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Sass and Serendipity by J. Ziegler


Based loosely on Jane Austen's Sense and Sensibility, this book follows two very different sisters, the serious and sensible Gabriella (Gabby) and the younger, more romantic, Daphne. Both girls are reeling from their parents' divorce and reduced financial circumstances and both deal with these problems in different ways. Gabby, firmly allied with her mother, blames her father for abandoning the family and rejects all notions of romantic love. Daphne idolises her father and believes that the boy of her dreams is waiting for her. When a crisis leaves the girls and their mother homeless, help comes from an unexpected source and both girls begin to see new possibilities in the people around them, especially two new suitors.

This is a light, somewhat entertaining read, but both Gabby and Daphne are so self-centered and one-dimensional that the story quickly becomes tedious. Gabby is angry and mean to almost everyone around her, although her one friend Mule amazingly continues to tolerate her appalling behaviour. Daphne is so obsessed with romance that she is oblivious to the family concerns. Somehow, however, the girls find suitable boyfriends and this, more than anything else, causes them to become better sisters, daughters and friends.

Recommended with reservations: 2 out of 4 stars

Reviewer: Kristine Moruzi

Kristine Moruzi is a Grant Notley Postdoctoral Fellow in the Department of English and Film Studies at the University of Alberta, where she is examining representations of girlhood in Canadian children's literature between 1840 and 1940.