



Sunrise

Susan May Warren

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In Susan May Warren's novel about a steady, fated romance, *Sunrise*, a prodigal son returns to the shadow of Denali to take up the mantle of a bush pilot, all while confronting memories of the woman he left behind.

After his estranged father is injured, Dodge, a veteran, returns to Sky King Ranch to cover his flight routes. He makes deliveries to remote homesteads and runs into Echo, a spirited wilderness guide who, a decade before, hurt him with a thoughtless betrayal. Both harbor mixed feelings about each other; they hesitate to rekindle their relationship.

The events of Dodge and Echo's adolescence shaped their perspectives about love, as did their family rifts. At first determined to avoid pain, they learn to accept the risks that come from allowing God's plans to supersede their own. Too often, though, the novel delegates issues of faith to Dodge's father, who is a fount for calm advice. His words resurface in Dodge and Echo's minds at opportune junctures in the tale.

Paralleling the reignited relationship are intriguing threats from poachers, grizzlies, and treacherous weather, as well as piercing descriptions of the couple's hometown. Dodge and Echo search for a missing friend, and the demands of their mission result in plentiful suspense.

Dodge and Echo's interactions are sometimes tentative, and at other times marked by restrained passion. Echo is somewhat fearful about them. This back-and-forth propels the story forward, though Echo's repeating worries about abandonment are a point of frustration. Still, both characters are compelling and idealistic: each believes the other is the only person they'll love, resulting in sweet endurance.

In the romance novel *Sunrise*, a once-couple reconciles in the rugged landscape of Alaska's beautiful frontier.

KAREN RIGBY (January / February 2022)

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