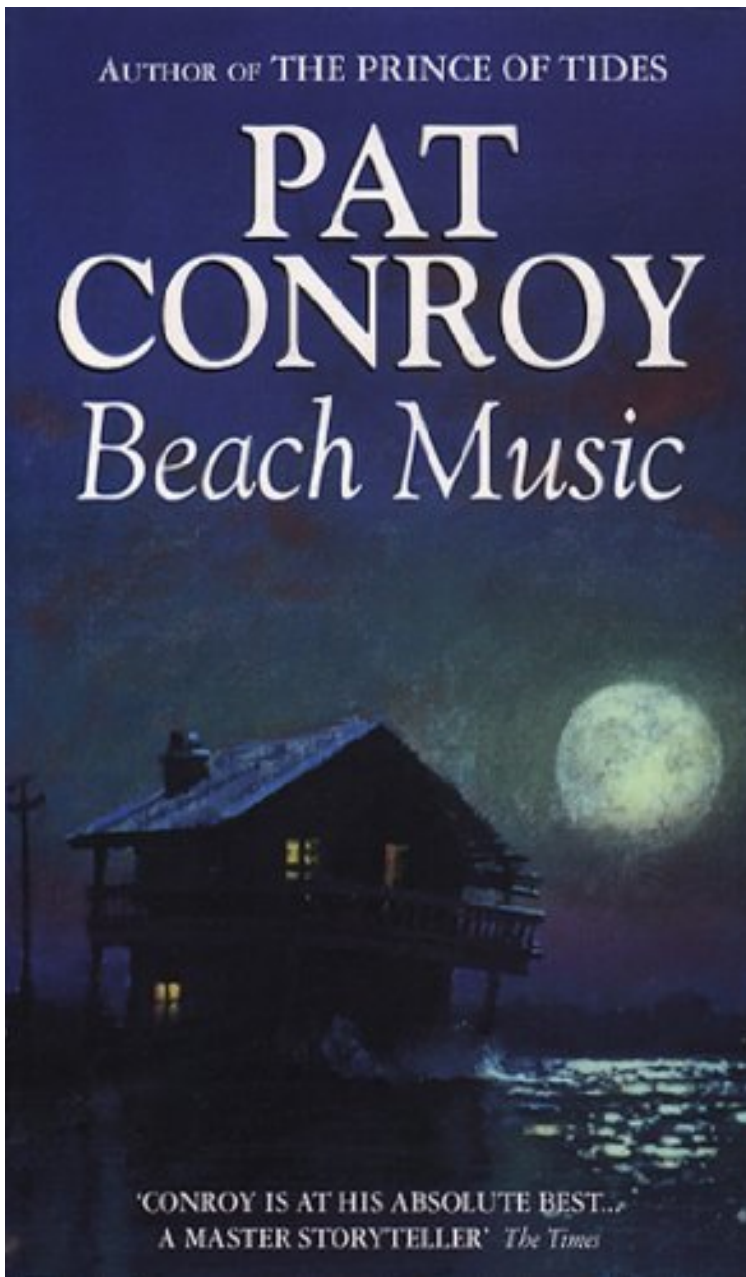


[Read ebook] File size: 43.Mb

Beach Music



Par Pat Conroy
*ebooks / Download PDF / *ePub /*
DOC / audiobook

Dtails sur le produit Rang parmi les ventes : #87144 dans eBooksPubli le: 2012-08-31Sorti le: 2012-08-31Format: Ebook Kindle

[Read ebook] Beach Music

Par Pat Conroy : Beach Music before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Beach Music:

Download

Read Online

Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurWith the spectacular worldwide success of his unforgettable novel The Prince of Tides, Pat Conroy established himself as a major international writer. He is known for his anguished and painfully honest insights into families and the human heart. He now returns with Beach Music, a story which tells of a family haunted by dark memories that reach back into the unutterable terrors of the Holocaust.Jack McCall, an American living in Rome with his young daughter, is trying to find peace after the recent trauma

of his wife's suicide. But his solitude is disturbed by the appearance of his sister-in-law, who begs him to return home, and of two school friends, who want his help in tracking down another classmate who went underground as a Vietman protester and never resurfaced. These requests launch Jack on a journey that encompasses the past and the present in both Europe and the American South: a quest that leads him to shocking and ultimately liberating truths.

Extrait

In 1980, a year after my wife leapt to her death from the Silas Pearlman Bridge in Charleston, South Carolina, I moved to Italy to begin life anew, taking our small daughter with me. Our sweet Leah was not quite two when my wife, Shyla, stopped her car on the highest point of the bridge and looked over, for the last time, the city she loved so well. She had put on the emergency brake and opened the door of our car, then lifted herself up to the rail of the bridge with the delicacy and enigmatic grace that was always Shyla's catlike gift. She was also quick-witted and funny, but she carried within her a dark side that she hid with bright allusions and an irony as finely wrought as lace. She had so mastered the strategies of camouflage that her own history had seemed a series of well-placed mirrors that kept her hidden from herself. It was nearly sunset and a tape of the Drifters' Greatest Hits poured out of the car's stereo. She had recently had our car serviced and the gasoline tank was full. She had paid all the bills and set up an appointment with Dr. Joseph for my teeth to be cleaned. Even in her final moments, her instincts tended toward the orderly and the functional. She had always prided herself in keeping her madness invisible and at bay; and when she could no longer fend off the voices that grew inside her, their evil set to chaos in a minor key, her breakdown enfolded upon her, like a tarpaulin pulled across that part of her brain where once there had been light. Having served her time in mental hospitals, exhausted the wide range of pharmaceuticals, and submitted herself to the priestly rites of therapists of every theoretic persuasion, she was defenseless when the black music of her subconscious sounded its elegy for her time on earth. On the rail, all eyewitnesses agreed, Shyla hesitated and looked out toward the sea and shipping lanes that cut past Fort Sumter, trying to compose herself for the last action of her life. Her beauty had always been a disquieting thing about her and as the wind from the sea caught her black hair, lifting it like streamers behind her, no one could understand why anyone so lovely would want to take her own life. But Shyla was tired of feeling ill-made and transitory and she wanted to set the flags of all her tomorrows at half-mast. Three days earlier, she had disappeared from our house in Ansonborough and only later did I discover that she had checked in to the Mills-Hyatt House to put her affairs in order. After making appointments, writing schedules, letters, and notes that would allow our household to continue in its predictable harmony, she marked the mirror in her hotel room with an annulling X in bright red lipstick, paid her bill with cash, flirted with the doorman, and gave a large tip to the boy who brought her the car. The staff at the hotel remarked on her cheerfulness and composure during her stay. As Shyla steadied herself on the rail of the bridge a man approached her from behind, a man coming up from Florida, besotted with citrus and Disney World, and said in a low voice so as not to frighten the comely stranger on the bridge, "Are you okay, honey?" She pirouetted slowly and faced him. Then with tears streaming down her face, she stepped back, and with that step, changed the lives of her family forever. Her death surprised no one who loved her, yet none of us got over it completely. Shyla was that rarest of suicides: no one held her responsible for the act itself; she was forgiven as instantly as she was missed and afterward she was deeply mourned. For three days I joined the grim-faced crew of volunteers who searched for Shyla's remains. Ceaselessly, we dragged the length and breadth of the harbor, enacting a grotesque form of braille as hoods felt their way along the mudflats and the pilings of the old bridge that connected Mount Pleasant and Sullivan's Island. Two boys were crabbing when they noticed her body moving toward them beside the marsh grass. After her funeral, a sadness took over me that seemed permanent, and I lost myself in the details and technicalities connected to death in the South.

Great sorrow still needs to be fed and I dealt with my disconsolate emptiness by feeding everyone who gathered around me to offer their support. I felt as though I were providing sustenance for the entire army in the field who had come together to ease the malignant ache I felt every time Shyla's name was mentioned. The word Shyla itself became a land mine. That sweet-sounding word was merciless and I could not bear to hear it. So I lost myself in the oils and condiments of my well-stocked kitchen. I fattened up my friends and family, attempted complicated recipes I had always put off making, and even tried my hand at Asian cuisine for the first time. With six gas burners ablaze, I turned out velvety soups and rib-sticking stews. I alternated between cooking and weeping and I prayed for the repose of the soul of my sad, hurt wife. I suffered, I grieved, I broke down, and I cooked fabulous meals for those who came to comfort me. It was only a short time after we buried Shyla that her parents sued me for custody of my child, Leah, and their lawsuit brought me running back into the real world. I spent a dispiriting year in court trying to prove my

fitness as a father. It was a time when I met a series of reptilian lawyers so unscrupulous that I would not have used their marrow to feed wild dogs or their wiry flesh to bait a crab pot. Shyla's mother and father had gone crazy with grief and I learned much about the power of scapegoating by watching their quiet hatred of me as they grimaced though the testimony regarding my sanity, my finances, my reputation in the community, and my sexual life with their eldest child. Though I have a whole range of faults that piqued the curiosity of the court, few who have ever seen me with my daughter have any doubts about my feelings for her. I get weak at the knees at the very sight of her. She is my certification, my boarding pass into the family of man, and whatever faith in the future I still retain. But it was not my overriding love of Leah that won the day in court. Before she took her final drive, Shyla had mailed me a letter that was part love letter and part apology for what she had done. When my lawyer had me read that letter aloud to the court, it became clear to

Shyla's parents and everyone present that laying her death at my feet was, at best, a miscarriage of justice. Her letter was an act of extraordinary generosity written in the blackest hours of her life. She blew it like a kiss toward me as a final gesture of a rare, exquisite sensibility. Her letter saved Leah for me. But the ferocity of that court battle left me exhausted, bitter, and raw around the edges. It felt as though Shyla had died twice. I answered my wife's leap from the bridge and the fierceness of that legal battle with a time of disorientation and sadness; and then with Italy. Toward Europe, I looked for respite and hermitage, and the imminence of my secret flight from South Carolina again restored a fight spirit within me. I had made a good living as a food and travel writer and running away had always been one of the things I did best. The flight to

Europe was my attempt to place the memory of both Shyla and South Carolina permanently in the past. I hoped I would save my life and Leah's from the suffocation I was beginning to feel in the place where Shyla and I had come of age together. For me, the South was carry-on baggage I could not shed no matter how many borders I crossed, but my daughter was still a child and I wanted her to grow into young womanhood as a European, blissfully unaware of that soft ruinous South that had killed her mother in one of its prettiest rivers. My many duties as a father I took with great seriousness, but there was no law that I was aware of that insisted I raise Leah as a Southerner. Certainly, the South had been a mixed blessing for me and I carried some grievous wounds into exile with me. All the way across the Atlantic Leah slept in my lap and when she awoke, I began her transformation by teaching her to count in Italian. And so in Rome we settled and began the long process of refusing to be Southern, even though my mother started a letter-writing campaign to coax me back home. Her letters arrived every Friday: "A Southerner in Rome? A low country boy in Italy?"

Ridiculous. You've always been restless, Jack, never knew how to be comfortable with your own kind. But mark my words. You'll be back soon. The South's got a lot wrong with it. But it's permanent press and it doesn't wash out." Though my mother was onto something real, I stuck by my guns. I would tell American tourists who questioned me about my accent that I no longer checked the scores of the Atlanta Braves in the Herald T... From Publishers Weekly A man tries to make peace with himself in the wake of his wife's suicide in Conroy's long-awaited blockbuster, which was a PW bestseller for 24 weeks. Copyright 1996 Reed

Business Information, Inc.