



Blackberry Winter: A Novel

By Sarah Jio

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THE NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

In 2011, Sarah Jio burst onto the fiction scene with two sensational novels--*The Violets of March* and *The Bungalow*. With *Blackberry Winter*--taking its title from a late-season, cold-weather phenomenon--Jio continues her rich exploration of the ways personal connections can transcend the boundaries of time.

Seattle, 1933. Single mother Vera Ray kisses her three-year-old son, Daniel, goodnight and departs to work the night-shift at a local hotel. She emerges to discover that a May-Day snow has blanketed the city, and that her son has vanished. Outside, she finds his beloved teddy bear lying face-down on an icy street, the snow covering up any trace of his tracks, or the perpetrator's.

Seattle, 2010. *Seattle Herald* reporter Claire Aldridge, assigned to cover the May 1 "blackberry winter" storm and its twin, learns of the unsolved abduction and vows to unearth the truth. In the process, she finds that she and Vera may be linked in unexpected ways...

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Editorial Review

Review

"Sarah Jio's writing is exquisite and engrossing."--Elin Hilderbrand, bestselling author of *Silver Girl*

"A Most Anticipated Book of Fall 2012" ... "This novel will enchant Jio's fans and make them clamor for her next offering."--Kirkus

"Terrific ... compelling ... An intoxicating blend of mystery, history and romance, this book is hard to put down."--REAL SIMPLE

"Engaging ... enticing ... [A] fascinating exploration of love, loss, scandal, and redemption."--Publisher's Weekly

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"A fascinating exploration of love, loss, scandal, and redemption."—*Publishers Weekly*

Praise for Sarah Jio and her novels:

"Jio has become one of the most-read women in America."—*Woman's World* (on *Morning Glory*)

"Delightful and uplifting."—*Historical Novel Society* (on *Goodnight June*)

"Linger[s] long after the last page."—*Romantic Times* (on *The Last Camellia*)

"Eminently readable . . . a tribute to family and forgiveness."—*Booklist* (on *Goodnight June*)

From the Author

Dear Reader,

One morning, while in the car with my husband and our young sons, an intriguing song came on the radio. I had never heard it before, but I was instantly transfixed by the melody, and the singer's haunting voice. I turned to my husband, who was driving: "This is a *beautiful* song!" I exclaimed. "Do you know it?" He shook his head. I glanced at the radio, and the screen read, "Blackberry Winter by Hilary Kole." The title made my heart flutter. As a lifelong Northwesterner, blackberries are special to me. I get nostalgic when I think about the after-dinner walks I took with my parents and siblings during the summers of my childhood. We'd all take bowls and tromp through the woods near our home, scouting for blackberries. My sister and I would eat the majority of them, and the rest would find their way into one of mom's famous pies or cobblers. Summer just wasn't summer without berry-stained fingers.

That day in the car, I pulled out my phone (which, ahem, happens to be a *Blackberry*), and emailed myself the name of the song and its artist. I wanted to read the lyrics, but mostly, I wanted to know the origins of the title. *What is a blackberry winter?* Later, at home, I sat down at my desk to do some research. I learned that the term is old-fashioned weather jargon for a late-season cold snap--think of plunging temperatures and snowfall in May, just when the delicate white flowers are beginning to appear on the blackberry vines.

I couldn't get the words "blackberry winter" out of my head, and that night, I began to sketch out the concept for this novel. The story came to me quickly and vividly: Vera and Daniel and the little apartment they shared in the 1930s; his beloved teddy bear, lying face-down in the cold snow; Claire and her curious reporter's mind and her own deep pain and grief; snowflakes falling on the spring cherry blossoms.

For the next many months, I lived and breathed *Blackberry Winter*. At the heart of this story, for me, were the raw emotions of motherhood. I began writing the novel when I was pregnant with my third son, and I channeled Vera and Claire's pain and often-heartbreaking experiences. I thought a lot about how it would feel to lose a child, and what I would do.

Then, in a heartbreaking turn of events, shortly before I finished the book, one of my dearest friends, Wendi Parriera, lost her two-year-old son to a rare form of brain cancer. It broke my heart to watch her say goodbye to her precious boy, and I wept with her on the phone as she held her son against her chest in the final hours of his life. But, I also saw her strength, and the light in her eye--the one that told me how thankful she is to have been the mother of this beautiful child, and how excited she is to know, with certainty, that she'll be seeing him again, in heaven. Wendi reminds me, always, that motherhood--life--no matter how short, is a gift.

While my characters' challenges are great and their stories tragic, like my dear friend, I like to think that they found their own sense of peace and truth--swirling in a late-season snowstorm and hidden amongst the protective thorns of the blackberry vines.

Thank you for reading. I hope this novel touches your heart in the same way it touched mine.

Sarah Jio

About the Author

Sarah Jio is the #1 international, *New York Times*, and *USA Today* bestselling author of eight novels. She is also a longtime journalist who has contributed to *Glamour*, *The New York Times*, *Redbook*, *Real Simple*, *O: The Oprah Magazine*, *Cooking Light*, *Woman's Day*, *Marie Claire*, *Self*, and many other outlets, including NPR's *Morning Edition*, appearing as a commentator. Jio lives in Seattle with her three young boys.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Caroline Petrie:

Have you spare time for any day? What do you do when you have considerably more or little spare time? Sure, you can choose the suitable activity for spend your time. Any person spent their particular spare time to take a move, shopping, or went to the Mall. How about open as well as read a book called *Blackberry Winter: A Novel*? Maybe it is being best activity for you. You already know beside you can spend your time with your favorite's book, you can smarter than before. Do you agree with it is opinion or you have other opinion?

William Perrotta:

What do you regarding book? It is not important along? Or just adding material when you really need something to explain what your own problem? How about your time? Or are you busy person? If you don't

have spare time to do others business, it is make one feel bored faster. And you have extra time? What did you do? All people has many questions above. They should answer that question simply because just their can do that. It said that about reserve. Book is familiar on every person. Yes, it is proper. Because start from on guardería until university need that Blackberry Winter: A Novel to read.

James Yancey:

Is it anyone who having spare time and then spend it whole day by watching television programs or just lying on the bed? Do you need something new? This Blackberry Winter: A Novel can be the solution, oh how comes? A fresh book you know. You are and so out of date, spending your free time by reading in this completely new era is common not a nerd activity. So what these books have than the others?

Maria Holder:

Some individuals said that they feel bored when they reading a publication. They are directly felt that when they get a half parts of the book. You can choose the particular book Blackberry Winter: A Novel to make your own reading is interesting. Your current skill of reading talent is developing when you including reading. Try to choose easy book to make you enjoy to study it and mingle the impression about book and examining especially. It is to be 1st opinion for you to like to available a book and examine it. Beside that the book Blackberry Winter: A Novel can to be your friend when you're feel alone and confuse with what must you're doing of their time.

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