



Fierce Fragile Hearts

Sara Barnard

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'This time around, I'm going to be so much better. I'm going to prove to them that it was worth waiting on me.'

Two years after a downward spiral took her as low as you can possibly go, Suzanne is starting again. Again. She's back in Brighton, the only place she felt she belonged, back with her best friends Caddy and Rosie. But they're about to leave for university. When your friends have been your light in the darkness, what happens when you're the one left behind?

Fierce Fragile Hearts is the stunning sequel to international bestseller *Beautiful Broken Things*.

Fierce Fragile Hearts Details

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Author : Sara Barnard

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From Reader Review Fierce Fragile Hearts for online ebook

Samantha (WLABB) says

Rating: 4.5 Stars

I am really grateful that we got this sequel. I knew Caddy and Rosie would be ok after Fragile Like Us, but I wanted to know how Suzanne made out. This transition was bumpy, but Suzanne discovered so much about herself during this year in Brighton, and I was really proud of the tremendous changes she made.

Full review to follow

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Brooklyn Tayla says

RTC.

Georgi says

Okay so I read Beautiful Broken Things yesterday and today I decided to carry on the series whilst it was still fresh in my mind and it was a very good decision!

Beautiful Broken Thing's was done from Caddy's point of view whereas this one is done from Suzanne's point of view and I have to say I loved it even more, I gave Beautiful Broken Things four stars out of five but I just had to rate this one higher because it actually made me go through a major rollercoaster of emotions, I've been a mess all day guys!!

I had to stop reading multiple times because I was becoming a blubbering mess! Books rarely make me cry and I cannot even begin to tell you how many times I was welling up or full on crying throughout this.

This time around, I'm going to be so much better, I'm going to prove to them that it was worth waiting on me.'

The book is based two years after the events that happened in Beautiful Broken Things where Suzanne has decided to move back to Brighton where she has felt much more at home. We see her character develop a lot since the events two years previous and we get to see how she is dealing with being independent and learning how to help herself.

At the beginning of each chapter there is a title with a song so if you wanted to you could listen to the music whilst reading along as we learnt in the first book that Suzanne likes to have playlists which makes sense for the author to have done this.

There were scenes in the book with a character named Dilys who Suzanne visits a lot and the moments with

her are the main cause of my sobbing, I find it hard to put into words because the parts I was crying at weren't actually all sad but there were moments where I was just like ???

I would really like a third book in this series to be done from Rosie's point of view, I'm not sure if this has been mentioned or not but it would be interesting to read as I feel we don't get to see her much in this one or really in the first book compared to Suzanne and Caddy!

Becca Fowell says

I would like to thank the publisher and NetGalley for providing me with an ARC for *Fierce Fragile Things* by Sara Barnard.

First off I'm so so happy I got sent an ARC for this book, because it has been KILLING ME waiting for this to be released, and now I don't have to wait (still got this pre-ordered because oh boy will I be re-reading this!)

For those of you that don't know, this is actually a sequel to *Beautiful Broken Things* which I believe was released about 2, maybe 3 years ago. I absolutely loved BBT and felt like I needed more on those characters, and thankfully Sara has answered my prayers. I loved how we got the story from Suzanne's view point (as opposed to Caddy's) and my heart just broke for her multiple times. It hurts knowing that even though Suzanne is a fictional character, there are so many real people out there who have to go through the horrible things that Suzanne has had to go through.

I really liked the progress of Suzanne's internal battle with finding herself and being independent. I loved how we finally get to watch her grow and I'm so proud of where she's at by the end of the book. I feel like there are so many unanswered questions, but in the good way, where we can decide for ourselves what happens after the book ends... although I would not be upset if there was another book, just saying (I really love Sara's writing)

Lucy says

(Gifted) Thank you to Netgalley and Pan Macmillan for an eARC of this book.

Please note: this book is the companion novel to *Beautiful Broken Things* and maybe therefore contains spoilers for that book. Other than that, this is a spoiler free review of *Fierce Fragile Hearts*.

Trigger Warnings: This book does deal with an abusive history as well as talk about suicide attempts.

I think I'll start this review with a bit of backstory of when I read *Beautiful Broken Things*. I read *Beautiful Broken Things* about a year and a half ago and it was the first Sara Barnard book I'd picked up. It wasn't my favourite book, but I loved Barnard's writing style and there were definitely aspects of it that made me want to pick up *Fierce Fragile Hearts*.

I went into *Fierce Fragile Hearts* knowing practically nothing. I don't think I even realised it was told from Suzanne's perspective. I just knew it was to do with Caddy, Rosie and Suzanne from *Beautiful Broken*

Things. But despite knowing nothing about it, I still really enjoyed it.

I'd say this book is definitely more character driven than it is plot driven but it deals with so many different and important aspects that I don't feel it really needed a plot to keep it going. It done well enough without some sort of mission. There were perhaps a couple of moments I felt slightly bored but nothing too dramatic, especially since I knew if I kept reading through the parts that didn't interest me as much, there would definitely be something that was about to come up that was more interesting and intense and kept me on the edge of my seat.

This book deals with lots of different and important points. One for example is the fact Suzanne is coming out of care having to live by herself and not following the path of her friends Caddy and Rosie, who both go to University. I think both the fact Suzanne is living independently without the help of any parents and the fact she isn't going to Uni is important because there are going to be young adults out there, whether they have a similar history to Suzanne or not, who are going to be having to live independently or aren't going to Uni. I think these points show it's okay to not be doing what everyone else is doing. It was also rather refreshing to read about a character who wasn't doing the whole A-level business and I really feel it shows your well being comes first.

Sara Barnard really seems to capture intense relationships perfectly. There is no sugarcoating it, it is what it is. She really shows the ins and outs of a friendship and no relationship is easy, whether that's platonic or romantic. Caddy and Rosie appear so early on in the book which is so lovely to see. I was kind of hoping this would set the friendship tone for this book which I suppose it did do, but I think I was expecting a bit more happy side of the friendship when there was actually a lot of tension. That being said, it was so good to see Caddy and Rosie supporting Suzanne. I also really enjoyed seeing Rosie have more of a role in Suzanne's social life.

What I also really enjoyed about these characters was that they were all completely different from each other. I just admire Caddy's honesty, Suzanne's perseverance and Rosie, well, I just really loved Rosie. There are also some new characters which I don't want to say too much about in case I spoil anything but it was certainly great to have some new faces thrown in there too as new people can also put strains on relationships and is something that is going to happen in people's lives.

Suzanne is definitely a character who grows throughout the book and there's moments when you want to help Suzanne and then moments where she helps herself and you're just so proud of all the thing she's achieved. I think I remember not really liking Suzanne that much in Beautiful Broken Things, not that I hated her but rather she wasn't a favourite character, but in this book, I just really began to love her and like I said, felt proud of her for the things she achieves.

I don't think I realised how important Suzanne's story was until I read this because of literally everything that Suzanne is going through, whether that's dealing with her family, her friendship struggles or the fact she is living on her own and slightly separated from her friends. I think there is something everyone will relate to whether that's now or at another point in there life.

Overall, it's a book definitely worth picking up if you've read Beautiful Broken Things!

Kelly says

I need some time to process words and thoughts but another PHENOMENAL novel from Sara Barnard.
full review to come

Trisha says

Authentic and immersive.

Review to come on my blog soon.

#blogtour #yabloggers

Escape into a Booksite says

4 Stars

ARC kindly received via Pan MacMillan Aus in exchange for an honest review.

This was my first book by Sara Barnard, and let me tell you, it was quite intense. At times I found it hard to read. It really pulled you into the story and made you feel the things that our main character Suzanne did.

When she was insecure, I was insecure. I actually had to put this down for a while and read something else in the middle, to give myself a break.

The book deals with very serious issues, surrounding abuse, particularly emotional abuse. We follow Suzanne as she comes out of foster care and is making a new life for herself. She's finding her footing and where she fits in with her friends again. She's trying to make changes to how she reacts to things and treats other people, and she's trying not to spiral out of control again.

Very intense, but a great story.

Imi (Imi Reviews Books) says

This review was originally posted on my blog, Imi Reviews Books

I received an uncorrected proof copy for free from the publisher in exchange for an honest review.

Any quotes used in this review are subject to change upon release.

You may have noticed that I read Beautiful Broken Things just a few weeks ago. I had to get that in quick because the lovely people at My Kinda Book sent me an ARC of this! Now, it's worth noticing that this is a companion (and sequel, in that the events occur after those of *BBT*) however, I believe both books are readable as standalones. I think I probably connected with the characters more because I had read the first, but I feel like the strength of this story would shine through without the prequel.

To add to that, this book has everything that was missing from the first for me. Now, like I said in my review, I couldn't exactly tell you what was missing, but something felt not quite right for me, hence the four stars. But this? This was phenomenal. It was everything *BBT* had, it was everything *BBT* was lacking, and it was everything I needed.

"They have this power, my friends, even after all this time, even though I don't deserve it; they're like lamp posts on midnight streets. Lights in the dark."

The return of Suzanne, Caddy and Rosie – I know I hadn't been out of their world for long, but diving back into it was really great, especially with the time jump. Seeing the whole gang three years on was really great, plus it's set at my favourite point in life for YA – going to uni for the first time. This time of life is so tumultuous and so difficult. I remember it well – the fear, the anxiety, making new friends, fending for yourself, the independence, the homesickness, being thrown together with people you'd never normally socialise with. It is hectic. Seeing the girls go through this, and Suzanne watching from the sidelines is so intriguing. So many of the university scenes could have so easily been taken straight from my uni experience. Again, Sara Barnard nails the British teen experience.

It isn't just the uni though, it was just having the girls back together that was amazing. Seeing how their friendship has blossomed, changed, grown and diminished in different ways over the time apart and the time being back together is truly wonderful. Friendships are living things, they change so much as you grow as a person and the time as a young adult, leaving home, independence, these are the times when friendships change the most because you are changing the most. Sara explores this idea so well and I felt all of it.

"When someone knows you've been broken, all they see is the cracks."

Suzanne's perspective – I think this was the most important thing for me. *BBT* was told from Caddy's perspective, and while that was very important for that book, I think that was the reason why it disconnected a little for me. As I reader, I was more focussed on Suze rather than Caddy, and not having Suze's perspective made it hard. But here it is, all of Suze's thoughts and feelings. How she has grown up, survived and is trying to recover. I needed her voice, and getting it was the best thing that could have happened. Suze has had a hard past, that feels like an understatement, but it was rough. Importantly she's still here. She's survived and she's still struggling. Recovery is never a straight line, and seeing her coping, living, trying, has been so important, and I think a lot of readers will agree with me when I say that it has meant so much to me to experience Suze's story.

"This is what people like Sarah will never understand. What none of them will ever understand. How you can want help and not want it at the same time. It's not even about levels. It's just confusion all the way down."

Mental health – Honestly this has some of the best mental health rep I have read. I relate too much to Suze and it was hella painful to read myself in her. Her self-destruction, her spirals. The above quote I felt in my

bones, my blood and my soul. Being self-aware while suffering from depression is so hard. The wanting to get better, but the not wanting, the desire to wallow and spiral, but still hoping to save yourself. It is just confusion, and it's horrible. Sara approaches this and explores it so perfectly. Again, Suze's point of view really helped this book with the rep. *BBT* being from Caddy's POV meant that there was a disconnect, and Caddy's confusion and not knowing how to deal with it, while very realistic, made it seem like it was being portrayed in a skewed way, and that was the point. Experiencing this from Suze, put a lot of *BBT* into perspective for me. Another huge tick for Sara.

"The people who have failed to love you simply do not know you. That is not your fault. This is your only life, and it is short. Surround yourself with people who love you."

Dilys and Clarence – OKAY GUYS ARE YOU READY FOR THE GUSH. Dilys is without a doubt my favourite new addition in terms of characters (and there are quite a few great new characters). It's hard to talk about without spoiling but Dilys is a next-door neighbour of Suze's and Clarence is her dog. They bring so much to this story, and while they don't get loads of airtime, the impact they have on the story as a whole is immense. They were such a highlight for me, and Dilys had a lot of wisdom which I personally really needed this week, so thank you Sara.

On the note of new characters, big shout out to Jade who is from Somerset and has an "amazing accent".

"Any friend can make you laugh. Best friends make you cry."

Recovery – More than anything, this book is about recovery, and recovery is something that doesn't happen and then poof, you're better. Recovery is something that you go through for the rest of your life and some days it will be better and other days will be worse. Sara depicts this so well through Suze's story. We can see how much she has learned and how much she has grown in the three years away from Brighton, but continuing on, we see her learn more and more about recovery over the course of the book. You see her realise that her path is constantly changing and challenges will always be thrown her way but she can overcome them.

This is the book I needed when I was 18, leaving school lost and low. This is the book I needed at 19, going to uni alone and afraid. This is the book I needed at 20, running away from love because I was terrified of it. This is the book I needed at 22, moving out of home to a brand new city with no friends. And this is the book I needed at 23, this very week when my lows hit me hard and I didn't know what to do. This book is so very powerful and so very needed. Thank you, Sara, for your words.

"Recovering isn't about fresh starts, or new beginnings. It's about the constant as well as the change. You build a foundation in layers, and that's what makes it strong. Maybe sometimes it means taking a step back, but that doesn't have to be a bad thing. Sometimes you have to take a step back to get a better view of where you're going."

Representation: *Mental illness (depression and anxiety), LGBTQIA+ (coming out, bi rep, F/F secondary relationship), PoC side characters.*

Content Warning: *Emotional abuse and manipulation, physical abuse (past actions discussed), mild sexual content, grief.*

Dannii Elle says

Actual rating 3.5/5 stars. This is the second instalment in the Beautiful Broken Things series.

Beautiful Broken Things is the story of best friends Caddy and Rosie and what happens to their friendship when their ranks are infiltrated by new girl Suzanne. She is rebellious and restless. She is erratic and emotional. She is trouble and troubled. She promises the lives and friendships of all those around her will never be the same again.

Fierce Fragile Hearts takes place two years after Suzanne has left. She is set to return to Brighton, and the best friends she left there, but she knows she also must face all of the trials from her past, as she does so.

Whilst the first book was told from Caddy's perspective, this latter instalment is told from Suzanne's. I'm so glad the reader was provided with a chance to hear of her story, in her own voice, as I felt there was so much left to learn about her character, after Beautiful Broken Things concluded.

Whilst this provided the same levels of teary-eyed heartache and laughter-filled bellyache as the first book, I did find that I missed some of the best friend magic, of the former. The relationship between the three did form the crux of this novel but romantic relationships were blossoming and detracted some of the focus from the trio, somewhat. That is not to say that Barnard created some badly-made Lotharios, it is merely a case of my personal preference being for books that remain primarily romance free, which is what I so appreciated in BBT.

At its centre, however, this is a novel about Suzanne, best friends and potential boyfriends aside. Her traumatic past still haunts her and the reader continues along with her journey as she attempts to come to terms with this. Every section that featured her alone had me hooked on every word and Barnard did her terrible story true justice. Suzanne really proved herself as bearing a fierce, fragile heart and almost broke mine as she came to realise this.

Also, Dilys is the best fictional character in creation!

I received a copy of this book in exchange for an honest review. Thank you to the author, Sara Barnard, and the publisher, Macmillan Children's Books, for this opportunity.

Nemo (The Moonlight Library) says

OMG

want

need

MUST HAVE

will not cry

who am I kidding this is Sara Barnard, shredder of souls

Lost count of how many times I cried while reading this.

Review coming Feb 15 as part of the Fierce Fragile Hearts blog tour!

Amy (Golden Books Girl) says

Beautiful Broken Things was one of the first YA books I remember reading and loving, and ever since that day in 2016 when I devoured it in a single sitting, I have thought often of Suzanne, who was Caddy's new best friend in that book who had to leave Brighton at the end due to difficult circumstances. In this sort of sequel, set two years later, we see things from Suzanne's point of view as she returns to Brighton and attempts to build an adult life for herself after leaving the care system, while also having to deal with her past and her abuser continuing to torment her, a romance with a handsome musician she's been warned off of and the way that her friendships with Caddy and Rosie shift when they leave for university. As you might have guessed, I already really loved Suzanne, and her narration only added to this; she is so flawed, yet utterly loveable, and I admired her so much for how far she has come since Beautiful Broken Things, and how hard she is still trying to create a happier life for herself, even though it is so unfair that she has to. I also love the portrayal of the friendship between Suze, Caddy and Rosie, Suzanne's romance with Matt was gorgeous (I can't tell you how hard I was rooting for them) and I adored the new additions of Kel and Dilys too. They all felt so real to me, and I think this was due to the super natural dialogue and inclusion of messages/group chats between them. I couldn't put this down because I so desperately needed to see how everything was going to turn out, and the writing is so beautiful that it was very easy to lose myself in Suzanne's story. I don't think I'll ever stop thinking about how Suzanne might be getting on, but I really like where we left her at the end of this. Prepare yourself to feel every emotion possible, and pick up Beautiful Broken Things and then this. I really don't think you'll regret it. 5/5

Karen Barber says

One of those books that felt like coming back to a familiar friend, though everything had moved on a little. A couple of years on Suzanne is now 19, still very much in the process of recovery and just about to start living alone. She gets a bedsit in Brighton and returns to the place that made her so happy, though her best friends Rosie and Caddy are about to leave for university.

The actual situation Suzanne is in is upsetting, but not unfamiliar to many. It was mildly amusing to see her going through the process of learning to be independent, but I still felt rage at what she had been through at the hands of her family.

I was fascinated by the way Barnard wrote about the therapeutic relationship, and the after-effects of trauma. It all felt far too intense at times, and the ins and outs of the story didn't always appeal as much as I'd hoped

they would. However, Matt has to go down as one of the loveliest characters I've read about for a while, and I have a new soft spot for Dilys.

I'm very grateful to NetGalley for providing me with an advance copy in exchange for my thoughts, and I can't wait to get my hands on a physical copy to pass on to those I know who loved Beautiful Broken Things.

liv says

i need this immediately

L A says

Thanks to Pan Macmillan and NetGalley for providing me with an Advance Review Copy in exchange for an honest review.

I've read some very disappointing contemporary YA novels lately, but I knew from the start that this book was going to be different. I haven't read the author's previous novel which concerns some of the same characters, but I don't feel like I had to in order to appreciate this one.

The story follows Suzanne, an 18-year-old girl who has recently left the care system. Suzanne suffered from physical abuse in her childhood which continues to affect her life. At the beginning of the novel she has moved back to Brighton to start a new life for herself. There are lots of changes for Suzanne to deal with including living and managing by herself for the first time, her close friends leaving to go to university and a potential new relationship.

The novel does a really great job of portraying the reality of Suzanne's life and the issues she experiences. Her struggle with her finances and the loneliness she experiences in her tiny bedsit are all too real to anyone who has been in a similar position. One thing that stuck out for me in particular was when she is too poor to buy food in bulk. This is something that people in real life rather patronisingly say to struggling people so that struck a chord to me. This novel examines the realities of living a minimum wage existence and the hand to mouth existence that is a reality for many. Loneliness, poverty and abuse are all explored and it's hard not to feel genuine sadness and frustration at Suzanne's experiences and the mistakes she makes.

The characters all felt incredibly real. Suzanne, Rosie and Caddy were all utterly believable as young girls on the very cusp of adulthood and their experiences and friendships will be familiar to many young women at this point in their lives. The laughter, the tears, the drama, the angst...it's all here. The relationship between Suzanne and her elderly neighbour Dilys is also very touching and sweet. The relationships in this book are mature and complex, this isn't fairy tale land. It's the real world and the author has captured this brilliantly.

As a main character, Suzanne is sometimes a difficult person to like, and some of her choices will frustrate you as the reader but she feels very real. If anything, Matt was perhaps a little too good to be true, but I could also argue it's nice to have a male character in a contemporary YA novel who isn't a complete and utter git.

There were moments of humour too, I couldn't help having a little laugh at quotes like:

"I feel instantly terrible for judging her for wearing Converse even though she's in her forties"

As someone pushing 40, I did feel ever so slightly personally attacked but I let it slide. No one is ever going to stop me wearing my Converse.

This novel had all you would want from a contemporary YA novel. It explores real issues; the voices are credible and the problems and issues the characters experience are all utterly believable. Highly recommended.
