



Ellen Foster

By Kaye Gibbons

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Winner of the American Academy of Arts and Letters' Sue Kaufman Prize for First Fiction and of the Ernest Hemingway Foundation's Citation for Fiction. An eleven-year-old heroine tells her unforgettable story with honesty, perceptivity, humor, and unselfconscious heroism. "The honesty of thought and eye and feeling and word!"--Eudora Welty; "A lovely, breathtaking, sometimes heart-wrenching first novel."--Walker Percy. A LITERARY GUILD SELECTION.

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Ellen Foster By Kaye Gibbons Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Oprah Book Club® Selection, October 1997: Kaye Gibbons is a writer who brings a short story sensibility to her novels. Rather than take advantage of the novel's longer form to paint her visions in broad, sweeping strokes, Gibbons prefers to concentrate on just one corner of the canvas and only a few colors to produce her small masterpieces. In Gibbons's case, her canvas is the American South and her colors are all the shades of gray.

In *Ellen Foster*, the title character is an 11-year-old orphan who refers to herself as "old Ellen," an appellation that is disturbingly apt. Ellen is an old woman in a child's body; her frail, unhappy mother dies, her abusive father alternately neglects her and makes advances on her, and she is shuttled from one uncaring relative's home to another before she finally takes matters into her own hands and finds herself a place to belong. There is something almost Dickensian about Ellen's tribulations; like Oliver Twist, David Copperfield or a host of other literary child heroes, Ellen is at the mercy of predatory adults, with only her own wit and courage--and the occasional kindness of others--to help her through. That she does, in fact, survive her childhood and even rise above it is the book's bittersweet victory.

From Publishers Weekly

The appealing, eponymous, 11-year-old orphan heroine of this Southern-focused debut survives appalling situations until she finds safe harbor in a good foster home. "Some readers will find the recital of Ellen's woes mawkishly sentimental," PW remarked, "but for others it may be a perfect summer read."

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From Library Journal

Ellen Foster is the often heart-wrenching tale of an 11-year-old girl who loses her dearly loved mother through suicide and is left to coexist with her alcoholic father. "Old Ellen," as the protagonist refers to herself, is a tough but tender young soul, determined and wise beyond her years. Initially, she is resourceful enough to ferret out money for necessities, but eventually she becomes fearful for her safety and runs away to live with her art teacher. When a court decides she can no longer remain there, Ellen is briefly shuttled between uncaring relatives but eventually triumphs in finding a "new mamma." Gibbons has produced a warm and caring first novel about a backwoods child persevering through hard times to establish a new and satisfying identity. It is written with the freshness of a child but the wisdom of an adult. Kimberly G. Allen, Supreme Court Lib., Washington, D.C.

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Rodney Bryant:

Do you have favorite book? For those who have, what is your favorite's book? Book is very important thing for us to know everything in the world. Each guide has different aim or even goal; it means that publication has different type. Some people experience enjoy to spend their time to read a book. They are really reading whatever they have because their hobby is actually reading a book. Think about the person who don't like examining a book? Sometime, man or woman feel need book after they found difficult problem or exercise. Well, probably you'll have this *Ellen Foster*.

Linda Banks:

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