

Xpress Reviews: Fiction | First Look at New Books, April 27, 2012

McFadden, Maryann. **The Book Lover**. Three Women. May 2012. 340p. ISBN 9780984867103. pap. \$14.99. F Hopeful author Lucinda Barrett is sliding into depression after receiving multiple rejection letters from publishers when she decides to self-publish and promote her novel. Upon discovering devastating news about her husband's secret life, she escapes on a book tour. Reeling and confused, Lucy shows up at an author signing a week early and has a minor breakdown in a small New Jersey bookstore. Owner Ruth Hardaway recognizes Lucy's stricken look as one she herself had years ago. Ruth offers Lucy the use of her lakeside cabin where she can recuperate. Lucy's friendship with Ruth grows as does her attraction for Ruth's Iraq war veteran son, Colin. **Verdict** McFadden (*The Richest Season; So Happy Together*) tells an absorbing tale of two women struggling to overcome their fears of failure and achieve more fulfilling lives. Avid readers will identify with the love of books that permeates the novel. Through her characters, McFadden deftly personifies the current challenges of authors and independent booksellers.—Joy Gunn, Henderson Libs., NV