

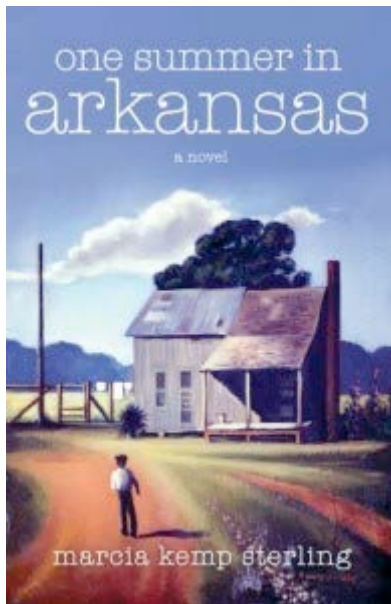
## One Little Library

Of Life and Books

AUTHOR ARCHIVES: [ARIEL PRICE](#)

## One Summer in Arkansas + Giveaway!

Books February 2, 2013 Comments: 2



*One Summer in Arkansas* by Marcia Kemp Sterling; published 2013 by Archelaus Press

A couple weeks ago I linked to [Aimee's review of \*One Summer in Arkansas\*](#). I was so impressed with what she said about the book that I asked the author, Marcia Kemp Sterling, if I could read it. She graciously agreed and also offered to give away three copies to readers!

*One Summer in Arkansas* is the engrossing tale of Lee Addison, newly graduated from Stanford Law, who returns to his hometown of Riverton, Arkansas, to spend a summer with his mother and sister. Though in such a familiar setting, Lee discovers that the hometown and the people he

thought he knew so well are quite different from what he remembers. While interning for a local law firm, Lee is put on a case that makes him see just how connected everyone in the small town is, and how his own family has impacted the community.

Riverton is a town in which racial tensions are still strong, and abiding by the status quo is law. But Riverton is changing. Lee's mother struggles to deal with a new world in which she is no longer the bell of the county. Lee's sister, M.J., struggles to live up to the high standards placed upon her, always in the shadow of Lee's success. Lee finds unexpected friendship in an elderly neighbor, Etta, and in Annie, the high school sweetheart he had left behind. When M.J. makes a fatal mistake, the family must pull together and learn a lesson that Annie and Etta already know: to carry on, to love in spite of suffering.

Sterling beautifully weaves together a rich story, delicately handling difficult topics such as racial strife, class differences, faith, alcohol abuse, and love. As an editor, I was continually amazed by Sterling's thorough plot, balanced with lyrical imagery. Sterling was raised in Arkansas and though I have never been to the South, Sterling made me see the fullness of Southern culture, with all of its beauty and all of its faults.

My favorite character was Annie, and I loved many of her lines:

"Having faith is a humble kind of thing. There's no proof, but you choose to believe. And, for me at least, it has something to do with the fact that our lives are too beautiful and horrible and magical and...*sacred*...to treat them like an accidental evolutionary blip. So I choose to believe in the power of something I can't understand."

"If there was one thing Annie Rayburn had taken away from her lifelong exposure to organized religion, it was patience. Not doctrine or dogma. Not the good works to stamp out malaria in Africa. Not the righteous pride of being on the safe side of an unknowable universe. But there was a quiet strength in her that let her accept the joys that came into her life and at the same time enabled her to give them up."

The book is full of wisdom and just plain good storytelling. If you'd like to enter to win a copy, simply leave a comment and you'll be entered into the drawing!

To learn more about *One Summer in Arkansas* and Marcia Kemp Sterling, you can visit [her website](#).