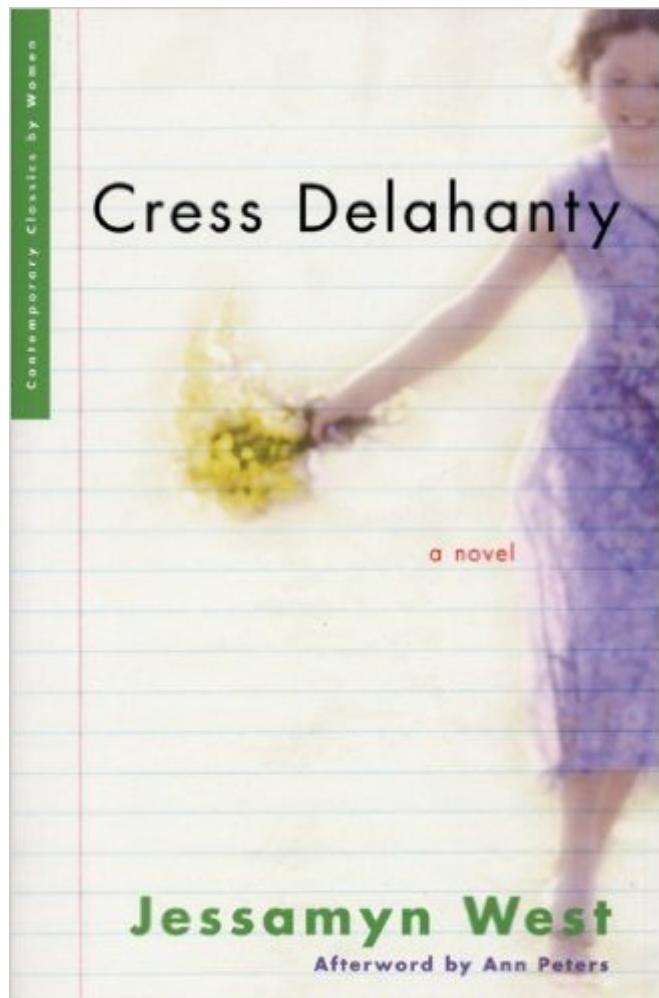


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Cress Delahanty (Contemporary Classics By Women)



Synopsis

Cress Delahanty remains one of the most intrepid and beloved teenagers in all American literature. Amid the clotted oil fields and pungent orange groves of rural 1940s California, the young woman explores her family's citrus ranch, worries about boys, attempts to negotiate the high school social ladder, and suffers embarrassments, big and small, in a tenacious search for her own identity.

Book Information

Series: Contemporary Classics by Women

Paperback: 304 pages

Publisher: The Feminist Press at CUNY (May 1, 2006)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1558615164

ISBN-13: 978-1558615168

Product Dimensions: 5.4 x 0.9 x 8.4 inches

Shipping Weight: 13.6 ounces

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars See all reviews (6 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #1,993,738 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #92 in Books > Teens > Historical Fiction > Exploration & Discovery #304 in Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Historical Fiction > Exploration & Discoveries #3879 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Girls & Women

Age Range: 12 - 15 years

Grade Level: 7 - 9

Customer Reviews

I plan to read Cress Delahanty to my daughter when she's about 10 or 11. The author, Jessamyn West, has captured the "evanescent" (one of Cress's favorite words) nature of a young girl's personality as she is growing up. The book is a collection of stories about a girl between the ages of 11 and 17 who lives on a ranch in Southern California. Each chapter entrances the reader with Cress's shenanigans. You think she is doing something outlandish or brave; you think the story is going one way, and then you get a view into the workings of Cress's mind and you suddenly understand what she's doing and the story goes in a different direction. As an adolescent I loved Cress because she was me, in all her insecurity, feats of boldness, crass humanity and growing understanding of boys, friends, family and relationships. The last chapter transcends all and always makes me cry.

When I was in sixth grade, the St. Louis Public Library still had a branch in the basement of our school, and it was there, in the "junior fiction" department, that I discovered Cress Delahanty, Jessamyn West's soon-to-be-teen girl, growing up on her family's citrus ranch. Ms. West created a character that appealed to my--shall we say androgynous?--self-image. Cress was more like me than anybody I knew: she was more like a boy in some ways, and yet more like a girl in others, and like me she seemed to have problems defining the lines between the two. Her father was the sage that advised her through much of her growing up--and he seemed to me to be the kind of man I would like to be when I got there. The thing I remember most, though, about Cress is her lovely poem:Once I was young and had dreamsNow I am old and have children.Dreams are evanescent; dreams fade:Children do not.But then again,You do not have to wipe the noses of your dreams.If that's not quite correct, it's because I haven't seen the book in over forty years, but I think I'm close to right. And indeed, one does not have to wipe the noses of one's dreams. I think about Cress from time to time, and most recently as I write this: for me in some not exclusive way she reminds me of what I thought growing up should be about, and how I thought I should react to it. I think I must read this one again.

Jesamyn West gives us a character in Crescent Delahanty that is so real you think she just might have been your friend when you were thirteen. Cres, as she is called in the book represents the struggles for peer acceptance and young love that any young woman can relate to. West's acute attention to the details of Cres's external environment (growing up on a ranch) and the other characters who impact on Cres's life deserves applause.

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