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A bittersweet, darkly comic novel from a lyrical new voice, *Love Will Tear Us Apart* tells the story of six childhood friends reunited at a wedding where secrets are revealed, hearts are broken, and new meaning is given to the phrase “You can’t go home again.”

High school sweethearts Lea and Dan are getting married—and no one’s surprised. After all, they’re both perfect—so perfect that their “friends” can’t help but be reminded how screwed up they are in comparison. As an awkward night wears on, and getting wasted is the only way to make it through, a killer soundtrack—from Madonna to Nirvana, the Geto Boys to the Grateful Dead—takes us back to the first cracks in their friendships, their shaky transitions into adulthood, and the few moments of love and connection that have defined them through the years.

By turns a Nick Hornby-esque ode to the way music shapes our memories and an elegy to lost youth in the manner of Bret Easton Ellis, *Love Will Tear Us Apart* doesn’t aim to capture some supposed “voice of a new generation” but rather tells the story of a generation more comfortable with letting music speak on its behalf.

Love Will Tear Us Apart Details

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Author : Sarah Rainone

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From Reader Review Love Will Tear Us Apart for online ebook

Justin says

The title caught my attention, the chapter headings sold me, I went in with low expectations... and I ended up loving every word! Hilarious and heartbreaking, this one kind of hit home. Maybe it's just that I grew up during the same era as the characters, maybe it's that I too was part of a Gifted & Talented program, fourth grade through twelfth, and had many very similar experiences. Even if the characters aren't good people, I feel like they are all old friends from back-in-the-day. A little part of me even fell in love with Alex, despite what a train wreck she is, I would love to start a synthpop band with her. (Rob Sheffield would understand.) Thank you, Sarah Rainone. I laughed out loud, I shed a few tears, and I will quote this book for years to come!

If you are child of the 80's and a teen of the 90's, if you liked "Love Is A Mixtape" or "High Fidelity", ignore all the reviews and check this one out!

Catherine says

Terrible, self important, not interesting, faux-deep. Of course, I didn't manage to finish it, either, but I generally give books about music and popular culture obsessions extra love and attention and a generous grading curve. Too many cookie-cutter characters, too much fake drah-mah. Maybe it gets better, but halfway in, I didn't care and wanted them all to just go away and stop liking the same stuff I liked.

Cynthia says

Admittedly, I initially picked up this book solely for the title, as I have a soft spot in my heart for the Joy Division song of the same name. The cover blurb compared this work to Bret Easton Ellis and Nick Hornby. Uh, no. (And not being a fan of Hornby's, we can count ourselves lucky there!) There's a similar bleakness to Ellis. Similar drug use. However, this book has a semblance of a plot (she's got you there, Bret!). It's a fun read, particularly if you grew up, as I did, listening to the music that is referred to throughout the book. The characters' voices are a little flat and stereotype-y at points. (Oh, there's a coked-up New York slut dreading her return to the 'burbs of her youth? How unusual!) But if you can overlook the sense that we've seen & heard much of this already, it's not a bad read.

Garrett Zecker says

For some reason I expected a great deal more from this book. I had read a review of it somewhere that it was a modern, Hornbyesque approach to applying a story to the songs and lyrics of my generation. What I seemed to get, however, was a rather bland and self-indulgent narrative whose main characters seem to just name drop a great deal of the pop culture references within, and I suppose the thing that made me a little disappointed in it was the approach. I recently read Ready Player One, and the main character in that did the same thing, but it seemed to play a much bigger role in the story; but even then, that book seemed to just

name drop, just a bit more effectively and unexpectedly. I also think that the title, and the song it takes it from, does not really reflect the contents which surrounds the reunification of friends at a wedding who are dealing with a great deal of unresolved issues from their youth. This is interesting, because we all have unresolved issues from our youth, and we do in fact attach symbolic and global significance to many of the pop culture events from our youth. We then transpose those and bring them into adulthood, and only the smallest hint of a song or a smell or a taste can bring us back there. This book, however well approached and three dimensional the characters are through a realistic narrative, does not bring me back. I think that the reviewer I read originally, as well as the one who has implied that this book is like Nick Hornby or Bret Easton Ellis in any way, is a bit mistaken and has ultimately led to my disappointment. I probably would not have picked this book up without the reviews and only having read the back copy - which wasn't available when I purchased it used online.

Erika says

nice quick read. nothing that special, but did have some truths/characters that reminded my of my own life. :) oh, and the chapters were song titles & some of them were actually really good songs! hahaha

Brittany says

How I Came To Read This Book: I spotted it at the library and decided to give it a whirl.

The Plot: It's high school sweethearts Lea and Danny's wedding day, and they've gathered all their family, neighbours, and former friends – including four of their formerly nearest and dearest school pals. The story encompasses snippets of the wedding (including a few ugly showdowns) that trigger flashbacks in the four friends lives to their interactions with each other, and the happy couple, going as far back to elementary school. Alex a cokehead, Lea's frenemy, and not-so-secretly in love with the groom. Her best gay friend is Shawn, a fellow recreational drug user that is still struggling with his identity. The other bridesmaid is peace-loving, hippie dippy Cort, fresh from several years on tour with Phish. And finally Danny's right-hand man is wiggalicious Ben, who simply wants to party.

The Good & The Bad: First, skip this book if you hate the emergence of the word 'like' that grew in prominence in the lingo of 80s/90s teens. Rainone isn't afraid to write her characters' dialogue in a most realistic, shallow fashion. Second, skip this book if you aren't interested in character-driven fictional vignettes, as that's pretty much all she wrote here. There isn't much by way of plot, just lots of interesting stories that help build characters and unveil a few revelations by the end of the book (but no resolutions, to be sure). It's a glimpse into these people's lives, and the majority of readers will appreciate that they either know these characters in their own lives – or that they've been them. Minus the excessive whoring and drugging that is...that was seriously a turn-off to be three chapters in and have every character be quite neurotic and depressed and addicted.

Another nice element is the fact this book is set in the 80s/90s. Readers in their 20s and 30s will appreciate the pop culture and music references throughout, and the actual 'gimmick' of the book. Each chapter is named after a song which works its way into the plot, and conveniently, often reflects the theme of that chapter (hm, similar to "Love Is A Mix Tape").

Overall, I enjoyed this book. It wasn't the most enthralling, but it was a relatively interesting character study (albeit Cort felt kind of unfinished – Alex and Shawn felt the most wholly realized) that basically could have used a few more ends tied...but then life isn't like that, is it?

The Bottom Line: A character-driven homage to 90s angst.

Anything Memorable: Nope. Although I'll point out this book is an interesting mix of Martha Wainwright's "The Bitch Posse", Rob Sheffield's "Love Is A Mix Tape", and the TV show Lost.

50-Book Challenge: Book #51 in 2009.

Ethan Cramer-Flood says

I'm giving this book a four instead of a three because I know Sarah and I like her, so she's getting the nepotism boost. Also I suspect that for people who like this genre it may genuinely be a four star novel. The kind of story Sarah recounts in Love Will Tear Us Apart is not my cup of tea, but my gf read it and loved it, and I can concede that it has legit entertainment value. Sarah's got a real talent for crisp zingers, and she infuses her female characters with impressive depth and truth. Her male characters don't seem as honest -- and I cringed at some of her attempts at hip-hop lingo -- but the plot was sharp and it held my attention. I think there's some real ability here, and I hope she centers her next project around her obvious strength: expressing the thoughts of hip, edgy, tormented young women.

Em says

with chapters titled by stand out 80's songs, I secretly had high hopes. but, damn, I couldn't stand these people and, although told from different characters' perspectives in a group of party friends who've grown apart since high school, they all sounded like the same a**hole that always drank one too many beers and intrusively hit on everyone who walked or told stupid braying jokes that they later forgot. sigh. I guess the author did a great job at creating this character and there were definitely some great moments, thus the 3 stars.

Jeff says

It's a good read filled with shocking revelations and good one liners but it didn't win me over completely which is not the fault of the author who is good.

I applaud the inventiveness of the book revolving around a wedding of two characters who never really speak for themselves but through the testimonials of the other characters. Describes their love story and their wedding while the same various characters reveal a lot about themselves and how their past may have shaped them to how and who they are now.

We also get a vivid memory of someone from the past they all knew but couldn't make it there. I also love the realism of the story no happy ending not everyone's life or problem is solved there are still a lot of

unanswered questions when the book ends. in fact some things about the characters are never revealed frustrating but it shows your interest in them. This is a coming of age tale.

I can recommend it. Not riveting or intresting.

Ashley Churbock says

Technically, I would give this book about a 2.5 if I could. There were parts/chapters of this book I really enjoyed and others I did not. The first 50 or so pages were not so good but by the middle of the book, I started to get into the characters more. I think the way Sarah Rainone ties music (great music) in with the development of the characters is interesting and unique. I did not like how every character is pessimistic, unmotivated, and generally an awful person. It's kind of a "whoa is me" book where the development of the characters is SOLELY based on stories that revolve around sex and drugs. It is hard to believe that the friends of these so called "great" people (Lea and Danny) who are getting married are only drug addict losers. And, I TOTALLY disagree with the comparison of Sarah Rainone to Bret Easton Ellis. I'm sorry, Sarah, sure you're great. Overall, an easy and enjoyable read and the author has loads of potential to become a great writer.

Desiree says

i really enjoyed this novel... written by a friend of a friend...

this is an excellent "coming-of-age"-type story plus there's the great idea of making the novel a "mix tape" of sorts with each chapter representing a different song from the 90s... the characters are fairly well conceived and most of them plenty multi-dimensional... the writing is quite good, too. the only thing that detracted, in my opinion, was her dispensation with the convention of quotation marks... she begins all dialogue with a dash, but continues on into personal thoughts and then back into quotes with no delineation. not my favorite thing. i like good old-fashioned indicators that someone is speaking, sorry!

highly recommended as a quick beachy read, especially for anyone who grew up in the 90s :P

Rebecca McNutt says

Nostalgic and despite its rather typical plot, dull characters and choppy sentences, it's an unforgettable novel nonetheless.

Jen says

79 pages in and I cannot stand to read another sentence about these messed-up, self-centered, high-ons and waste-oids--maybe when I was 21 and screwing up in college I would have loved this book...who knows.

79 pages in I still don't know much about Lea, the one getting married, and so it's hard to say whether I feel bad for her because she has a bunch of suck-ass friends or that maybe she is just like them and deserved friends like them.

As for the music. Ahhh, I'm not getting it. The back copy of the book references a "killer soundtrack" and again 79 pages in a few chapter titles are song titles and there is a reference to the strippers playing Def Leppard, but not much else. Sure where I decided to stop was the part where the best man is accosting the groom at the wedding for not playing his, the best man's, 32 song playlist, so maybe the music was coming-- who knows.

Read with caution...unless of course you can relate to a bunch of grown adults doing 'shrooms, snorting coke, being late for a wedding your standing up in, and moaning about how your friend's not playing your full list of songs at his wedding.

Chris says

I read Sarah Rainone's Love Will Tear Us Apart. I mean, how could I not after it was described as a cross between Nick Hornby and Brett Easton Ellis? And that's exactly what it was, minus Hornby's music literacy and Ellis' moderate depravity (not including the completely depraved Glamorama and American Psycho). In my mind, the best music-driven book ever written is Hornby's High Fidelity. This is no High Fidelity. Love Will Tear Us Apart is a decent book - at no point did I consider putting it down nor was I ever not entertained - but music certainly didn't drive the story. It wasn't even an integral part. And that was a little disappointing.
