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My Grape Year: (The Grape Series #1)



Synopsis

My Grape Year takes fans of Laura Bradbury's "Grape" series back to where it all began. In a last-minute twist of fate, Laura is sent to Burgundy, France for a year on an exchange. She arrives knowing only a smattering of French and with no idea what to expect in her first foray out of North America. With a head full of dreams and a powerful desire to please, Laura adapts to Burgundian life, learning crucial skills such as the fine art of winetasting and how to savor snails. However, her inability to resist the charming young men of the region means that Laura soon runs afoul of the rules, particularly the "no dating" edict. Romantic afternoons in Dijon, early morning pain au chocolat runs, and long walks in the vineyards are wondrous, but also present Laura with a conundrum: "how does she keep her hosts happy while still managing to follow her heart?" Bradbury's 'Grape' series has been described by readers as combining the dry humour and escapism of Peter Mayle's "A Year in Provence", the emotional honesty of Cheryl Strayed's "Wild", and the romance of Diana Gabaldon's "Outlander".

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I read one other book in the series before getting this first one, so I knew who she'd end up marrying. Still. This was the most romantic memoir I've ever read. There was suspense until halfway through the book about who *the guy* would end up being and - surprise, surprise - it was still suspenseful. I felt all her teenage angst of waiting for that perfect someone as I read along, and all the joy when she found him. It makes it more special that they're still together after all these years. Romance (and reliving teen years) not your thing? This book had everything else. There was a rip-roaringly funny scene about trying to make a speech in non-existent French using only infinitives (this is not even a spoiler because the humour comes in the way she describes it). And there were plenty of other funny scenes that had me chuckling, and this is coming from someone who lives in France and has heard it all. The descriptions of food are so sensory I felt like I was there enjoying it (or not, in some cases). And I adored her descriptions of studying abroad, much of which I could relate to since I also studied in Avignon only a couple years before her. In short, it was a thoroughly enjoyable book and one I recommend.

My Grape Year is the latest of Laura Bradbury's book which centers on her first visit to France as a Canadian exchange student. I love books about people who pull up stakes and move to France to explore a new country and its language. Most are written by English people so it was refreshing to get a North American's experience. It is a terrifying to be thrown into a full-blown foreign culture with limited language skills... and I have been there, so I enjoyed this book a lot and laughed at her many misconceptions of France and nuances of the language. It was a great introduction to the culture and food of France as well and you will learn right along with her as she lives for a year with three different families. Being immersed in the language is the best way to become fluent and has a way of imprinting certain words and scenarios in your memory forever and Laura shares how she grows and changes over her exchange year. I loved her school and party experience and how they differed from those she had attended in Canada. Her school lunch/cafeteria experience cracked me up. Her chapter about picking grapes during the fall harvest was also delightful. However, this book is also about her experience about falling in love with a Frenchman and how this put her into conflict with her exchange families at times. To be honest, I have hosted 5 exchange students and had uneasy feelings about this part of the book. I could feel both sides of the coin. Laura writes with honesty about her feelings and this journey that turned her life around forever. If you read this book first, you will definitely want to read the rest of her books and get the "whole story"! An enjoyable read about life lived among the people in Burgundy from the viewpoint of an 18 year old, the importance of food, wine, and family to these people, and the emergence of a love story.

My Grape Year is the true story of a 17 year old Canadian that goes to Burgundy France for a year as an exchange student written as a memoir of her experience. The rules of the exchange program was no alcohol drinking and no dating. Laura very quickly had to deal with these issues in a region of the world that is known for it's wine production. Although she had several years of French in Canada she describes the difficulties of learning a new language. She then meets the missing piece of her life, a French gentleman. This is a wonderful book for anyone that has any interest in France or French culture. Laura Bradbury tells her experience with detail and humor. She draws the reader into the story and makes you feel like you are sitting down at one of the 10 hour French meals with her. As a frequent traveler to France, I found all four of her books very interesting and well written. She has the ability as a writer to make you feel like you are sharing her wonderful adventures in Burgundy. Highly recommend all four books.

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