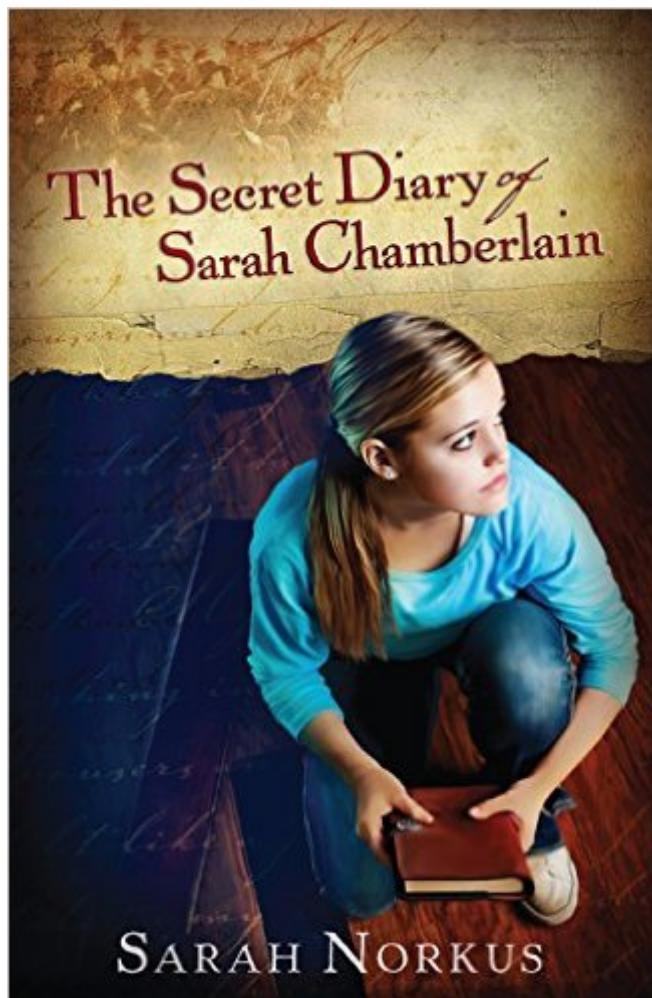


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The Secret Diary Of Sarah Chamberlain



Synopsis

In the year 2008, fifteen year-old Emily Grace (Em) discovers a secret hiding place under a wooden plank in the attic of an old house in Petersburg. It conceals a 150 year-old-diary belonging to Sarah Chamberlain, the previous owner of the house. Carefully turning to the last entry, Emâ™s interest is piqued by the mention of missing confederate gold and a murder mystery. She slips the diary into the pocket of her capris. As she reads the diary, Em is touched by Sarahâ™s deep love for her husband, Robert. Emotionally, Emâ™s life is spinning out of control and the diary is a welcome distraction. Each day her faith slips further and further away as she blames God for the many trials and tribulations she has had to endure. After rereading the last page and Robertâ™s senseless murder, she has one more reason to doubt Godâ™s love for his creation. Em slips the diary back in her pocket planning to return it to the attic before helping her mother clean the old house in Petersburg. While scrubbing black scuffmarks off the kitchen floor, Em has an emotional meltdown airing her list of grievances, including Robertâ™s murder, before God. As she shouts that she doesnâ™t believe he really exists, vertigo suddenly hits with a vengeance and she passes out. Regaining consciousness, Em is dumbfounded; the kitchen has been replaced by a nineteenth century parlor.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The moment she saw the small brown book, a loud roar filled Emâ™s ears, accompanied by a sharp pain to her head, followed by dizziness. She emitted a soft groan. Book: The Secret Diary Of

Sarah Chamberlain by Sarah Norkus, Living Ink Books, 2012Genre: Historical

Fiction/AdventureTarget Audience: Girls 13-18Subjects: Civil War, Time Travel, Trials, Trust in GodSummary: Cancer for her, loss of home for her aunt, loss of husband for Sarah. If God really exists He must not care much for His people. That's Emily Grace's conclusion. After some of the struggles she has faced she starts to doubt God and His love, but when she finds an old diary and reads about the murder of an innocent man right at the end of the civil war she makes her decision. God just simply doesn't exist. As soon as she makes her decision, her life completely changes, but not in the way she thought. She finds herself unconscious, wakes up and she is back 150 years ago and a loss of memory. The family she falls in with is very godly, openly professing a faith she had denied 150 years in the future. As the days go by, she faces choices that will affect not only her and her time, but the past as well.Notes: This is the first in the time travel series about a girl in her mid-teens who finds a diary hidden in an old house and travels through time to learn more about the character of God and grow in her faith. In this book the girl has to learn trust God even when bad things happen. The book does a good job covering the spiritual elements. The spiritual focus of the book is the theme running through the entire book. And (spoiler's warning) the ending is not as tragic as I expected it to be!

When I read the blurb, I knew this was a book I wanted to read and review. I thought it'd be a YA (young adult) book since the main character is 15, but it read more like a MG (middle grade) book. Because it reminded me more of a MG read, I will be reviewing it as such. However, this was still a great read!The title didn't catch my attention, but I think to a middle grade student, the title would be very catchy.The cover is alright. It's nothing special, but I do feel it would appeal to a younger age group.The world building was fantastic! Sarah Norkus does an awesome job at making the world building very believable. I'm no history buff, but Miss Norkus brings the Civil War era come alive. I enjoyed reading about life during the Civil War. It's obvious that Miss Norkus has done some research on this time period.The pacing was slow at the very beginning. I really wanted to like this book, so I hung in there, and I was greatly rewarded. The pacing picks up when Em gets transported to Sarah Chamberlain's time, and after that, I was hooked on this book!I loved the plot! Em finds a diary belonging to Sarah Chamberlain in an old house. When Em starts blaming God for everything, she is transported to the Civil War era. However, she ends up losing her memory and can't remember where she came from or anything from her modern life. Being Christian, I loved how the plot of this book had Christian themes.I thought the characters were written fairly well. Em is supposed to be 15 years old, but I felt she acted and spoke like she was around 12 years old. I had

to constantly remind myself that she was a 15 year old girl. Eventually, I just stopped reminding myself of her age and just thought of her as being 12.

Imagine helping your mother clean up an old house that is part of the Historical Societyâ™s inventory and finding a loose board that holds an old, old diary. Would you tell your mother and give it up or would you keep it and read it? Emily Grace (called Em) did what I would do: She kept it to read. Ms. Norkus mixes Civil War history, time travel, slavery, and a modern girl all together in a story that I found fascinating. The more of the diary she reads, the more Em gets caught up in Sarahâ™s life. When she finds out Sarahâ™s husband dies at the hands of the military, she is devastated. The author makes Em a young woman who has begun to fall away from God and her church. She doesnâ™t believe God is there. None of her prayers get answered. Reading about Sarahâ™s husband Robert dying makes her angry and she shouts at God, giving Him her whole list of grievances. Em is fifteen and I remember what puberty was like; I cried all the time. Em carries a lot of anger. What she didnâ™t expect was to be transported back in time. Apparently God does listen. Going back 150 years means things are quite different there. She finds Sarah and they take her in but she has no real plan to save Robert. The author works with the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution, so her information about the times and practices of the era are accurate. The only hesitation I had about the story was that Em changes history while sheâ™s there. And, any change you make in history would affect the future, but the only thing that really changed in the future was the diary and a sign. I had a difficult time believing nothing else was affected. Overall, this is a very nice read and young women readers should find it fascinating.

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