



It Ended Badly: Thirteen of the Worst Breakups in History

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A history of heartbreak-replete with beheadings, uprisings, creepy sex dolls, and celebrity gossip-and its disastrously bad consequences throughout time

Spanning eras and cultures from ancient Rome to medieval England to 1950s Hollywood, Jennifer Wright's *It Ended Badly* guides you through the worst of the worst in historically bad breakups. In the throes of heartbreak, Emperor Nero had just about everyone he ever loved-from his old tutor to most of his friends-put to death. Oscar Wilde's lover, *whom he went to jail for*, abandoned him when faced with being cut off financially from his wealthy family and wrote several self-serving books denying the entire affair. And poor volatile Caroline Lamb sent Lord Byron one hell of a torch letter and enclosed a bloody lock of her own pubic hair. Your obsessive social media stalking of your ex isn't looking so bad now, is it? With a wry wit and considerable empathy, Wright digs deep into the archives to bring these thirteen terrible breakups to life. She educates, entertains, and really puts your own bad breakup conduct into perspective. *It Ended Badly* is for anyone who's ever loved and lost and maybe sent one too many ill-considered late-night emails to their ex, reminding us that no matter how badly we've behaved, no one is as bad as Henry VIII.

It Ended Badly: Thirteen of the Worst Breakups in History Details

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From Reader Review It Ended Badly: Thirteen of the Worst Breakups in History for online ebook

Wanda says

“No one gossips about other people’s secret virtues.”—Bertrand Russell

How true! What fun would that be? And this book is fun and snarky. In a very 21st century way, the author discusses some of the most prominent romantic break-ups in history. It can be difficult to judge the past by their own standards, so let’s not, just for the duration of this little book. Get all judgey with 21st century values and giggle while you do it.

There are poets behaving badly (Lord Byron), Romans behaving viciously (Nero), and rather sad tales, like Oscar Wilde (eventually abandoned by the guy that he went to jail for). Then there are the ladies who won the public relations battle—Elizabeth Taylor and Debbie Reynolds, whose friendship outlasted both of their marriages to Eddie Fischer.

Light & frothy, just the thing to get you interested in reading serious biographies of some of these people, and a wonderful change from heavier fare.

Stewart Tame says

The title pretty much says it all. This was a fun book to read. Wright has a nice, light touch with the material that works wonderfully well. Her sense of humor smooths out some of the rougher edges of these tales. One hopes that any reader in the midst of a bad breakup will console themselves with the thought that, at least they're not breaking up with Norman Mailer. Or Nero. Or Lucrecia Borgia. Or ... This is one of those books that's every bit as charming and entertaining as the title and cover promise. Jennifer Wright's prose sparkles in all the right places. I would definitely read more of her work. Recommended!

Sonja Arlow says

2 1/2 stars

I read this between other books for the past 2 months and was actually relieved when I was finally done. I have promised myself that this year I will try to be more honest with my ratings but I went back and forth between a 2 and 3 star the whole time I was reading.

Humour is sometimes a tricky thing to get right for everyone. What is funny for one person just sounds facetious to another. I knew from the start this was going to be a book that does not take a very academically rigorous look at certain historical figures but more a light hearted poking of fun at them. But unfortunately the majority of the author’s running commentary throughout felt very juvenile and contrived and at the end started irritating me.

The book covers 13 couples in history and their messy breakups. The author often cites comparisons to current pop culture to show similarities or how they fit into the social hierarchy and because of that it made me feel as if this book would be well suited to girls between the ages of 17 and 22 going through their first bad breakup.

But it was not all bad. I like list-type books as it gives one exposure to historical figures you may not have thought to read about. For example, King Nero (the first story), he was even worse than Henry 8 in my opinion and I will definitely look out for more books about him. Other historical figures include Liz Taylor and her host of husbands, the Borgias, Norman Mailer (Who?), Edith Wharton and Morton Fullerton (WHO?) , Caroline Lamb & Lord Byron, Oscar Wilde, Anna Ivanovna (who I want to read more about) and a host of others.

I am in the minority with my feelings about this book so my advice is to get a sample chapter of the book and make your own call.

Silea says

Snark snark snark snark snark... oh, and history and vengeful spurned lovers.

...and snark.

thefourthvine says

I bought this book because I'd just finished the Imperial Radch series and I needed to read something that I could not possibly compare to it (the comparison was bound to be unfavorable; the Radch books are super great). This book fit the bill perfectly.

This is part of the subcategory of nonfiction that I think of as "funny history anecdotes." Sarah Vowell is obviously the queen of this particular niche, and if you like her work, you'll probably like this, too. Vowell is more funny history anecdotes plus travel, while Wright, at least here, is funny history anecdotes plus some fortunately brief self-help type stuff, but they're both funny and that's what counts.

I just had a lot of *fun* reading this, is the thing. I laughed a lot, I learned some great stuff that I will have to try really hard not to share with the next ten people I meet, I read long passages out loud to my extremely patient spouse. I even got to hate Norman Mailer more than I already did, which I had thought was impossible. Time well spent, all the way around.

The only part of the book that didn't work for me (although I should note that I skipped the chapter on Wilde and Bosie on the grounds that that entire thing was terrible and sad and I just don't want to think about it anymore ever) was the part where Wright talked to me, the reader, about breaking up -- about how it is better to have loved and lost, basically, and no matter how badly you act you're never going to make a sex doll of your ex and then behead it, so you're definitely not the worst breaker-upper ever. But, okay, I've been married for a really long time, to a woman I met when I was 16. "Boring middle-aged happily married lesbian" isn't really the target audience for the self-help parts. But I can see them being useful if you have

recently broken up.

And whether your breakups are long passed, recent past, or still in the future, there's solid value in reading about all the hilarious, awful, or hilarawful things you haven't done/won't do. Like marrying Eddie Fisher or pretending your still-living partner is actually a ghost.

And now I need to stop writing this review before I just start copying and pasting my favorite bits. Seriously, this book is FULL of funny history anecdotes. If this is at all the kind of thing you like, read it.

Irmak says

Asl?na bakarsan?z kitaba *çok* uzun zaman önce ba?lam??t?m fakat sonra kitab?n varl???n? unutmu?um. Ve kitab? geçen gün Goodreads hesab?m? 'yanl??l?kla' talan etti?imde tekrar hat?rlad?m. Ve bitirmek istedim çünkü zaten kitab? severek okuyordum, neden unutulup gitti?ini bile *hat?rlam?yorum*.

Jennifer Wright kendine has mizah yüklü anlat?m? ile tarihe damgas?n? vuran 13 ayr?l??? anlat?yor bize. Ama öyle sand???n?z gibi '*beni terk etti e?yalar?n? yakt?m, internette foto?raflar?n? sat??a ç?kard?m*' tarz? ayr?l?klar de?il bunlar. Mesela içlerinden bir tanesi sevgilisinin kellesini ald?r?rken bir ba?kas? erkek kölesini k?z gibi giydirip ona sevgilisinin ismi ile sesleniyordu ve *emin olun ki bu söylediklerim kitapta okuduklar?m?n yan?nda hiç kal?yor*. (Anna ?vanovna bir çifti dü?ün gecelerinde ç?plak olarak buzdan saraya kilitlemi?, dü?ünebiliyor musunuz ? *Ben dü?ünemiyorum*.)

Yazar?n anlat?m? sayesinde büyük zevk alarak okudu?um bir kitap oldu Böyle mi Olacakt? ?

Sana puan?m dokuz kanka.

Ayr?ca tarihteki en sevdi?im çift net olarak bu çifttir adhjasgda

Madalyn (Novel Ink) says

Is Jennifer Wright becoming a new favorite author? YUP.

Jennifer Wright says

Full disclosure: I am biased because the author and myself are literally the same person.

Onur Birler says

Çok, çok, çok sevdi?iniz eski sevgilinizin ard?ndan yanaklar?n?zdan süzülen ya?larla yata??n?za uzan?yorsan?z durumla bu kadar iyi ba?a ç?kt???n?z için kendinizi tebrik etmelisiniz. Çok daha fenas?n? yap?yor olabilirdiniz. Çok daha fenas?n?. Eski sevgilinizin kellesini al?yor, hiç tan?mad???n?z tipleri had?m ediyor veya bir ?i?me bebekle yeni bir hayata yelken aç?yor olabilirdiniz. S?Z B?R KAHRAMANSINIZ. (arka kapak)?

?Normal kabul edilen bir çiftin ayr?l???nda gözya?lar? sel olabilir, birbirinin arkas?ndan içip içip kötü sözler sarf edebilirsiniz, belki daha sonra utanaca??n?z mektuplar ya da mesajlar atabilirsiniz ama tahmin edilebilir rezillik s?n?rlar? (bence) en fazla bunlar olur. Ne kadar kötü ?eyler yapm?? olursak olal?m, kimsenin bu kitapta yer alan on üç çiftte oldu?u kadar kötü olamayaca??na eminim. Yazar Jennifer Wright bizlere tarihte ya?am?? ve rezillikte ç???r açm?? 13 berbat ayr?l?k hikayesini öyle e?lenceli bir üslupla aktar?yor ki okurken k?k?rdamalar?ma engel olamad?m. Keyif için Roma'y? da yakan pislik Neron'dan nefret ederken, can?m Oscar Wilde için içiniz kan a?layabiliyor bu gerçek anekdotlar? okudu?unuzda. Evlilikten nefret etti?i için mutlu çiftleri buzdan saraya ç?r?lç?plak kapatan manyak bir Çariçe, dönemin en ünlü bestecisi olmas?na ra?men elinde bir parça kanl? bezle dola?an bir meczuba dönü?en adam ve zilli (en kibar tabiri kulland?m burada, kendisine çok sinirlendim çünkü) Elizabeth Taylor... Benim gibi tarihin e?lenceli yönlerini okumay? seviyorsan?z "Böyle mi Olacaktır?" kesinlikle tavsiyemdir. Kitap Domingo Yay?nevi 'nden ç?kt? ve ba?ar?l? çevirisi de Zeynep Ye?iltuna'ya ait.

"Nihayetinde sadece üç ?eyin önemi var. Ne kadar sevdi?iniz, ne kadar nazik ya?ad???n?z ve k?smetiniz olmayan ?eyleri ne kadar zarıfçe b?rakt???n?z." (BUDA)

Jeanette says

2.5 stars rounded up for the level of classlessness that this entire reaches. It's so extreme that I can't help but admit that gossip level achievement attained. It is all of one piece in this tone, despite the 13 different chapters of despicable couples. Wright often makes comparisons to idol or celeb figures of today to illustrate social placements and other associative hierarchies. Or any duality in looks.

I could be wrong, but in some of the cases, I think she may have gotten some of the actual facts more assumed than researched. Although I thought her constant attempts at humor, sarcasm, farce and opinion were not in anyway disguised as anything but fun- to me they were so broad that they got old very fast. This is like reading History through a plot or dialogue of a "Dumb and Dumber" type film.

The photos were good. I appreciated them. But did not often concur on Wright's opinion of who was hot or not.

Jill Hutchinson says

The title "It Ended Badly" could have described this book..... except it also started badly as well. It was much too cutesy for me.

Diane S ? says

The author made this such a fun and interesting way to learn a bit of history. Her sarcastic comments and amusing anecdotes made this a pure joy to read. She reminds me of my sophomore history teacher whose way of teaching made me fall forever in love with all things historical.

Of course many of these breakups were beyond nasty, none more so than the less than delightful, Henry the Eighth. Still there were some strange characters from many areas in Europe that were weirder than weird. Also learned many interesting tidbits, such as the phrase, Keeping up with the Jones, which referenced Edith Wharton's father who was beyond wealthy as was Edith herself.

Some may find some of the comments over the top but if you just go with the flow I think you will find much amusing but informative as well.

Jennie says

You guys. This book had everything:

1. Historical facts and stories spanning hundreds of years
2. Weird facts about well-known (and not-so-much) historical figures
3. Humor (for serious, some serious laughs)
4. Unbiased commentary on what shitty people certain historical figures were (coughcoughNORMALMAILERcough)
5. Some real feels, for reals (Oscar Wilde SAD FACE)

I also enjoyed that it was basically a history lesson wrapped in gossip, which was AWESOME.

It Ended Badly is a quick, interesting read, full of bizarre stories about some historical figures you may know, and some you may not. When I picked up this book based on someone's recommendation (I'M SORRY I CAN'T REMEMBER WHO I NEED TO START KEEPING A SPREADSHEET), I had absolutely no idea what it was about, I only knew that I liked the title and I liked the cover. (I know we have that whole "don't judge a book by its cover" thing but I think we can all agree that for some reason that saying doesn't really apply to books, yeah? OK, good.)

Anyway, I sort of thought this book was going to be about the author's own personal horrible breakup stories, and saying they were the worst breakups in history was just one of those over exaggerations that people use when they're in the throes of despair (you know, like after a breakup). Imagine my utter DELIGHT (seriously, just imagine it) when I discovered Jennifer Wright was going to instead talk some serious shit about some super shitty people from the past. I WAS SO EXCITED.

I wish I'd written down some of my favorite facts from this book because there were A LOT but I didn't think of it until just now and, as of right now, I don't know how to time travel. Maybe Future!Me knows how, but so far, she's not sharing that information with Present!Me because SHE'S RUDE. Anyway, here are some things that I learned from this book:

1. Nero was fucking insane, which I knew, but like even more whackadoo crazy than I thought. I don't want to spoiler too much but he killed his wife in a horrific fashion and then made a slave who sort of looked like her BECOME her basically? A male slave. So. Yeah.
2. Lord Byron was in this, of course, but was not the one behaving badly in terms of the breakup? Or at least he looked better by comparison...sort of? Honestly, I would read an entire book about his exploits with Catherine Lamb, does that exist?
3. Timothy Dexter, who I had never heard of, was delightfully crazy in a way that sort of reminds me of Trump but Timothy Dexter doesn't make me want to vomit out of my eyeballs so I guess it's not the same at all. For instance, he wrote an autobiography where he didn't use any punctuation, and when someone pointed it out, he included just a full page of punctuation in the second printing. Like, all the punctuation, so people could pick and choose what they needed and put it in themselves. SO UNINTENTIONALLY HILARIOUS, it's just the best.
4. Eleanor of Aquitaine was BADASS.
5. The parts about Debbie Reynolds and Elizabeth Taylor's friendship legit made me tear up.
6. ICE CASTLE. Seriously, just read this.

If you at all enjoy reading anything about history or horrible breakups or just historical figures behaving badly, all written like you were gossiping with a friend, this book is perfect for you. Pick it up!

Pam ?Because Someone Must Be a Thorn? Tee says

“If you haven't got anything nice to say about anybody come sit next to me.” ? Alice Roosevelt Longworth

Alice would have loved this book. In fact she would have insisted that Jen sit next to her at dinner and then drop by the next day so they could continue their tear down session. Because Jen --Jennifer Wright = Jen -- cuts through all the historical 'glamour' and gets right down to calling a nasty breakup what it is; a chance to perfectly awful to one another.

As for me, I LOVED THIS BOOK. It was funny and snarky and after the first two chapters I decided that it was going to end far too soon. So I passed a mandate for myself that I would only read one chapter per night. Thus to make it last as long as possible.

Honestly, it was like snarky gossip with your best friend. Getting down in everyone's business in the worst way. I want more.

I KNOW this one won't be to everyone's taste, but it's my kind of humor and I found it entertaining as well as educational. To that end let me say that Ms. Wright has done her historical homework but this is hardly an academic tome. This is about how Caroline Lamb cut off a bit of her nether region and sent it to Lord Byron and how he wisely refrained from replying in kind.

Highly Recommend.

~review copy

Brendan Monroe says

If you liked Jennifer Wright's *Get Well Soon: History's Worst Plagues and the Heroes Who Fought Them*, you'll be sure to enjoy this one too. It's light, enjoyable, but also mildly educational. I never knew that Norman Mailer was such an ass, for example, or that Oskar Kokoschka was such an oddball. Ok, I probably could have guessed that an Austrian artist would have his eccentricities, but building a life-size sex doll based on an ex is likely a bit more eccentric than most.

The obvious examples of relationships gone awry are here — Anne Boleyn's ill-fated dalliance with King Henry VIII, Elizabeth Taylor and, well, everybody — but there are plenty of famous historical figures whose love lives were previously unknown to me that I enjoyed seeing fleshed out here.

Is it gossipy and somewhat tabloid in nature? Certainly. But it's also scandalous fun — if you're into that sort of thing.
