

The Fairness of Beasts

Gar LaSalle

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Gar LaSalle's third book in the Widow Walk series, *The Fairness of Beasts*, moves a sprawling family saga into the drawing rooms and battlegrounds of a people divided.

The year is 1862. Geographic distance and family rifts emerge from the Civil War's darkness to threaten Emmy O'Malley Evers's kith and kin. As they try to survive all that divides them, Emmy scrambles to navigate a personal war, aware that, decision or indecision, some relationships may be severed forever.

The daughter of a Democratic congressman from Massachusetts, Emmy has had access to money and power all her life, but recent experience has seasoned her. Twice widowed, she is a survivor. Now she is reunited with her family and living in Washington, DC. Her beau, physician Rory Brett, waits behind Southern lines for an answer to his proposal.

As the war escalates, communication evaporates, and Emmy's family is once again endangered when she leaves her children behind to embark on an extraction mission, unsure if she's guided by head or heart.

Emmy is a flawed heroine whose strength seems brittle, perhaps due to all she's survived. But this is more than Emmy's story. The novel uses multiple points of view and explores the lives of each character who crosses Emmy's path. Sexual victimization of children, physical and psychological violence, and the pedestrian abuse of power are significant themes and make for harrowing reading.

When the characters' problematic choices coalesce with the savagery of war, the outcomes are heartbreaking and often horrifying, "without so much as anything that resembles even a bit of the fairness accorded to beasts." Gar LaSalle's diligent use of historical events and locations serve as a frequent reminder that this fiction is moored in a bloody past that none were able to outrun or escape.

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