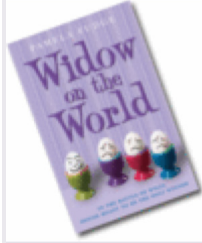


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A Novel About the Stages of a Woman's Life

Widow on the World by Pamela Fudge



Widow on the World is about three women who find themselves at a crossroad, reaching a state in their lives in which they must do SOMETHING. The need to choose a path is due to both internal and external causes, but in all cases action must be taken and it's up to the individual woman to make choices that will impact the rest of her life.

Denise has been suddenly and unexpectedly widowed at the age of 45. Not only must she come to grips with that, and find a way to heal and move on, but she must also deal with the rather obnoxious needs of her runaway mother and temporarily misdirected daughter. Her daughter, Bobbi, has decided to leave nursing school, and a promising career, in order to cohabitate with her extremely unsuitable boyfriend, Jason. The place she's chosen to cohabitate is, incidentally, Denise's own home. Denise's mother, not to be left out, has left her husband, inexplicably, for goodness knows what reason, and it doesn't seem she even knows herself. She shows up on her daughter's doorstep with no real explanation whatsoever, expecting to be taken in because she is the mother and that's how things are done!

When the book opens, Denise is at a turning point in the grieving process. By no means is she over the loss of her husband, but she has reached a sort of peace with things. She's been through the worst of it and she's ready to move forward. Her journey lies not so much in finding a new career path, as she's happy enough with her work, but in finding a new partner with whom to share her life. At the same time, she feels she must stop and ask herself "Am I worthy?," which after all her years comfortably ensconced in marriage seems a very natural doubt to have. She's feeling shop-worn and more than a bit insecure.

Denise's mother has reached that state of life in which she finds herself growing older and with nothing of our own to show for herself that's purely hers. Her identity lies mostly in being somebody's wife, and somebody's mother. She's left her husband not because she doesn't love him, but because she's stymied, and stuck in the rut of longterm marriage. What she's seeking is overall life fulfillment, and the feeling of being needed for who she is rather than who she's been.

And Bobbi, the daughter, is simply young and uncertain. We've all been there.

Most of us have been all three of these places, actually, or have been one or two of them and will almost certainly be in the third before it's said and done. That's the strength of this book, that it does effectively show the stages of a woman's life, from youth to middle age to the older years. It depicts all our usual self doubts and insecurities in a way that's very sympathetic.

The treatment of these subjects goes middling deep. It's not a deeply psychological self help manual, but it does contain some very positive, constructive wisdom. It's

a lighter book with just enough substance to help it avoid the "chick lit" title. In the end what it really does is reaffirm what it means to be a woman in today's society, and to give us all a very much needed bit of uplift and hope, and that theme is its own recommendation.

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