

Velva Jean Learns to Drive: A Novel By Jennifer Niven This was a time where women were supposed to marry.

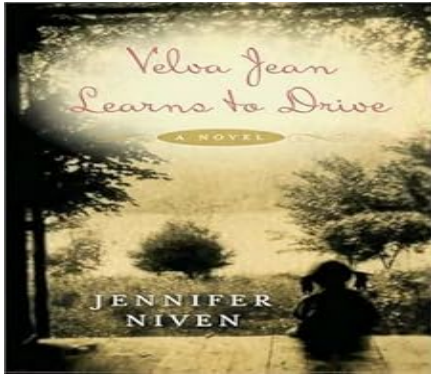
Her sister who has to put her own life on hold in order to take care of her brothers and sister after their mother dies and their father leaves home. Velva Jean's character often struck me as immature but then I would have to remind myself that she is not even 18 years old yet through most of the book so then I would find myself feeling sorry for her. The ending wraps up quite nicely with her learning the true reason her father left home and we finally learn the decision she makes whether to pursue her dream or pursue the love she has for Harley. In this Southern fiction coming of age novel.

No God would allow their Mama to die and their Daddy to abandon them... It's on one of these Hell-raising missions that Velva Jean first encounters the Moonshiner's son. She soon learns the hard reality many of us faced when deciding where to go to school (or whether or not to go at all)- she is torn between her love for Harley and her love for singing. Can we do what we love and still be with who we love? How do we walk that fine line of respecting our partner's beliefs and feelings without losing track of who we are at our innermost core? A coming of age story like no other.

I listened to this in audio because Jenna Lamia (The Invention of Wings) narrated it. Velva Jean Learns to Drive dragged for me and it took a great length of time before Velva Jean does learn to drive and for her to achieve her dreams about making music and playing at the Grand Old Opry. Velva Jean Learns to Drive: A Novel What a delightful touching and heartfelt coming of age tale! The prose was simple yet elegant and beautiful and Jennifer Niven completely transported me to the hollers of the Appalachians during the construction of the venerable Blue Ridge Parkway. I loved that the Niven explained in the epilogue (Roots) that the inspiration for Velva Jean and some of the other characters in the book came from her own family history in the mountains of North Carolina. I grew up in the Piedmont but have spent many happy times in the NC mountains over the years so I felt a degree of kinship with her characters and even for the yellow truck which became a character in its own right. Velva Jean's plight and her dreams for herself will resonate with anyone if who has ever dreamed of rising above any aspect of her upbringing or current situation -- and who hasn't? This uplifting hopeful story touched my heart and had me cheering for Velva Jean and her yellow truck. I was transported to the mountains of Appalachia where Velva Jean a young girl of ten years is trying to grow up in a place where her mother was sick and her Daddy was hardly ever home. The portrayal of how she goes about being true to herself and rejoicing in where she comes from mirrors the inner struggle that all of us have managed to cope with in one way or another. Its about the people living in the Mountains up around where South Carolina North Carolina Tennessee Kentucky all come together before the Blue Ridge Parkway was built and how the coming of that road affected and changed their lives. I highly recommend this book for its raw honesty and exposure of a life so completely different from those who have not lived secluded sheltered and cutoff in the gaps and hollers of the South. The story did pull me in and I loved the cast of characters you meet like her brother Johnny Clay the wood carver who is supposed to be some sort of crazy half-animal murderer and Sweet Fern Velva Jean marries Harley Bright at the tender age of 16. Velva Jean Learns to Drive: A Novel Set in Appalachia in the years before World War II Velva Jean Learns to Drive is a poignant story of a spirited young girl growing up in the gold-mining and moonshining South. Velva Jean Learns to Drive: A Novel Jennifer Niven is the Emmy Award winning #1 New York Times and International bestselling author of ten books including All the Bright Places and Holding up the Universe. Her books have been translated in over 75 languages and All the Bright Places has won literary awards around the world including the GoodReads Choice Award for Best Young Adult Fiction of 2015. It was named a Best Book of the Year by Time Magazine NPR the Guardian Publishers Weekly YALSA Barnes Noble BuzzFeed the New York Public Library and others and was the #1 Kids Indie Next Book for Winter 14 15. The film starring Elle Fanning Justice Smith Luke

Wilson and Keegan Michael Key is now streaming on Netflix with a script by Jennifer and Liz Hannah (The Jennifer Niven is the Emmy Award winning #1 New York Times and International bestselling author of ten books including All the Bright Places and Holding up the Universe. Her books have been translated in over 75 languages and All the Bright Places has won literary awards around the world including the GoodReads Choice Award for Best Young Adult Fiction of 2015. It was named a Best Book of the Year by Time Magazine NPR the Guardian Publisher's Weekly YALSA Barnes Noble BuzzFeed the New York Public Library and others and was the #1 Kids' Indie Next Book for Winter '14 '15. She also oversees Germ a literary and lifestyle web magazine for girls and boys age high school and beyond that celebrates beginnings futures and all the amazing and agonizing moments in between,

Marries and has to make a decision about pursuing her dream of singing in the Grand Ole Opry. I had to really get myself into the right frame of mind for this book. It takes place in the early 1930s and continues into the early 40s: So there were a lot of things that I was shaking my head over, I couldn't believe that it was unseemly for women to drive cars. I had never actually heard that before and would have smacked my husband if he tried to tell me I couldn't drive a car, But things like this were a part of every day life for Velva Jean, This just makes her dream of singing in the Grand Ole Opry that much more difficult to achieve, Velva Jean Learns to Drive: A Novel What a powerful and moving book about finding and pursuing your dreams. Their paths cross later at the county fair when she wins the talent competition for her singing: She is saving her money to get there when her path crosses once again with the Moonshiner's son- only now he has a name: The story progresses over time and we see the challenges faced almost daily for a lot of couples: A good hardscrabble southern story but perhaps a little too long for my liking. Five enthusiastic stars! Velva Jean Learns to Drive: A Novel A powerful story , The years that followed Velva Jean's dream was coming to a reality (singing at the Grand Ole Opry): Then she had to chose between keeping her marriage going or fulfilling her life's long dream: Velva Jean Learns to Drive: A Novel A quiet well written gentle tale set in the North Carolina mountains near our cabin in Rabun County Georgia: The time is the 1930's knee deep in the Depression and in the building of the Blue Ridge Scenic Parkway, Velva Jean first appears at about age 9 or 10 just as she is being saved by Jesus and just before her beloved mother dies: She loves her mama her brother and her singing and dreams of heading to Nashville some day, Her world is changed forever when her mama dies and her daddy leaves: Her road to Nashville is diverted by the HARley Bright the devilish son of the local moonshiner now turned preacher. So much color and character in the book which was good because Velva Jean only contemplates learning to drive on page 266 which was a little slow even for me, The last part of the book steam engined ahead like the train barreling towards Terrible Creek did but with less catastrophic results. we only have Velva Jean's reaction to the ending not Harley's: Velva Jean Learns to Drive: A Novel I loved this novel about a very young woman in Appalachia during the time that a highway is being built through the Appalachian mountains. This change is being implemented and accepted (or not) in many ways: Velva Jean falls in love and marries a charismatic preacher boy Harley Bright who suffers injuries in a train wreck and whose personality begins to change. He becomes very possessive and suppresses her longings to be and do more: Lucky for Velva she has a cast of people in her life who encourage her to be herself and recognize her talents: Some of these people include her brother Johnny Clay; a Woodcarver who lives high on the mountain; Butch a blues singer: The predominant ways in which she gains freedom are by learning to drive and making a record(she has a great singing voice), Very good! Velva Jean Learns to Drive: A Novel



I am speechless, I have to put this book right up there with *The Help* and a few others I've found amazing and which greatly moved me. I would call it historical Southern fiction by a very talented woman, Its about judging things and people who are different and how change and unknowns cause fear which is a catalyst for destructive emotions, How some can step beyond that fear and find the courage to follow their dreams and soar, *Velva Jean Learns to Drive: A Novel* This book was a little hard to get into at first and yet strangely I could not put it down, We first meet Velva Jean when she is 10 years old and watch as she grows older have children and take care of the family and house hold and be happy with it. Constrained by her role as a preacher's wife and blocked in by her life on the mountain her dream of singing in the Grand Ole Opry begins to fade: I found the characters well developed and real and the plot engaging. Perhaps my favourite character outside of Velva Jean was the Wood Carver, Many feared him however Velva Jean develops an unlikely friendship with him and knowing her heart and dreams he supports and encourages her: The story also takes place during the building of the Blue Ridge Parkway, Emotions run high as some folks feel intruded upon and threatened, On the other hand for others if a road can bring you in then it can bring you out. This book fully deserves a 5 star rating and I am looking forward to reading the sequel: *Velva Jean Learns to Drive: A Novel* *Velva Jean Learns to Drive* started out as a buddy read with the lovely TL. I did and am so glad that I did! There was a couple points early on that almost made me call it quits as well but I stuck with it. Velva Jean believes her life will not have meaning or purpose unless she is saved by Jesus, Set high in the mountains in the 30's we meet Velva Jean and her family: Her father wanders off at length for work and Mama is the glue that holds the whole family together: So when she gets ill while Daddy's away the family is at a loss: Mama doesn't survive leaving Velva Jean to figure out what she meant with her cryptic last words "Live out there, " Velva Jean and her brother that is closest to her in age go on a mission to raise as much Hell as possible. Jennifer Niven wrote one of my most cherished books- *All the Bright Places*, I knew when I saw her name on this that I would have to get my hands on it: I'm not sure when I will continue on to the sequel of this book but I know when I do it will feel like coming home, *Velva Jean Learns to Drive: A Novel* I found this book delightful. The storyline is nothing new and there are no twists to be found but you will fall in love with Velva Jean and her family. She speaks some truisms that are spot on and it's a good old fashioned read which shows what it was like to live in NC/Appalachia country in the 1930's. The book reminded me a bit of Scout in *To Kill A Mockingbird* - a young girl making her way in the world trying to figure out who she is and right from wrong. Before she dies Velva Jean's mother urges her to live out there in the great wide world: Velva Jean dreams of becoming a big-time singer in Nashville until she falls in love with Harley Bright a handsome juvenile delinquent turned revival preacher. As their tumultuous love story unfolds Velva Jean must choose between keeping her hard-won home and pursuing her dream of singing in the Grand Ole Opry. The film starring Elle Fanning Justice Smith Luke Wilson and Keegan Michael Key is now streaming on Netflix with a script by Jennifer and Liz Hannah (*The Post*): Jennifer is currently at work on her fourth and fifth novels for young adults with number three— *Breathless*— coming out September 29, Her previous works include four novels for adults as well as three nonfiction books: She divides her time between Los Angeles and coastal Georgia with her husband kids and literary cats. Singing is all Velva Jean wants to do. Her ultimate goal is to sing at the Grand Ole Opry. Harley Bright. Harley has grown from a

miscreant to Revival Preacher. And Little Miss Velva Jean is quite taken with him. And she isn't sure she will be able to have both. She gives another stellar narration and elevated this story. There were battles she to fight to prove herself. She did learn to drive by herself. Characters were well drawn intimate and complete. No stereotypes or straw-men. (Or maybe not less.) I may need to think on this a bit more. Thanks to Elizabeth for the loan of the book. It was beautifully written. They also encourage her to grab onto her dreams. Many were excited many were afraid. But later a new dream emerges . . . Velva Jean wants to learn to drive. Unfortunately she lost interest and didn't continue it. For surely Velva Jean was a great read. Velva Jean is a true survivor with a wonderful heart. Velva Jean has spunk and independence and a kind heart. {site_link}.