is it possible to forgive those who are unable to ask for forgiveness? Can the hurts of our childhood be redeemed? Can we ever sacrifice too much? Charles Martin tackles deep questions like these in his sophomore stand-alone novel, WRAPPED IN RAIN. As he did in his debut novel, THE DEAD DON'T DANCE, Martin masterfully blends lovely prose, interesting characters, well-integrated faith themes, and a moving plot to create a powerful story that will long linger in the mind of the reader after the last page is turned. In rural Alabama, two abused boys find their only comfort and hope in the 45-year-old childless widow Miss Ella Rain, the only daughter of the son of an Alabama slave. She stands as a solid force between them and their evil, alcoholic, and wealthy father Rex. Beaten bloody by her boss and paid only minimum wage, she sacrifices her own aspirations and dreams to

ensure that both Tucker and his half-brother, Matthew ("Mutt"), know they are loved --- by her and by God. Despite her best efforts, the boys' relationship with their father leaves terrible scars. Long after Miss Ella has died and Tucker has found fame as an international photographer, his bitterness toward his father makes it nearly impossible for him to lay the ghosts of the past to rest. Thirty-three-year-old Mutt is now a schizophrenic, obsessive-compulsive paralyzed with fear at the thought of contact with germs, and committed by Tucker into a mental health facility, Spiraling Oaks. Mutt tries to scrub out his past failings by scouring everything around him clean with bleach and Windex --- cars, water towers, houses, his room at Spiraling Oaks. Kudos goes to Martin for his handling of the damaged character of Mutt, who evokes disgust, fear, sympathy, and finally deep compassion.

Of the 30+ books I read so far this year, *Wrapped in Rain* by Charles Martin outshone them all. This southern coming home novel is filled with compelling characters, bittersweet moments, and a lesson for all of us. At the age of six, Tucker Mason's secluded life at Waverly Hall becomes a little more bearable. His father, Rex Mason, arrives one night with a boy in tow and offers eight words of introduction. "This is Matthew . . . Mason. Apparently, he's my son." The two boys are left in the care of Miss Ella Rain, a local woman hired by Rex to keep them out of sight. As adults, Tucker and Mutt (Matthew) now struggle with the memories of a childhood at the hands of a father who didn't want them and memories of "Mama" Ella's death. Tucker returns home from a photo shoot late at night to find a woman and child stranded on the side of the road. He offers them shelter for the night and puts them up in Miss Ella's house, only to discover the woman is Katie, a childhood friend now running from an abusive husband. When Mutt escapes from the mental hospital, Tucker is faced with the decision to place Mutt in a more secure facility. Against medical advice, Tucker chooses instead to take Mutt back to Waverly Hall. Can their former childhood home help ease the voices in Mutt's head, and can Miss Ella's soft promptings help Tucker reconcile his past and place a hope for a future in his heart? *Wrapped in Rain* had me laughing out loud one minute, and crying the next. Charles Martin has a gift for bringing his characters to life and placing them firmly in the reader's heart. My heart broke many times for Mutt. His antics were both funny and poignant, and helped me understand the mind of someone battling a mental illness.

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