



## Diary of a South Beach Party Girl

*Gwen Cooper*

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South Beach in the late 1990s is a town of blink-and-you'll-miss-'em nightclubs populated by celebrities, models, mobsters, heiresses, drug dealers, drag queens, and fun seekers of all stripes. It's a place where the famous come to party like locals, the locals party like rock stars behind velvet ropes, and the press is savvy enough to know what not to report.

Rachel Baum is a sheltered, career-oriented everygirl when she moves to South Beach from her quiet Miami suburb, searching for a life less ordinary. Quickly making friends among SoBe's most exclusive scenesters, she spends her days building a career and her nights building a reputation. But in a town where friends become enemies faster than highs become hangovers, the life less ordinary turns into more than Rachel bargained for. As she pursues the endless party in penthouses, dive bars, after-hours clubs, and cocaine speakeasies, Rachel struggles to balance her goals and ambitions with the decadence and excess -- especially her drug-fueled, on-again off-again relationship with Yale-graduate-turned-addict John Hood -- that threaten to destroy everything she's always worked for.

With tremendous wit and razor-sharp insight, *Diary of a South Beach Party Girl* portrays the innermost sanctums of South Beach's privileged Beautiful People through the eyes of a no longer innocent heroine.

## Diary of a South Beach Party Girl Details

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## **From Reader Review Diary of a South Beach Party Girl for online ebook**

### **Yvelisse says**

so don't bother reading this book if you haven't been part of the club scene, or any true hard-core party scene. You will not get it at all since you have lived an average life. You only get it if you have been in v.i.p. It's all-around fun reading.

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### **Emily Mcarthur says**

I adore this book. I've read it 8,000 times. Rachel is so much like me!! I also credit this book for inspiring me to go into nightlife pr. (the lead character does that) Makes me want a best friend like Ricky and go clubbing with them! I think my favorite part is when Rachel is on a date trying to hide the fact that she is high as a kite, rofl

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### **Aspasia says**

Although this was well written, I wanted to reach into the book and shake the protagonist...hard. A middle class, suburban Miami girl moves to South Beach and for three years engages in non-stop partying, cocaine use and multiple sexual partners. Her lifestyle made me cringe as I read this book.

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### **Lynn says**

I really enjoyed this book, but I lived in Miami for almost 20 years, and was actually was a "lite" version of the party girl that Rachel Baum was in this book. That enabled me to relate a lot better to the lifestyle that she was leading. On the mainland where I lived, however, there was not as much social climbing, although we did enjoy VIP status to a couple of clubs where we would sail in nightly without ever paying a cover charge, or for more than one drink, for that matter (although we'd be drinking all evening).

Gwen Cooper paints a very apt picture of life on South Beach in the 90's, when South Beach had really come of age again. The excess that she describes is not an exaggeration, and my guess is that this book is largely autobiographical, despite all the disclaimers in the prologue. I recognized (and had visited) a few of the clubs that she mentions in the book, although as a "causeway crawler" with no SoBe connections who had to pay full cover charge, these forays were infrequent.

What comes across strongly, and what resonated with me the most, was Rachel's lack of self esteem under her mask of bravado and social status. Despite being an "it girl", invited to every exclusive party and rubbing shoulders with the rich and famous, she was still vulnerable to losers (one in particular) who would use her affections for their own selfish ends - something that I could totally relate to as I had been in that place as well. Even after Rachel moved away from that environment and left those people behind, she was still susceptible to their siren call.

The book was well-written, and I'd recommend it to those who were "party girls" at some point in their lives, particularly in Miami, and who can thus relate. Others will find it a repetitious recitation of drug-use and the club scene, and probably won't enjoy it as much.

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### **Regina says**

light & fluffy read, fun most of the time and for those that have been down to south beach, the names will be familiar...it was a little before my time. definite beach read.

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### **Lara says**

Could not make myself care about any of the characters. Pretty people doing drugs is not exciting to me. Instead, I find myself angered by the selfishness of Rachel and her "friends". This may be a true representation of life in Miami in the 90's, but in the 90's I was raising my son; nothing resonates with me.

This is mostly disappointing as I loved Cooper's other fiction novel, and the biography of her blind cat. I'll definitely read anything else she reads, as long as it has characters and situations that are compelling to read about. Sadly, both were lacking here for me.

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### **Kellie Eizensmits says**

this was kind of a fun book to read partly due to all the name dropping and all the drugs they all did...I kept waiting for her to grow up and have a "real" relationship and job...which she finally did at the end.

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### **Christy says**

This is one of those books that you read because you secretly wish you were Paris Hilton. It's not a superb story, but the glamor and glitz really draw you in. Next plane to South Beach anyone? Ahhh, the life!

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### **Megan says**

I couldn't have 'tolerated' this book more. I found the main character insipid, annoying, whiny and immature and her male interest equally so.... Then I realized Thai I bought the book in my 20s when life was similar (sans cocaine addiction) and I softened. Now just thankful I wasn't there - because, we could have been good friends...

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### **The Lexington Bookie says**

Alright, so if you've already judged me for reading this, get out. (Ha ha just kidding, you can stay.)

I've been reading a lot of good, heavy hitting books (and watching a ton of drama-series reruns on TV while repainting my house), so I decided what I needed was a little fluff. So, while cleaning and sorting through my book stacks, I pulled out "Diary of a South Beach Party Girl". I don't know how I came to own it, and I don't remember reading it before, but I figured it would give my emotions a break and be perfect for spring break.

I'm assuming this book is based partly on the life of the author, Gwen Cooper. Her main character is Rachel Baum, a Miami native to finds herself bored with her traditional life. So after quitting her non-profit job and breaking up with her long term boyfriend, she heads to South Beach to start anew. She moves in with fast friend Amy, who introduces her to the South Beach party scene.

Night after night, Rachel works her way up the South Beach social ladder, and eventually finds herself becoming the girl she wished she could be- sexy, frivolous, and admired by those around her...a social celebrity. As she mingles, she makes friends with Ricky, Mike, and Kojo, and they become a tight group that picks each other up when South Beach life knocks them down- through job losses, bankruptcy, and long strings of bad boyfriends. Rachel also finds herself hopelessly attracted to John Hood, local transient bad boy with a questionable criminal and drug history.

After a few years of living the life she thought she wanted, Rachel starts to see that South Beach isn't a long term place for a girl like herself. So, she decides to take on New York City, where everything finally ties together.

Like I said, pretty fluffy stuff here. Even though it's all drugs, sex, and rock n' roll, it's a pretty predictable book. Closet party girl wants to party, goes through transformation as a popular party girl, and then decides that she's ready to move on from the party scene for something bigger and better. \*Insert eye-roll here\*. Oh, I should also note that it was written in 2007, but the story really takes place between 1998 and 2000, so there are a lot of references to people and songs that were a big hit in that time frame... which is a little funny to ready. \*NSYNC anyone? So yeah...I wouldn't recommend this book unless you were really looking for a pool side/ beach side read.

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### **Jennifer Gray says**

I read it right after returning from Spring break in South Beach in 07 and it was such a humbling reality of what can happen when your life spins totally out of control.

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### **Jess says**

This book started off exciting, and then the story started getting super repetitive. The end was predictable as always, but most of the loose ends were tied up. It is a good beach read, not much brainpower required to dedicate to this one.

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### **Ket Lamb says**

Gwen Cooper bangs out the late 90s South Beach club scene in this glitzy, rollicking novel, which makes you feel like you've picked the lock on a party girl's diary. The first half zooms along as twenty-five year old Miami native, Rachel Baum, breaks up with her boyfriend and moves in with glamorous trust fund scenester, who takes her beyond the velvet ropes at every social event in town. It isn't long before Rachel's career turns into a fascinating primer for PR wannabes. Once she gets too entangled with the sexy, mysterious, bad boy, Hood, however, it's hard to hang in there. Rachel notes, "We both regarded him as a sort of freak accident that had befallen us, one we couldn't shake and and wouldn't mind if we could - even though we knew we'd probably pay for it in the end." If only she would heed those inner warning bells. Suddenly, our smart, sympathetic protagonist is making annoyingly dumb decisions, repeatedly. Everclear sums it all up on page 198 with the lyrics, "You put yourself in stupid places... Yes, I think you know it's true... wonder if you will ever learn... yeah, why don't you ever learn?" Rachel's response? "Shut up, Everclear." Bad move. Rachel's drug of choice, Hood, leads her on a downward spiral that is almost too depressing and frustrating to stomach. This deeper, darker 90s rendition of "Miami Social" will immediately hook you, but you'll need to be an addict to finish it.

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### **Lenai says**

LOVED IT!!!!!!

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### **Kim says**

I liked this book, but mainly because where I live has similar people to those depicted in this book. I've seen people go through this same type of "status-searching" so to speak and can attest that it is hardly ever pretty. Two observations - yes, there is some repetition but that's sort of the point. The party life ends up being quite repetitious, which the narrator acknowledges in the end. Also, I found the writing to be a bit more formal than I expected based on the story content, but it dawned on me about halfway through that it was intentional. Overall, a good read, but may not be for everyone.

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