

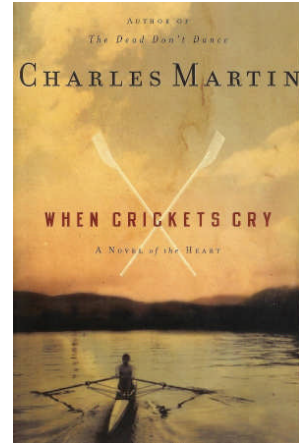
A Review of

When Crickets Cry, A Novel of the Heart

Author: Charles Martin

Reviewed by Jim Gleason, heart transplant recipient

Let me begin with a reminder that this is a work of fiction, a novel, to be enjoyed for its story, not for its factual detail. That said, there is a large part of this story that rings so true to life, with basis on the author's interviews with real heart transplant surgeons, that it may be hard to keep that in mind as the story gets so engrossing and enters the reader's own heart.



Popular author Charles Martin writes stories dealing with lives that come to life in their telling. In this book about a recluse widowed heart transplant surgeon, we come close to feeling the emotions and fears of such a doctor as he deals with three patients whose lives depend on receiving heart transplants through his gifted skills. They are not only patients but become connected to his heart in ways that cannot be described without giving away the storyline. Leave it be said their lives become intertwined as your own heart will in reading their stories as the author creatively takes the reader through flashbacks that build the total picture as its colorful characters face their many medical and relationship challenges of the present. The main story is about a young girl desperately trying to raise money for her heart transplant surgery, but this is only one of several love stories that weave their way throughout the book. Be forewarned, this book quickly engulfs its reader such that I became engrossed in the book as my plane left Philadelphia, and by the time it had landed 5 hours later, I had to finish it before I could continue on with the business of my travels. Later, as we often do with really special stories, my wife and I read it aloud to each other, crying and laughing out loud, trading reading roles as our eyes filled with tears of joy and sadness, blurring our vision. Together we found the same engrossing experience, unable to put it down until the full story had unfolded, and then we fell back, emotionally exhausted with smiles on our faces. Her description of this book was in two words, "heart-filled and heartfelt." As a heart transplant recipient myself, it really touched my heart and with firsthand experiences it rang so true that I had to repeatedly remind myself this was a work of fiction.

Charles Martin did his homework, not just in the technical details, but amazingly in the emotions of both surgeon and waiting patients as the story unfolds and their lives come closer and closer, leading to an ending that will leave you in both surprise and tears. The style of his writing reminds me of Nicholas Sparks, one of my all time favorite authors, so if you like the Sparks' books that awaken your emotions and bring out laughter and tears, this one will become a favorite too. How much did I enjoy it? Enough that I am buying copies as gifts for several special nurses, doctors and friends who helped when I faced my own heart transplant, and that says a lot!

I was especially touched, when, in answer to a question about a heart transplant recipient's concern for that new heart stopping again, we hear the surgeon offer very sincere and heartfelt advice and challenge that each of us could take to heart:

"Yes... but not until you're finished here. All hearts stop. What matters is what you do with it while it's still pumping."

One final word of warning, towards the end of this book, the reader may be tempted to stop reading due to a tragic disappointment. Promise yourself you will read on to the very end. Enough said.

Note: For further information about [When Crickets Cry](#) and purchase options, click on [Amazon.com](#) or [Barnes & Noble](#)

Brief bio:

Jim Gleason received his heart transplant in October, 1994. He volunteers with NKF, UNOS, TRIO and the Gift of Life Donor Program in Philadelphia. Jim is a nationally recognized speaker and author, having appeared on radio (i.e., NPR) and television. His book, [A Gift from the Heart](#), is offered both for downloading or on a CD free as thanks to his donor family and can be obtained by contacting him at GLEASONJIM@AOL.COM.