



Memorizing You

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Two high school boys from different walks of life: Ryan, a handsome athlete, and David, an average joe from a blue collar family, discover their desires, stealing their kisses under the cover of an old oak at night. Their love begins a secret life, hidden from their families, friends, and classmates. As their passion grows, so does the danger of their discovery. Their only hope is to create a separate world where every kiss is a treasure and every moment... memorable.

First love. Secret love. Unforgettable love.

Memorizing You Details

Date : Published July 9th 2013 by Cerberus Inc.

ISBN :

Author : Dan Skinner

Format : Kindle Edition 292 pages

Genre : Romance, M M Romance, Young Adult



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From Reader Review Memorizing You for online ebook

Judith says

Re read December 2015.Even though I knew what to expect, this book devastated me all over again....just amazing!!

I read loads of books but can honestly say that, to date, no book has made such an impression on me...

Right so , there is no way I can do this book justice in this review, but all I can do is write what I'm feeling right now after just finishing it...

It's a story of first love, hopes and dreams, formed friendships,families coming together, families torn apart but ultimately just an outstanding love story

I loved all the characters (obviously apart from one), thought they all played a part in this story, especially loved Rosemary and eventually Connor.

There are no graphic SEX scenes here, but I found it erotic because you could feel the connection and love David and Ryan had for each other.

My favourite quotes...

Ryan to David..

"Every time you're here, there's meaning. When you leave.....I just want you back "

David to his Mom..

"I can't leave what I love behind "

These were the most poignant to me

I finished this about 2 hrs ago and am still crying writing this, it's just an outstanding piece of writing

I'll finish with this..

I had a conversation with my 17yr old son a few weeks ago when he told me that one of his close friends announced that he was gay, I asked him how his other friends reacted and he just shrugged his shoulders and said "fine, why wouldn't they be, everyone likes the person he is "

And that's all it should be about.

Ana says

I loved this book, I could feel the joy and the pain of a coming-of-age love in the 60's.

"I think you're beautiful" "And you devastate me"

Well, this book has devastated me for real.

"Love really is...pure magic. It comes from"—she gestured toward the heavens—"out there. And it falls like pixie dust wherever it wants. And when it does...you can fly"

"When the landscape of real life gets ugly, we can pick up a book of fantasy and find a beautiful world, all green and filled with sunshine. When we can't find an end to something sad, there's always a novel where everything turns out okay and makes us feel better about things. And even though we know they're made up, we think that maybe there's just a possibility, in spite of all the ugliness around us, we really do have a chance to make it all work out. Because we read it. And we wanted it to be real"

Kol Anderson says

His hand came from the shadows and found mine. Tender fingers entwined, squeezed gently.

"When the landscape of real life gets ugly, we can pick up a book of fantasy and find a beautiful world, all green and filled with sunshine. When we can't find an end to something sad, there's always a novel where everything turns out okay and makes us feel better about things. And even though we know they're made up, we think that maybe there's just a possibility, in spite of all the ugliness around us, we really do have a chance to make it all work out. Because we read it. And we wanted it to be real."

His lids squeezed closed. They were the dams to the silver trails of his soul leaking out.

"The last few days, I've lived in that world of 'what if?' What if we could go somewhere else? What if we could start over away from all of this? What if...what?" He opened his eyes, looked into mine. "We're always looking for salvation away from some storm, away from some trouble, away from the turmoil that makes life seem way too impossible. We want to find protection, an armor to keep us from being wounded...a shelter..."

His voice trailed away as he pulled me into his arms....

I haven't seen anything so damn beautiful in quite a while. To say that Dan's a fucking genius would just be unfair. When someone uses the word genius it makes it seem like authors just sit there on the proverbial typewriter and start poring their hearts out and words start to just come out of their behinds magically to form complete works.

Writing is HARD WORK.

Every word you put on that piece of paper takes sweat, blood and an enormous amount of torment. You can 'love writing' all you want I feel like if you haven't gone through said torture your book isn't worth my time or money.

That said I could practically see the tears, blood and sweat that went into the creation of this book. I could feel, smell and taste every thing. It's sweet and beautiful and my words won't do it justice. I'm just going to give you another peak:

Being able to look back on those days with a forty-odd year hindsight, the memories come back bathed in a golden glow like from a romance film with music by Ennio Morricone. I've colored them like that over the years, like a painting in progress.

I seriously can't over this book. Going to take me a while to get into another one but it was so completely worth it. Going through the whole thing, like a modern version of Separate Peace, with the same magnificent beauty of words and the descriptions that paint a picture you won't ever forget.

Sarah says

FULL REVIEW

4.5 Wow.....what a way to start the year.....YOU HAVE TO READ THIS stars!

Ok so you've probably read lots of other peoples reviews on this book so you don't really need me to tell you how bloody brilliant it is.....This is David's story. His story of first loves, first kisses, first hopes and first dreams. It's about two young men building their lives, discovering themselves and each other, a story about holding onto a secret love in a world that is against them.

It's a story filled with so many beautiful words that when you put them all together you get a story that made me laugh and smile, it filled me with hope, and the promises of young love, it had me grinning like Cheshire Cat and reliving memories of my own teenage yearsuntil I read a bit further, the butterflies started up in my stomach and that overwhelming feeling of dread took a hold of me until I was uncontrollably sobbing all over the place and shouting oh my god, oh my god, oh my god repeatedly at my iPad.

Its a story that devastated me beyond words and totally saddened my naive heart.....but despite all this it's a story that somehow (and very cleverly) lifted my soul, it reminded me of first loves and the strength of friendship. It's a story I couldn't possible ever understand and one I still can't quite settle in my mind (or heart) yet it is one that I'm so very glad that I took a deep breath and opened the first page because it is a story that will remain with me always.

I've never read anything by this author before.....god knows why I've never come across him before? But after reading this book, it certainly won't be the last time! Because what truly amazed me was the detail, such beautiful detail. The story captured me from the first word, it read like a diary, a diary of someone I knew, because there was so much detail I felt like I was there seeing it for myself.

I know many of you may be putting off reading this book because maybe you've seen other reviews or updates filled with tears and sadness and it's scares you a little. Well all I can say is **BE BRAVE**, take a deep breath and jump right in because I know that no matter what book I read next, David's story will always sit in the back of my mind, as a beautiful reminder that time is precious so memorise every moment.

To my buddy reading girls; Lili and Pervy..... Thank you for holding my hand when I needed it most. Oh and for those who have read this book and are wondering why I rated such an amazing book 4.5 and not the full 5 stars well...(don't read if you haven't read the book).....(view spoiler)

Nick Pageant says

Yeah, my, my such a sweet thing

I wanna do everything

What a beautiful feeling

Crimson and clover

I want to write a coherent, thoughtful review, but I just don't have it right now.

I loved this book, not because I thought it was full of beautiful prose or poetic imagery, but because I thought it had a total lack of artifice. It's a funny contradiction, those of us who strive to write are not trying to tell lies. We're trying to tell the truth about what life means. There are a million ways for a writer to tell the truth. He can go for laughter. He can go for tears. He can even try to scare you enough that you sleep with the lights on. Every writer, though, is trying to make you believe every word; to make you recognize the truth of the message he's written for you.

That's why I loved this book. I knew from the first few pages that Dan Skinner was telling me the truth. Not many authors can say that they've written a truthful book. I certainly can't say it, but Dan Skinner can say it. He made me feel those long-gone, but far from forgotten, feelings of what it means to be an outcast. He made me remember the joy of finding others like myself. And, of course, he made me remember that sweet, devastating misery that is first love - the love that we never recover from and don't really want to recover from.

I loved this. Highly, highly recommended.

Big thanks to Marcie for the BR.

Sandi ♥'s way too many M/M books says

I can barely form a thought right now. 5 stars is not enough. Ill review soon.

Baba says

5+++ memorable stars. Review completed October 7, 2013. Review edited June 2015

Beautiful. Emotional. Evocative. Authentic. Just...bloody good! Let's spread some love for this A-mazing book because ~~it's easily one of the best I've read this year~~ it's my all-time favorite YA M/M read.

Update:

My reaction after I finished my reread

This is why I'm still reading. I can read a couple dozen ridiculously bad books and then come back to something like this...a piece of romantic art, *an act of the heart*, and be devastated all over again. Being held captive by all those intensely beautiful feelz...this is great writing and storytelling. My reading world has been set to rights again.

I know that *Memorizing You* needs better proofreading and editing. Despite the mistakes, I could still enjoy it because I love Dan's writing and Ryan and David will always have a special place in my heart.

A thank-you goes to my friend Lenore who (partially) buddy read *Memorizing You* with me. Unfortunately she couldn't finish the book.

Dang, woman, I always thought that I'm hard to please but it looks like you're an even more serious case. I really thought you'd like it but I couldn't have been more wrong. I'm sorry you didn't have a satisfying reading experience.

Photo by Dan Skinner

I will keep my written review simple because the pics and quotes are worth a thousand words.

At the beginning of *Memorizing You* which is set in the 60s is a blank canvas, and over time the author paints a small yet utterly vivid and colorful place in a world that was essentially colorless. It's a place filled with insecurities, hope, longing, love and happiness. On the other hand, it's a borrowed haven of love with an uncertain future. Still, I can't help and look at the ending with a tiny grain of hope. In fact, I look at it like this...(view spoiler)

This is my personal ending but you can make up your own. And even though there is no HEA, the story does end hopeful.

I believe the ending leaves room for your own thoughts, wishes and perceptions.

3 am by Gregory Alan Isakov

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M0wRjN...>

Behind the somewhat unfortunate cover hides a true **gem**, and I'm very glad that I read this beautiful yet tragic love story. It was so well worth my time and money. *Memorizing You* is a prime example why I will never hand out guilty five stars. If I could I would have rated it with more than five stars. *Memorizing You* is one of those books that you don't just read--it's one to be experienced. At the very least it provides some thought-provoking impulse. I think I said the same about *Rough Canvas* and *Mirror of My Soul* because these kinds of books are so much more than love stories. They're food for your heart, mind and soul.

If you'd like to read a story about...

...a reverent look at first love

...the shelter and warm cocoon of secret love

...not having the freedom to do little intimate things like holding hands in public

...two people who gave each other's lives a purpose

...two people who stayed true to themselves and made their own decisions

...then buy this book and read it. Chances are you're going to devour and treasure it. I must add, however, that I was privy to the fact that over the course of time their secret love turned into 'open' love which made me very happy. People can change, they're able to learn and they can be accepting and supportive after all. Unfortunately not everybody. Ryan's (view spoiler)

A shout out to all those readers who'd like to dip their toes into unknown waters

Memorizing You is the perfect place to pop your m-m cherry. If explicit m-m sex scenes make you uncomfortable then you needn't worry because there are none at all.

I loved everything about this beautifully and compellingly written story. Interesting plot and setting, great dialogue and excellent narrative, wonderful MCs as well as some endearing secondary characters, i.e. David's supportive friend Rosemary as well as his awesome parents made this book an all-around winner. Even (view spoiler) came around eventually. *Memorizing You* is not all about tears, not in the least. There is so much gaiety to be found and some well placed banter and humor lightened the mood.

Have you ever noticed how much beauty lies in stillness?

I'm someone who likes to talk about problems. Yet I found it very interesting that David never pushed Ryan to talk to him when he sensed that something was wrong or when he knew he felt sad. I really liked that. There's a deep understanding, an intense connection between these two young men and it worked so well without numerous conversations. There was nothing superfluous about their love. They shared a highly intimate and gentle bond that's so worth striving for and many of us can only dream about it. On the other hand, I'm aware of the fact that you can say a lot through non-verbal communication; just by being *there* you can ease someone's pain and sadness. It's so true that love can be found in stillness.

There's no denying it, I wanted to absorb every word and emotion. It is also a story that you want to lock away in your heart for a long time, so you can always go back and revisit special parts of it. Besides, this story reminded me that we should never regret anything because at one time in our life it was everything we wanted. It was everything we could ever wish for. That's why it's so essential to make memories and treasure them because they will always be there to convey comfort. And don't project your dreams on your kids. They have their own dreams. *You* don't own your children. *You* are only entitled to love, protect and guide them through life. We shouldn't forget that either.

Feed on this very inspirational journey of self-discovery.

"Every time you're here, there's meaning. When you leave"--He pressed his head into my shoulders, harder--"I just want you back."

Recommended read.

JR says

This is an amazing story, written with lyrical, vivid pictures of life. If you have ever wanted to know what coming of age was like in the turbulent, mind altering 60's, this is the book to read.

The story centers around the nerdy boy no one talks to Dave and the well liked jock Ryan. Ryan dreams of becoming a horticulturist, while Dave begins his own lawn mowing business. Their families are polar opposites. Dave comes from a very loving family, unfortunately, Ryan is the child not wanted, that is pushed into being a jock to salve his father's ego. Their first moment is a glance across a football field, the rest becomes their history.

There are many solid characters that accompany Dave and Ryan on their journey. The most notable being Rosemary the girl turned down who becomes their closest companion through the years. Their story unfolds slowly so one can savor every moment of their relationship. We witness the discovery of their love, their joys and ultimately the tragedy that changes everyone forever.

It's a magnificent journey, sprinkle with love, joy and sadness, a journey well worth the taking. Put 60's music on while you read, it will enhance your experience. I give it a garden full of stars.

I had to add this to my review. This book has stayed with me like no other book in a long time. It's doesn't matter what I am doing, a little snippet will dislodge from my brain, putting me right back into the story again. It really is an amazing journey. Everyone needs to read this.

Partial lyrics to Donovan's "Catch The Wind"

In the chilly hours and minutes
Of uncertainty
I want to be
In the warm hold of your lovin' mind.

To feel you all around me
And to take your hand
Along the sand,
Ah, but I may as well try and catch the wind.

When sundown pales the sky
I want to hide a while
Behind your smile,
And everywhere I'd look, your eyes I'd find.

For me to love you now
Would be the sweetest thing,
'T would make me sing,
Ah, but I may as well try and catch the wind.

Sheziss says

*****I wrote this just after finishing the book. No recovery period, just my raw feelings.*****

I feel like my heart wasn't my own.

I feel like my heart was out of my body.

It feels dead.

But no, it's not dead. It's beating.

It's beating so hard it makes my chest hurt.

I don't understand that.

It feels like there was nothing inside.

Maybe that's the natural thing, to feel nothing.

Because, really, we are all made of nothing.

Electrons are mostly nothing. Molecules are mostly nothing. So we are nothing too.

Why does it feel like there was no nothing? We feel solid, we feel liquid, we feel air.

Maybe there is something filling the gaps.

Something I haven't thought about.

What is the force that moves the world?

Is it Love, maybe?

Maybe Love fills the gaps.

That's why we feel almost complete.

Solid.

Alive

No-nothing.

I just think... Love is in the electrons, so we are not empty.

So, why do I feel like my heart has just been ripped out of my chest?

It just doesn't make sense. Maybe there is no Love inside.

Yeah, just it.

Love has left my chest to never come back.

You know that feeling, David?

Yeah, I know you do.

Devastated.

You tasted the ambrosia for a short while.

You danced, you smiled, you jumped.

But the Earth underneath keeps moving.

Why does it keep moving?

There is no Love moving it.

Ah, yeah, because we are nothing.

Not even a tear in the rain.

Maybe we are blessed.

Once.

And maybe never again.

I want to harm someone.

I want to scream in a roller-coaster and look the world on it. Nobody touches me there.

But you know what I want the most right now?

I want to laugh.

I want to cry.

I want to scream.

I want to find a corner and rot.

I want to be nothing.

I am devastated.

Maybe will ever be.

You know, that beautiful moment when everything fits? Everything is perfect? Maybe for a second?

You know that feeling, right, David?

And you know it can't last, because... that is how the world works. Maybe Love is not what makes the world move.

But maybe we just need to believe that.

We need fantasy.

Maybe electrons are full of fantasy. Maybe we are fantasy, too.

Maybe it's useless to fall in love.

Maybe the population is doubled because the hearts are broken in the same chest.

Looking for our half, is that really true? Not even our own half is solid. We are empty.

I see my life and sometimes I only see a series of unfortunate events.

I see my life and I can only find something worth living.

Maybe we human beings are not meant to understand it.

Only to be. Only to feel.

Maybe there is no meaning. Only chaos.

I feel like my heart wasn't my own.

I feel like it has been ripped out of my chest.

You are beautiful.

But you devastate me.

You are a supernova. You no longer exist. But your light keeps shining on the horizon.

But you devastate me.

Yeah, my heart is bleeding.

Daniel says

COUNTLESS SPECTACULAR STARS

[This review may contain spoilers.]

While I let my mind realise what I have just finished reading, I want to thank a few people:

- my amazing GR friend *Marcie* for recommending this book to me.

- *Nick Pageant* for staying by my side and offering me his special kleenex boxes.
- everyone commenting my updates and being a strong support for this short-timed but intense reading I have gone through.
- last but not least, *Dan Skinner*, for being such an outstanding writer and for giving birth to what is for me a masterpiece.

I am speechless, to be honest. I don't even know where to start reviewing *Memorizing You*.

I could say I didn't cry, because something I don't do very often and will not do very often, but this time I would be a shameless liar.

I started sobbing when the last page was not even there, simply because I knew how it was going to end chapters before. I knew, and the thought ripped my heart out.

Why is this? It is because everything Skinner has written down felt real. I don't know how to put this to sound like it does inside my soul.

Every single word was so genuine, sincere, true: every emotion the characters felt, every thought they had, every breath they inhaled, and when their hearts skipped a beat, mine did too.

Impressive is how the whole story is something we all have experienced, walking the path of our lives. In many different ways, of course, but still it was as if I was going through chapters of my neighbors existence, as well as mine and the guy's I spoke to this morning; yours, too.

Page after page and word after word, I was getting a look at the world, at how different it was years ago, but also as how similar it is nowadays in so many ways.

How many of you have been in Becka's clothes? Ignored, underestimated, insulted by some dumb-blonde at school. A stranger in the crowd. Alone. Insecure.

How many of you have once known a Connor person-like? Or still know one, but don't realise he's one of the good ones, afterall.

How many of you had had a drunken, unpleasant, pushing, absent, horrible father trying to raise you on his image?

How many of you discovered being homosexuals and not told anyone because afraid they wouldn't accept you? How many of them did and how many did not?

How many of you have a friendship like David and Rosemary's? Who knows, if you don't, that it will not happen, one day or another.

And - here comes the sobbing - how many of you have loved a person as much as David and Ryan loved each other?

How many of you have lost a lover and still feel the sorrow of the loss, with all the memories still intact in your hearts?

Real is how I describe this book and how will always remember it.

I don't have much else to add, expect for another **THANK YOU** to Dan Skinner.

Bev says

This is without doubt one of the best books I've ever read, if not *the* best, an absolute treasure. A masterpiece of emotional writing, and I'm only sorry that I can give it 5 stars, but no matter, in my heart and in my head this book has *millions* of stars!!

This is the story of David and Ryan. It is a coming of age story, a first love story, it's the story of a young man's struggle with his sexual identity. A bittersweet and poignant tale of friendship gained, of love encouraged and nurtured like the garden that Ryan cared for, and then lost due to another person's anger, bitterness and selfish desires. It describes in minute detail the growing friendship between the two boys, when they first realise that they are falling in love, how they memorise things about one another and store them away in their hearts...this is a truly beautiful story, and **please** do not be put off by the fact that this is a young adult story, you will be missing out on a total keeper of a book, and I warn you now, there will be tears...lots of ugly crying and tissues a-plenty, but this book is simply **superb!!**

Mark says

Why haven't I read this book until now? What took me so long? I want the whole world to read this book, the whole world NEEDS to read this book. You can't possibly go through life without having read this book! Friends* have been telling me for a while to read this book, well all I can say is, "Listen to your friends!"

This story soars way above the normal romance trope either M/M or M/F in a class of its own. Maybe a sweeping statement I know, but that's the way I feel. First class writing with a story that moves the reader to tears of despair and in the end joy! This book is one that you can identify with, feel the emotion and takes you back to an age of innocence and then innocence undone. It is categorised as a YA story, but it isn't, it's truly more than this. From the very beginning you know that this is a mature man reflecting on his youth and all the things that shaped him to the very person he is today. Like listening to someone talking fondly of their first big love that has never left them and accompanied them a life long. So not a YA story in the sense that it is told from a YA point of view for a YA audience. The fluid and breath-taking writing pulls you in immediately from the very first chapter and doesn't let go. This book is also so quotable, contains so many wisdoms and sentiments that we can all relate to, but it never gets sappy or sickly sweet. I think you will get the most from this book if you have reached a certain maturity, but it also has a message for young adults today. You may ask yourself while reading whether teenagers would truly behave and think like this. Well, I believe so, they may appear on the outside intolerable at times, but deep down they are all waiting and wishing for their prince or princess to come along. That one person which will be life defining. As mature adults reflecting on our youth our minds can't remember all the details, you usually remember just the highs and lows.....

"It's funny how after living for some fifty-odd years that retrospection makes your life seem like a string of scenes. Some we push away because of the pain like the death of someone close. But there are very few we visit with regularity because of their special quality; their meaning to our heart. I have visited that day, every week of every month of every year of my life since it occurred. It couldn't be more familiar to me than if it were a painting on my wall that I woke to see every morning."

David is a teenager and discovering that although society tells him one thing his feelings tell him he's different. For David this is very real, but keeps it a closely guarded secret for himself and doesn't open up until he meets someone who feels the same. This person happens to be Ryan the school quarterback and aspiring football star. It starts as a friendship and as time passes blooms into a love that is all encompassing, a devotion to each other that can only be found through the solidarity of having to keep things secret. Set in the late 60s / early 70's, this was a time of sexual liberation, make love not war, peace and all that stuff. But only if you weren't gay. It was still a time where the people who accepted you for being gay and just seeing the person you are, we're still very few.....

"It's hard to want to fit in and not be able to," his voice came barely above a whisper. "They make us feel like it's easier to lie than be truthful. Easier to hide than be seen. Make us feel like we did something wrong to not be like them. Like we made a conscious choice."

But to the rest of the world at large it has to remain a secret.....

"And then I looked up the word secret. The word that gave me so much pain. Its definition said that a secret is something kept from the knowledge of many but the initiated or privileged. Sheltered and secure. And that's when I realized that a secret was okay. Because I did feel privileged. I did feel sheltered. And I was secure. I was all those things because of my 'secret'. You. And I'm okay with that now."

However, a love as great as this can never truly be kept secret for long. People will observe, start to talk. Those undeniable little gestures that when two people are in love are obvious to everyone else, even if you think you're being careful...

"You brought the smile inside me. The joy. And I wanted to show you off to the world. I wanted them to see and know the one who gave each heartbeat a purpose. But I couldn't. And I can't because that's how a world with missing pieces is. It's incomplete because they can't add us to itself. We had to be a secret. And I came to hate that word—secret—because it made us sound like we were dirty and wrong, and had to hide from others. For all the happiness I found in you, that it had to remain a secret...made me unhappy."

Ryan's parents are estranged and his father only sees his chance to relive his failed football career through his son. Ryan is not interested in football and would rather be a horticulturist, but his father will never give him the chance. There is no love there and his father becomes David's and Ryan's nemesis. Ryan's mother loves him, but is weak and disillusioned with her marriage and therefore does not support him either like she should or is able too. Only when it's too late. David's parents are understanding and loving, the total opposite of Ryan's. So once again we see how parents can be so important in shaping one's views and attitudes on life. But Ryan remains strong and never succumbs to his father's ill will and believes in what he has found in David, drawing on the strength they both give each other.

They try to keep their love under wraps, but eventually a love as great as this has to come out. They first find acceptance in a friend called Judy and her friends, for who David works for mowing her lawns. Eventually they also find acceptance among their school friends and David's parents. This acceptance comes only with a fight against ridicule and contempt. But the joy in the freedom they find at Judy's was wonderful.....

"She called me your boyfriend," he said, and an involuntary giggle popped out of him. He covered it with two fingers like he was trying to pinch the grin away. I was amused by his reaction. "Yes, she did." "Wow, that is such a wonderful thing to hear someone say." He wrapped his arm around me. "I'm your boyfriend!"

However, the reality of life and it's ugly truths too, takes it's firm hold sooner or later and youth is only a fleeting moment to be memorised and cherished, but fate and change is inexorable. Nothing does or can stay the same forever. Ryan and David find this out at the hands of Ryan's father. At this point in the book I lost the plot, I was grief stricken, crying into my Kindle about the senselessness of it all. Never has a book moved me so much that I was beside myself with emotion. I kept thinking.....NOOOO! This beautiful story, this wondrous love can't end like this, it just can't!!!! Well, the reality of life takes us over, moves us along, unforgiving and unrelenting. Every single one of us. But patience is a virtue and all things comes to those who wait. Dan leaves the book on a note of hope, a second chance in life, that once again had me burst into tears all over again. This time of hope and joy!

As Dan said in his blog post he wanted to write a book for "them" and not only "us." Well, he has definitely achieved that. A book that deserves recognition on all sides from all levels. Whether gay or not, young or old, this book will open eyes and hearts for the beautiful work it is.

If you're gay you'll recognise those feelings and find yourself immediately. No need to say anything further there. If you're not then this book will give you such a beautiful depth of understanding like no other book can or will. I would like to believe that parents are more informed today and would handle and react differently as opposed to how David's and Ryan's parents did. Although David's parents are actually pretty cool for that time.

Growing up in a rural part of the UK in a loving family, a teenager of the early 80s. I felt David's emotional turmoil. I kept reading and thinking that was me, that's exactly how I felt at that age, at that time.....

"Surely someone out there had to be looking at me the way I looked at others. Somebody out there had to want me the way I desired others. Were they out there looking at me but going through what I was? Not being able to do anything about it?"

It was frustrating. How could I be living a life I didn't want? How could I be something no one would want to be? It's not something I would have picked. I would change it if I could. But I knew I couldn't. This is no different than our eyes being blue, our skin being white. Being tall or short. None of these things are choices. They have no right making us feel like our love is out of sync with what's normal. It's no different than all of us breathing the same air and still being completely different creatures made of the same stuff. They want to tell us that love has one direction, one capacity, and one purpose. What horseshit. Love is about caring for another human being. What's wrong with that? We can't control this any more than we can control what day the sun shines and what day it rains. What makes them think we can just wake up one day and make a choice like this?"

Also the things sexually that you couldn't quite explain, let alone talk to anyone about this or hear the words from an adult that what you're feeling is OK and normal. That is a big weight to carry for any teenager. Believe me, I know!

"I would sneak my mom's Spiegel catalog and thumb through the pages of men in underwear. And even though you couldn't really see anything—they made sure there were no unsightly bulges in those days—they were a good jumping-off point for a masturbatory session. However, this time I turned to the women's underwear section. I thumbed through all four pages displaying women in various bras and underwear. I stared and stared. I tried playing with myself as I stared. Nothing happened. I thumbed back to the men's underwear section. The first page gave me an instant erection. I grabbed onto it and thumbed back to the women's section. It died in my hands."

So here I was reading and OMG! I found my own thoughts, emotions, feelings and insecurities of when I was **that teenager** come echoing back to me. Thoughts, emotions, feelings and insecurities that have long been forgotten, repressed and buried for all time, or so I thought, came flooding back on a huge tidal wave. Believe you me this is a big burden to keep secret when you are so young. I like to think it made me more resilient, more independent and stronger. I would like to think that young adults have it easier today, hopefully. We've come a long way, but there is still a lot of work to do, but we're getting there. And before you ask referring to the quote above. Yes, I did *exactly* the same and with *exactly* the same effect. ooopps! Let the cat out of the bag now – *runs and hides* – just don't tell mum!

I have possibly quoted a little more from a book than I usually do. As I said at the beginning, there is a beautiful depth of emotion in Dan's writing that wouldn't let me go. So therefore I make no apologies for it in my attempt to bring this to your attention.

This book is about forgiveness, how horrible teenagers can be to each other. About being strong and affecting change in others, believing and never giving up in what they have found in each other. Being hit hard by a real world, but dreaming of a better, more caring and loving world. About love and loss. About life! About the respect that love and commitment deserves between two human beings regardless of gender. A book truly for "them and "us."

Go read this book!

**Thanks go to Bev, Monique and Simon for their nudging to get me to read this book.*

Isabel says

~~I will write my review as soon as my tears stop falling...~~

I love this book and it is one of the best that I ever read! It is my first Dan Skinner book and I bought in the day that I read Lena's review! I was a little scared before I started it, because I knew that there would be tears. But to be honest, I loved its every single word, phrase and paragraph! It's so well written... it is sublime... and it worth every tear!

There is one special quote that marked me more than the others, because it describes what I felt on most parts of this magnificent story:

"There are so many types of sorrow. Sorrow for a loss. Sorrow for a tragedy. Sorrow for the way things are. Sorrow for the ways things could have been. But the worse sorrow is for what can never be. My heart cried, filled with that particular sorrow. Wanting to love and knowing I'd never be allowed to do so."

Love... David and Ryan loved each other! A beautiful, young and pure love, born in the late 60's, on a difficult time and space to be homosexual, a difficult time to be accepted and to live that love with plenitude. They treasured their love, they hide it, and they lived it on every possible and forbidden way.

"Love.

It had explained itself to me. I was swept away by what it really meant. It was a word used to convey what had no language. It was a word used to explain a million things that couldn't be explained. It simplified what the heart could not."

Sorrow... Unfortunately to David and Ryan, nothing was easy, and although they had some supportive friends and relatives, they still had to fight against prejudice, intolerance and unacceptance... Precisely what took years away from them! Although there is hope in the ending, it doesn't erase everything that David and Ryan lost! And that was what devastated me! The last part of the book was read constantly with tears! I couldn't stop crying... The sorrow, the sadness... *"Wanting to love and knowing I'd never be allowed to do so."*

And these words just don't leave me... How many men and women still suffer from this society that thinks to know better??!! It is so unfair...

"You can't dream in the light, if you can't live in it."

This book is brilliant. I will never forget it! I memorize it... in my head, in my heart and in my soul!

"But most of all, I realized that when he said he was memorizing me... I was, in fact, memorizing him."

T.A. Webb says

So, usually I start with a recap so you get a taste of what the book feels like. Then I tell you what worked and didn't work, and what touched me. Forgive me if I break a little from my usual style. This book has me all over the place, in a good way.

David is a regular kind of guy, and Ryan is a jock. They are both in high school in the sixties, when being gay was just not okay. They meet, become friends, then more. Then life and hate and the times tear them apart. Life goes on. People move on. And yet...

Now here's the beautiful sadness that grabbed me in the darkest and most hopeful and cynical places in my soul—life never takes you quite where you think it will. Yes, we are caught in the hurricane, but sometimes, just sometimes, it drops you in the most unexpected places. Sometimes, even after forty years, you look up and holy hell, there's your second chance.

I don't want to spoil anything for you as you read this incredible book. Dan Skinner, God bless him, has created characters that I know, that I lived with, played with, grew up with, loved, lost, cried over and still love. These are the people of my past. This story is mine, and probably in a lot of ways, Dan's. Gay men of a certain age (and doesn't that sound haughty, and is a simple way of saying, fifty-ish) have a very different experience of coming to terms with their homosexuality. It might be difficult now, but for those of us who discovered that part of ourselves in the sixties and seventies (and early eighties) lived a different life.

Here's the thing, and I'm sorry I'm all over the place here. This book is a must read. It's love, life, loss and joy, pain, sadness and...I am almost lost for words.

The lessons here? Life is bittersweet, take your happiness a day at a time, and hope is a fickle bitch that surprises you when you least expect it. It might take forty years, but sometimes, God gives you back that which you never thought you would see or feel or hold again.

What a gift.

Read this book. It's a prayer answered.

Tom

Lena♥Ribka says

First of all I want to thank my dear Baba, because her updates made me curious and awakened my interest in this book.

And then I want to thank JR who talked me into reading this book. In spite of my curiosity this book most likely would have never landed on my TBR without them.

Because of two reasons:

- ◆ I am not a huge fan of young adult stories.
- ◆ I am a HEA junkie.

It is why I want to say out loud:

- ◆ Don't be afraid to break down your own stereotypes.
- ◆ I'm so glad that I gave this book a chance.

I don't want to babble a lot.

Just imagine:

You are a boy who begins to develop your sexuality and discovers that you are not attracted to girls but...to boys.

Imagine, you live NOT in NY, Berlin, London or whatever, in the 21th century - I hope also for you not in Qatar - but in a small provincial town at the end of the 1960s, with it's "cookie-cutter families in their cookie-cutter jobs, living in their cookie-cutter houses" and who expect and accept only cookie-cutter relationships that are fit in their world.

And right here begins one of the most sensual touching and beautiful love story.
The story about **First love. Secret love. Unforgettable love.**

This book belongs to one of the strongest reading experience I have ever had.

It is not just a beautiful and pensive story about the first love, it is something very philosophical and deeply thoughtful too. Every line in this book is a tiny worldly wisdom, so simple and so powerful in its expression!... This book makes you not just **feel** and **live** through a wide range of emotions but it makes you **think**. I quoted not only separate sentences, but the whole paragraphs and whole pages. There are so many amazing lines, so many faithful thoughts in it!...

The writing and images are so vivid and meaningful, so sensual and captivating, every moment of this book will be **MEMORIZED** in your soul.

My last thoughts:

Can somebody please replace a bible under the pillow of the pope with this book?!

Can you please make an exception and read this book even if it is without our classical candy HEA?!

Because I won't be tired to repeat it again and again:

IT'S WORTH YOUR EVERY SINGLE TEAR, YOUR EVERY SINGLE EMOTION!...

All that you need are just a big box of tissues and a bottle of something very strong. You can replace the last one with a lot of chocolate.

And you have to listen to Donovan's *Sunshine Superman*.
