



At Seventeen

Gerri Hill

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Madison Lansford and Shannon Fletcher met when they were ten years old. Madison—daughter of wealthy parents and Shannon, daughter of their live-in maid and cook—became fast friends, yet both knew their place in life. There was never a doubt that they would become lovers . . . there was also never a doubt that Madison would marry and maintain her social standing in the community. Little by little, they grew apart, their love affair ending with Madison's marriage and pregnancy. Now, years later, Shannon returns to her old hometown to care for her ailing mother. Can they rebuild their friendship? Or will their new-found closeness bring back memories of their long-lost love? Travel through the years with Shannon and Madison and watch their love unfold as they move from teens to young women and into adulthood.

At Seventeen Details

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From Reader Review At Seventeen for online ebook

Choko says

Light, romantic and fluffy read, which hit the "feel good" spot I needed. A bit formulaic, but still very pleasant. Recommend it for those who love FF contemporary romance with a very touching coming out story.

Bib says

Oh gosh, I forgot that I read this book before. Simple, absorbing and touching story which I completed in a day.

M says

Classic Ms Hill, well written and with a HEA.

Sit back and enjoy!

Just a man's point of view says

Edit:

I just finished relistening the audiobook. Somehow I got compelled to.

And this time I *loved* it.

What I wrote below it's still true. But I've sort of given the characters a second chance and they have become very dear to me.

Yes, they have to struggle and to grow. But they have the most important things and they keep them constant throughout their story: loyalty, sincerity and true mutual affection.

This book certainly has issues. But it also has highlights.

It can be very frustrating. *And* it has beautiful, lyrical moments.

It is a book of contrasts.

For one thing, it is oversexual. The first part especially is nothing but sexual exploration between the two protagonists. Then yes, sex is good. But every interaction, since they were fourteen on, is sexually driven. Even in the second part, where the story really takes off and aims to its conclusion, sex urge between the leads is constantly brought up, even in moments when they really should think about much more.

Then there is the worst issue of all. The main characters are weak, weak, *weak*.

That even explains all the sex. They never confront reality. No rebellion, no will power, no talking or communication. No analyzing the situation to try to work something out, just dully suffering circumstances.

Sex becomes then a refuge where to hide from the misery of their lives. It is very sad.

The sympathizing reader feels all the unease and angst and is a helpless witness of two nice girls letting their lives fall and ruin without doing a single thing to stop it.

And it's very frustrating. Nobody really likes weak characters, isn't it true? Even if we can try to understand Madison, as she has been psychologically abused by her mother since she was a child, yet why she never even tried to say one "no"? And what justification has Shannon not to fight for who she loves? For the life she wants?

Next point.

Let's take it from an entirely different angle.

The truth is I really *felt* for them. Because if we just look at *feelings* this is certainly a five stars, amazing tale.

Between Madison and Shannon there is such a connection, such a commitment... it's really sweet, touching. Their mutual feelings are both powerful and delicate. Even poetic.

Only, this relationship is never explained, it was never actively built by them. It's just innate, instinctive. But it is beautiful just the same.

This book made me make some serious thinking about love.

Love is not only feelings. Feelings are a very important aspect of love. But there is another: *action*. True love always translates in actions. It motivates actions.

So this is where this story falls short. It lacks of balance. Feelings are wonderful, but love actions are lacking.

I enjoyed the reading. Gerri Hill made me feel for her characters. She even made me mad at them sometimes.

Kara says

There are three distinct parts to this book. In part one, we learn of rich-girl Madison and poor-girl Shannon meeting at age 10, and how their forbidden friendship developed into forbidden love over the course of seven or eight years. This period in their lives is told by Shannon to two of her friends of six years during a dinner. I very much liked this part of the book...it was very sweet.

I'll get to the second part in a moment....the third part is predictable so I'll get comments out of the way first. At ages 38, both women reconnect, acknowledge they're still in love with each other, and begin the rest of their lives together....true love having finally won. Tah dah! Check off the HEA.

Ahh...but the second part of the book....not my favorite. Between ages 18 and 38, our MCs lead very separate lives. Rich girl refused to run off with poor girl,, and instead married a man she did not love, and had a child. Poor girl pined so much for her true love rich girl that she never had another fulfilling relationship, and even avoided going home to visit her mother just in case she might run into her true love in the small town. Rich girl you, see, was so into being controlled by her mother that she felt she couldn't make any choices at all...not which sport to play, not which friends to have, not which college to attend, and not whom to marry. Poor girl was just so darned perfect that she had no love life at all until rich girl grew up and decided she could make choices after all.

Yeah, as you might have guessed, I did not much like part two. Rich girl was just too willing to ruin her own life by not living her own life. Poor girl was just too willing to allow her own life to be loveless because

there is, of course, only one single person on the entire planet that she could possibly love, and so she gave that person control over her love life for 20 years, and would, presumably, have died lonely except for her 20 cats if rich girl hadn't (in part three) come to her senses and decided to accept a life together.

Arrgh. I do believe in love, and I enjoy stories in which two people seem destined for each other and end up together in a HEA ending. But I do not like stories, in fiction or real life, in which an otherwise terrific person just can't or won't move on from a rejection by "the love that could have been". How many friends do we have that are emotionally distraught for years by thoughts of "what if"? Twenty years, Shannon? Seriously? Very few people spend their lives with their first love. Losing a first love is heartbreaking....but I believe there really is another person to love out there in the world. Spending life loveless after a first love makes a bad choice is just sad. In the case of this book, getting together at the end is a happy ending, but twenty years of unhappiness permeates this part of the book.

So overall, then, I didn't respect Madison much for her failure to stand up for herself until age 38. As much as I liked Shannon, I didn't have much sympathy for her for spending 20 years allowing Madison's choice to prevent Shannon herself from finding happiness. The story itself was well-written, as all of Gerri Hill's books are, and Carly Robins did an excellent job with the narration, but this book is only a 3* for me.

Rach (Les Rêveur) says

Gerri Hill has written a beautiful story that demonstrates what all good Lesbian Romance Novels should portray... true love lasts forever.

To the outsider, Madison lives a very privileged life with maids, cooks and lives on her family's large estate. Her life has been planned down to the company she will keep, the life she will lead and even the man she will marry. That is until the maid and her daughter move in and Madison's finds something she wants that is not in her life plan, the maid's daughter Shannon.

Shannon and Madison fall in love at very young age but Madison cannot waver from her family's aspirations for her, so Shannon watches from the sidelines and takes any hidden moment she can get until the day she can't take anymore and she leaves. Years later with an ailing mother and a new business afoot, she returns to her home town to find out that true love never really disappears...

Wow, these women were madly in love, the chemistry of these two characters just emanated off the page, to the point I actually thought at one point that Gerri Hill had to know these characters in real life. There were moments I actually got quite upset reading the sections from the past because I could see how tortured both their souls were and I just wanted for them to forget the world and run away together.

At the start I felt so much respect and genuine affection for Shannon for loving Madison the way she did. She never asked for too much and never forced Madison to choose between her and her family, she just accepted it for Madison! I'm not sure how Shannon didn't let the jealousy consume her; she was so strong at such a young age. The sex scenes were off the chart, they were extremely sexy but also gave sensual and loving undertones that just radiated adoration.

The secondary characters were all written extremely well and gave pathways to getting to know the main protagonists better. I have to say though, I wasn't a fan of Shannon's friends Charlotte and Tracy. I just had a weird feeling about them from the beginning in the way they questioned Shannon and about her relationship

with Madison.

I was genuinely sad when this novel ended and I was left wanting to start all over again just to relive the moments.

5 stars

<https://lesreveur.com/2017/01/05/at-s...>

Bree Paige says

I just finish this book around 4am in the morning. This is the book that u couldn't put down. I was already hooked when I've read the first page. I appreciate the book coz it focus more on to dialouge unlike the other book which they describe the whole place even the smallest details of the street that's why they are so long but this book is different. I love the Characters but she didn't describe them well the only thing that I've known to their physical features was Shannon is Brunette with dark eyes then Madison is Blonde with blue eyes and that's all. But I don't know what magic Gerri Hill did bcoz I still fell in love to her characters. Bcoz everytime I've read books I need a concrete description to be attached to their characters but to this I don't know..

my Re read book I love it!!

Jem says

This book got a couple of strongly-worded negative reviews, about it having a rehashed plot, etc. But this is my first Gerri Hill romance so that's not a problem for me. I'm glad I took a chance on it cause it rocks!

What attracted my attention was the rich girl/poor girl premise of the book. I love these impossible pairings. I know the premise is as old as time but the author was able to hash out a very entertaining, angsty and sexy tale out of it.

The two main characters are bff/soulmates as kids and teens. But only when they're alone. The rest of the time, because of their too-diverse social standing, they live in their own respective social worlds and pretend the other one doesn't exist. Things heat up when the adolescent hormones kick in and they step up to become lovers. But our poor little rich girl has her entire life path set out for her by the stereotypically over-the-top meddling mom, which of course, doesn't include the poor girl. Poor girl Shannon can't stand that Madison won't stand up for them and moves away. But even years later, on every occasion the two ladies interact as adults, there's still a lot of sizzling sexual tension.

I love the characters and how they grow as the plot progresses. Not always for the better at first as they live their separate lives in misery for one and apathy for the other. There's lots of angst before they find their way back to each other again. The plot may be trite (but isn't all of romantic fiction?) but the author's skill and versatility (amazing that she's got 20+ books) makes it most enjoyable.

Not Out says

6* Loved it. I am biased towards these storylines that hit home for me.

The courage to get out of an arranged/unhappy marriage, finding your independence and self respect at a later age and learning to accept what makes you happy. ?

Life is too short to keep being scared about what other people might think.

Jade says

Still one of my favourites by Gerri Hill

Megzz says

One of the rare Gerri Hill's novels which don't include broody detectives! How refreshing! I loved it. I love the idea that true love exists and survives time and distance. At Seventeen is a very touching and painful story about two friends who grew up together and who have always loved each other. But that love is impossible: Madison is trapped in the world of wealth and expected to live the life her family sets for her. Obviously, that doesn't include being a lesbian.

When both girls meet again, years in the future, the sparks still fly. Shannon is so endearing, and so incredibly brave. Madison is sometimes very frustrating and annoying (how can she deny herself the happiness of being with the love of her life? How can she blindly follow her mother's orders and live a life she never wanted?), but Gerri Hill manages to depict her struggle really well, too. In the end, I loved both characters. Their story is beautiful, and it's all about breaking free from what people expect from you, and letting yourself be happy.

I'll read it again.

Ty says

This was sweet and simple. Kind of like ripples on a pond caused by a gentle breeze. They won't leave a lasting impact, but they're nice to look at for awhile.

One of the characters in this book celebrated her 38th birthday during the story which was weird for me to read today because it's my 38th birthday. It made me think, though, that the only place I've ever encountered developed female characters over the age of 35 is from female writers, especially in this genre. Gerri Hill, Robin Alexander, and Georgia Beers all come to mind as writers who regularly use characters in their late 30s, early 40s, and older. It's nice to read about characters that age falling in love. It's nice to remember that there's no age limit on falling in love. So thanks to those authors.

Amy says

I listened to the audiobook version of the story. I was reluctant to listen to this story, because I knew going into the book that Shannon and Madison had a relationship that ended, and now they're encountering each other again after many years apart. I don't usually enjoy stories like this. The whole first part of the book is Shannon relating the story of her first love to her best friends before she moves back to her home town. This may have been one of the sweetest stories about first love that I've ever read. And it was torture, because we knew it would end, and how could it end well? I kept hoping I'd get to that point soon, because the sooner we knew their pain, the sooner they could meet again. I wanted to rip the band-aid off and get to the good stuff already.

I didn't have much sympathy for Madison. We're talking about someone who's almost forty years old who is still allowing decisions that she doesn't like to be made for her. Grow a pair! And part of me thinks Shannon was a doormat for just taking it. But beneath the cynic within me beats the heart of a romantic, so I loved when Madison finally woke up and took a good look around.

One final thing that I didn't like was the fact that Shannon let her friendship with Charlotte and Tracy go so easily. If you were good enough friends to tell them things you've never told another living soul, I wouldn't expect you to just tank the relationship like it didn't matter in the first place.

At the end of the book, I found that I enjoyed it, and that's a tribute to Hill's skill at telling a tale, because I didn't expect to like it much at all.

Luce says

3.25 Stars.

Gerri Hill is not one of my go to authors. I don't dislike her and I've read some of her early books and more recent here and there (most before GR). But some just don't appeal to me for various reasons. I decided to give her another try, as a few of my GR Friends really liked this one. I wasn't interested previously as I don't normally care for YA or romances with YA characters.

I listened to the audio book narrated by Carly Robins. She was a very good (4 Star) narrator. Considering she has narrated over 265 books, she better be!

I'm so conflicted on how I feel about this book. I wanted to like it more than I did. I will say, it kept me entertained. I've found for audiobooks, if I get bored and I drop an audiobook quicker than if I was reading it. Hmmm. Maybe because it's easier skip & skim pages if I'm reading it myself?

The first part is their early years 10yrs to early 20s. It covers their friendship as young girls and as it slowly develops to be more than friends emotionally and physically in love. Though they never discuss it. (Note: I was not comfortable reading/listening teen sex scenes which is why YA romance isn't for me). They are separated by their stations in life - Madison (the upstairs) daughter of very rich parents and a mother that is ultra-status conscious and there is Shannon (the downstairs) daughter of the live-in cook. Madison, is very much controlled by her mother such that she is incapable of making any of her own choices. Shannon knows her "place" and doesn't force the issue. Madison reluctantly ends up marrying the boy that her mother chose when she was still a young girl! A weakness? Perhaps. More like abusive dominance by her mother and a clueless father.

From the wedding until they are in their late 30s, they rarely see each other. Which I feel sadder for Shannon's mother as Shannon doesn't visit her often to avoid running into Madison. I think I enjoyed the last part of the book the best. Shannon returns after she and her brother decide to build a branch of their small "Whole Foods" type markets in their hometown. In part to be nearer to their mother, Alice who has been in poor health. Of course Shannon runs into Madison, because Alice has become like a mother to her and grandmother to her genius son, Ashton. (I loved Alice too!). They find that their love hasn't diminished, but can Madison make the necessary changes in her life? I'm sure you can guess.

Les Read says

This is the third book I've read that's written by the infamous Gerri Hill, and she certainly doesn't disappoint. She has the lesbian romance-writing formula down, so I know that I'm always guaranteed a good time. (Snicker) *At Seventeen* is no exception to that formula. Her novels are pretty quick reads, and perfect if you're sitting at an airport and need to kill some time before a flight. There aren't a lot of surprises in the novel, and there's a comfort in its predictability. You know what to expect with Gerri Hill, which is really part of the point in picking up her books. At least, it is for me.

Here's the good, the bad, and the ugly with this novel:

The Good – This is almost like the lesbian version of Nicholas Spark's *The Notebook*, but the story starts in childhood, ends in (early-ish) adulthood, and no one dies together while holding hands. There's a clear distinction between what happens in the past and what happens in the present, so there's no confusion for its readers. It skips back and forth until about a third into the book, then it continues on in the present. The storyline of *At Seventeen* is really its strong point, and the buildup of the romance between Madison and Shannon is very nicely done.

The Bad – The characters were a bit one-dimensional. Characterizations bring a depth to the story and because of its absence in *At Seventeen*, it left me wanting just a little more. Some of the characters' actions, especially Shannon's friends, were confusing. Even when there was some clarification in the end, it wasn't very satisfying.

The Ugly – There's a kid in the story. I have no gripes about a kid being in any story, but his presence doesn't add very much to it. And I get it, you could justify that his existence helps reinforce the message that things happen for a reason, but I felt like he was moved around like a Monopoly piece. It was almost too easy to roll the dice and move him down the board when they needed him to disappear.

It wasn't my favorite from Gerri Hill, but I enjoyed the novel and it provided a nice little escape for a few hours.

<http://lesreadoutloud.com/2015/11/30/...>
