



Boys and Girls Like You and Me: Stories

Aryn Kyle

Download now

Read Online ➞

Boys and Girls Like You and Me: Stories

Aryn Kyle

Boys and Girls Like You and Me: Stories Aryn Kyle

ARYN KYLE, whose award-winning novel *The God of Animals* was hailed as "reason for readers to rejoice" (*USA Today*), turns her gift for storytelling to the lives of girls and women in this spectacular collection. These eleven stories showcase Kyle's keen eye for character, her humor, and her uncanny grasp of the loneliness, selfishness, and longing that underlie female experience. In "Nine," a young girl given to exaggeration escapes a humiliating ninth birthday celebration with the help of her father's new girlfriend. The dubious benefits of sleeping with one's boss are revealed when a bookstore manager defends an employee from an irate customer in the hilarious "Sex Scenes from a Chain Bookstore." A raid on a neighbor's meth lab strengthens the unlikely friendship between a solitary woman and a Goth teenage girl in "Boys and Girls Like You and Me." And in a notable exception to the rule, "Captain's Club" features a boy whose devotion to a lonely woman transforms his cruise vacation.

In moments electric with sudden harmony or ruthless indifference, the girls and women in this collection provoke, beguile, and entertain. Writing with remarkable tenderness and wisdom, Kyle gives us a collection radiant with bittersweet revelations and startling insights, and secures her reputation as a major young talent.

Boys and Girls Like You and Me: Stories Details

Date : Published April 20th 2010 by Scribner (first published January 1st 2010)

ISBN : 9781416594802

Author : Aryn Kyle

Format : Hardcover 240 pages

Genre : Short Stories, Fiction

 [Download Boys and Girls Like You and Me: Stories ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online Boys and Girls Like You and Me: Stories ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online Boys and Girls Like You and Me: Stories Aryn Kyle

From Reader Review Boys and Girls Like You and Me: Stories for online ebook

Rachel says

I found this book while perusing the new books section of my local library. I was in the mood to try reading a book of short stories rather than a full-length novel.

It's hard for me to rate this book. On the one hand, Kyle's writing is fantastic. I left the end of each 20-30 page story thinking, "Not only do I feel I have a good understanding of the character, but I feel I have a good idea of where the character is going to end up even after the story ends. How is it possible to do this successfully with so few words?" On the other hand, as I read one story after another, I got a little depressed. The premise of this series of short stories are about women who are in the midst of making poor decisions or learning from past poor decisions. I felt depressed because not all of the leading characters were positively empowered, and I was saddened to see them go down paths of destruction or paths I wouldn't have taken myself if I were in their shoes. Looking back on it, it was likely not the best book for me to read at a time in my life where I want to be surrounded by powerful, confident women and avoid "drama" present in Kyle's characters' lives.

In summary, if you're looking for sharply written short stories from an up and coming author, Kyle won't let you down. However, if you're looking for uplifting stories, I would consider looking elsewhere.

Kevin Walsh says

When I read Carver's Cathedral I thought "Wow, that's a lot of alcoholics!" When I read Kyle's Boys and Girls I thought "Wow, that's a lot of adulterers!"

Carolyn says

PROS

- I like short stories b/c they force the author to boil the story down to the most essential scenes. I feel like I get their key points in a short space. Kyle did this well.
- The writing was pretty good. Not beautiful, but well done. She had some really good moments where she framed a character's perspective in such a way that it felt new to me. I love when that happens.
- She doesn't glamorize sin. These are not soap operas. They're more like "About Schmidt" - showing how bleak life is for someone people, especially those without a strong faith or supportive community.
- In almost every story, I could trace the problems back to the unfaithfulness of someone the main character loved -- a parent who'd abandoned them (physically or emotionally), an unfaithful partner, etc. I appreciated that she showed what havoc that wreaked.

CONS

- I disliked most of the characters in these stories.
- I disliked most of the situations and many of the choices made in these stories.
- I disliked the example these characters set for those who don't recognize them as anti-heroes (i.e. they

wouldn't actually be good cautionary tales for teens).

So ultimately, I just can't recommend it.

Wendy Burks says

First of all, this book is not for everyone...since it's about women making mistakes/bad decisions/reacting (poorly) to life's challenges, it comes across a little dark (some stories more than others) and as such, is a bit of downer. But since it's short stories, you luckily don't have to live with each character's drama for long. Like some other reviewers said...this book is so hard to rate!! As a collection of short stories, there was reason throughout the book for ratings all the way from 1 to 5. But, I went w/ a 4 for the following reasons: I found it @ Dollar General for \$1, so it was a great read for the price! The author did a great job developing the stories and characters in such short period of time. I couldn't put it down - each short story led me to the next, and then the next. Maybe I also wanted to get through it to a more uplifting book as well...? It bothered me that most of the down-and-out (and sometimes unlikable) characters smoked and/or abused alcohol and/or sex - even the underaged ones. This made for a sometimes depressing window into their lives. However, the one story which centered around a boy (The Captain's Club) was really sweet, and involved an innocent, supportive relationship between a father's kind, wide-eyed girlfriend and a coming-of-age teenage boy (even though the tone of the other stories had me expecting a darker motive for their friendship at every turn). The stories were provocative, as intended, and took the reader to places they (hopefully!) never need go themselves. It also reminds us that although the characters are a bit exaggerated and sometimes seemingly two-dimensional, everyone loses it sometimes and need to take a brief detour before getting back on track...

"This is how you ended up here. You were poor or unlucky or unwise. You told a lie or broke a rule or wanted something you weren't supposed to have. You ended up here because you didn't care where you ended up, because you were selfish or impulsive or naive, because you made a bad decision, not once, but again and again and again and again. You ended up here because you could not see what any idiot could see. This is not a place where people come to build a life -- this is a place where people fall apart."

The last story ends beautifully with this....

"That apartment, that town, it wasn't a place where anyone stayed. One way or another we would both be gone soon. Neither of us would ever go back.

And so I wish now that I could have that day to live again, that golden walk to the car. I should have told you how the light fell on you in that classroom, the way the atmosphere softened and brightened around you as you played. And -- how had I never seen it before? -- you were so beautiful and elegant and beloved. In the moment you played the last note, your bow still quivering over the string, that hot, crowded room drew a collective breath and I cannot recall a fuller, more radiant moment in my life.

And this, this is the part I want you to know. That moment lives in my head, a thing with breath and blood. A present tense. An always -- that sudden blossoming of grace and beauty and competence, all of it so unexpected, all of it so undeserved, and the feeling or knowledge or faith that somehow, everything was going to be all right."

Janelle Weiner says

Good to the last sentence. And I wonder if Kyle would hate this, but I feel like there was a GIRLS-esqueness

to these stories, written in a time before GIRLS existed. They're funny, twisted, inappropriate at times. The girls are drifting--not identity-seeking, but waiting for their identity to find *them*, which I think is a pretty great critique of the contemporary female experience, at least for those of a certain age.

Allyson says

This book was just mean although the writing was very clever. Few of the characters are at all likable or sympathetic. They all are either pathetic, evil, cruel, twisted, or just uninteresting. While these are short stories, so not the same as a novel, I can't help thinking of Rachel Cusk's recent book which I also found to be inhabited by unlikable characters, but somehow not as distasteful as these were.

She really creates her characters so well, and I remember quite liking her novel *The God of Animals*. While acknowledging her writing skills, I would not recommend this short story collection to anyone unless they are completely cynical, nasty, and revel in bad behavior.

Wendy says

This book leaves an impression. It's unsettling and outright hostile at times - but in all the right ways. If you've ever felt lonely or other, or are scared by your own thoughts or actions then you'll be able to relate. I think this book captures those feelings perfectly.

Emiline says

I loved this book of short

Hailley says

I haven't picked up a short story collection in a while so reading *Boys and Girls Like You and Me* by Aryn Kyle was a great way to jump back in it. The general theme and thread of these short stories was about love, in all forms, and most of the time, love that didn't work. The stories seemed believable, the characters one I might run into on my campus or later in life.

There are 11 stories and overall, it's a pretty quick read. I had many favorites such as "Economics," "Captain's Club," "Femme," and "Boys and Girls Like You and Me." Each story stood out to me and when looking back on the table of contents, these stories called to me.

"Economics" discusses not only a sister-sister relationship, but also about the secrets we keep from family members. The narrator moves in with her college-aged sister and starts working at a family-run shop that is basically going nowhere. She befriends the owner's daughter, Amy, who, while appearing to be flawless to her father, is actually a boatload of crazy. Amy is dating Hank and her everyday thoughts move away from

school and focus on Hank. Both the narrator's sister and Amy have to take an impossibly hard economics class and mid-way through the semester Amy gives up. Things go bad from there and the final scene is the narrator leaving the shop as the father has just discovered his daughter is not as perfect as she seemed. The focus of this story was on the cash drawer and the father's insistence that the number on the roll make the amount of actual money in the cash register. The narrator often finds the number on the roll doesn't match the actual amount of money. She either adds change or removes the extra to make the two equal. This simple, physical act parallels what is going on with Amy and her father. Amy removes or adds pieces of herself so that she matches the Amy her father sees.

"Captain's Club" takes to the water as two boys, CJ and Tommy, go on a cruise. CJ's father decides to take a cruise with his new girlfriend and allows CJ to bring along one friend. Unfortunately, all of CJ's friends are not allowed to go, the mothers are concerned. That's how Tommy, who is more of a social outcast, comes along. While CJ and his father would rather go to the casino or the arcade, Tree (the girlfriend) and Tommy bond and decide to make the most out of their trip. Tommy develops a school-boy crush, a crush which Tree is unaware of. And just as Tree is unaware of Tommy's crush, Tree is unaware that CJ's father is only looking for his next conquest.

"Femme" is probably the shortest story in the collection and is written in second person. The story asks the reader to imagine a friend, who in the end, is more of a fake friend. They cheat with your husband, get what they want, and pull you in to their so-called "secret circle." While at first, you are absorbed with this friendship, eventually you see their flaws and the friendship dies. I love the last line: "Your life belongs to you, just like we always told you it did." While you might have spent the past couple of pages agreeing and remembering that friend, the last line stops you in your tracks. For me, I reconsidered the people I was thinking of. Sure, they might not have done the nicest things but in the end, they did make me better. They did give me good advice. And they were right, my life belongs to me.

The final story of the collection is also the title of the collection, "Boys and Girls Like You and Me." The narrator befriends the neighbor girl, Iris. A weird friendship forms. I won't spoil the whole story, but the final paragraph really got me. It was one of those sentences I read and reread because I needed several times to really soak it in.

"And this, this is the part I want you to know: That moment lives in my head, a thing with breath and blood. A present tense. An always -- that sudden blossoming of grace and beauty and competence, all of it so unexpected, all of it so undeserved, and the feeling or knowledge or faith that somehow, someday, everything was going to be all right."

Again, Kyle stresses the idea everything is going to be all right in the end. Maybe the theme was love, that love is imperfect. Or maybe Kyle just wanted the reader to remember they are people out there like ourselves. That we all do silly things, that we all lie, that we all try to hard and sometimes fail. No matter what message you take from this book, it's definitely one you should pick up.

Amy says

Mixed feelings on this collection. Some of the stories are sharp and devastating, while others are just meh and feel overworked in that MFA-workshop way.

Amy says

It is not often that a short story writer can create characters that are multi-dimensional, real, and relateable in so few pages...Aryn Kyle is remarkably successful at doing just that. The characters that grace this set of stories are flawed, but convey a refreshing honesty & self-awareness that made for a good tale, even set amongst the most ordinary of circumstances. From the inside flap, " In "Nine," a young girl given to exaggeration escapes a humiliating ninth birthday celebration with the help of her father's new girlfriend. The dubious benefits of sleeping with one's boss are revealed when a bookstore manager defends an employee from an irate customer in the hilarious "Sex Scenes from a Chain Bookstore." A raid on a neighbor's meth lab strengthens the unlikely friendship between a solitary woman and a Goth teenage girl in "Boys and Girls Like You and Me." And in a notable exception to the rule, "Captain's Club" features a boy whose devotion to a lonely woman transforms his cruise vacation."

Laurie says

I don't usually care much for short stories; I don't understand them most of the time, and so they bore me. This collection is different. It grabbed me from the first paragraph and never let go. In each of these eleven stories about young women and girls (and one young boy), I recognized either myself or people I know. There are many, many ways that a woman can mess up her life, and several of these ways are brought to living, breathing, despairing life in these tales. It's uncanny how vivid these short tales are, despite dealing with the mundane situations of life.

Affairs with married men, trying too hard to be accepted, allowing a betrayal to ruin one's life, compulsive lies- they're all here, bad choices aplenty. In all these stories, you have the feeling that these lives could have reached dead ends, but you keep hoping for these people. Each story **does** end with the possibility that these lives can be turned around. These are stories about women and girls, but it's not chick lit.

Alison Abernethy says

The story's were hit or miss, some I really liked some I didn't.

Matt Raymond says

I'm unofficially the head cheerleader for Aryn Kyle. The God of Animals is one of my favorite books, and I even read passages of it at my writing group. As an example of good writing in case you were wondering. But that's the only book she's published besides this short story collection in 2010. So while I impatiently wait for her to continue proving her awesome writing abilities, I decided I should at least finish what she's had published. And I'm happy I finally did. Not *quite* as good as her novel, but it explores the same territory and brings up some new ideas.

This collection is about girls (in regards to maturity not age) reaching turning points that position them toward womanhood, all pretty sad and terrible events, and how that shift occurs and where it leaves these

“Not a girl, not yet a woman” characters, as Britney Spears circa Crossroads would say if she read books. There’s nothing unique or bizarre about these stories. They’re all pretty normal events, but Kyle is a very good writer. Mostly because she’s writing what she knows: girls and young women, and she’s just focusing on being very good at that perspective. Little girls lie, 15 year old girls are awkward and shy. None of this is news, but we see things from their viewpoint. It’s more complicated than JUST lying or being shy or apathetic. They have a reason. But it usually ends up being a terrible reason because they’re all immature. I used to have similarly terrible reasoning as a teenager that today I realize made zero sense in adult life. The reasons for their behavior are what force the story to be more than a vignette. It’s about how they realize that their actions do have consequences. Usually in harsh or tragic ways that were blind to them until that moment.

I liked most of the stories, while a few I think needed some rewriting. Here’s some that I loved:

Nine - A little girl turning nine (get it?) starts dealing with the fact her mother has left her. This wasn’t a perfect story, but I believed all the behavior of each character. Especially the dad’s girlfriend, an immature dancer who just took this girl out of school without notice like it wasn’t a big deal. Kind of crosses into the same territory as God of Animals. But still great as its own thing.

Economics - A young woman begins college, gets a job at a struggling gift shop and her general apathy toward everything leads to some serious damage. The real costs of having a life, or no life, is what this is about. So good!

Captain’s Club - This one was actually focused on a preteen boy’s infatuation with his “friend’s” father’s girlfriend Tree (I love that name). It’s about love. How people can ignore it, get cut down by it (HINT HINT) or become empowered by it. I still argue that this is mainly about Tree’s immaturity though, so my initial summary is still valid.

A Lot Like Fun - A former poet now apathetic 2nd grade teacher drifts through life attempting to change before she turns 30, but finding it difficult. She starts a relationship with a divorced man & forms an odd temporary bond with his moody teenage son. Funny and poignant, about how people in their 20’s sometimes are too scared to move forward with their life. And how change is easier said than done.

Femme - The most experimental piece, and the shortest, is an ode to female relationships and how complicated they are. So many facets to one kind of person, and Kyle explores most of them in a kind of fluid timeline of events. It kind of reminded me of Girl by Jamaica Kincaid, except a lot darker.

Allegiance - This story about a little girl moving from England to America is probably the best attempt at understanding that weird moment in childhood when you realize you have to participate in life. She’s in the middle of several fights between her parents, a nerdy girl and some popular girls, and tries to stay neutral but realizes that it can’t last. She has to resort to being cruel to survive. Sad? Yes. But incredibly astute for a moment in all our lives that we don’t usually remember. The moment we realize we have to take care of ourselves before anyone else, even though you will end up hurting the people you love in the process.

Boys and Girls Like You and Me - The title story is so quiet & wonderful, you almost forget that’s it’s just about two screwed up women that end up hiding in a bathroom together. A woman in her twenties has moved to a dump town to work for a plagiarizing/paper mill in the hopes of seducing a married man (she doesn’t). She meets a young woman in her apartment building, a teenager in love with another guy (it doesn’t work out either), and the two share this really weird bond that barely exists. Except they both get hurt by people they love (or think they love? I don’t really know). I can’t describe this too well, but it’s about

how we're scared of life moving forward without us, and insecure about our potential. We have to love ourselves, and that's sometimes the hardest thing about living.

These were just OK:

Sex Scenes from a Chain Bookstore - The melodramatic climax put me off, but otherwise it's a great story about a woman confronting patriarchal power at a bookstore she works at. And losing.

Take Care - It was an interesting story about false perceptions and shared identities so I can't say I wasn't entertained. But that older sister must have been mentally ill. Her behavior was just not grounded in real life. She stabbed herself with scissors because some guy dumped her? What? And then she spends the rest of the story being a huge bitch to everyone. The younger sister is really who I focused on. But combined with the several subplots I just can't say this was a great story. There's a nice twist ending though.

I didn't really like these much:

Brides - The dialogue was hammy, the "shock(s)" was/were predictable and the message was muddled by all the flat background characters and unfocused plot. I see the potential, but this needed some edits. Kind of like the movie version *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers*, which is the musical these kids are putting on. What, they couldn't get rights for something lamer? *Anything Goes* perhaps?

Company of Strangers - In this story about codependency, I didn't get how a man dies, and no one cares. Like, no one. There was no sadness or grieving. Just "Dad died, OK time to make the donuts" or something to that effect. And I don't really get why the the main characters, an irresponsible young woman & a strict older brother, had issues with their father. I liked all the weirdness of the sister taking her niece and nephew out to eat at some pirate dinner theater ("Just do something Cultural" her brother suggested) and she brings them along when she tries to sleep with a pirate actor who just happens to own some pink, fluffy handcuffs. And I loved the line, "A person is missing only if another person misses them" but ultimately the parts were better than the whole.

These are short stories after all, so by default they all must be depressing. My rule of thumb is, as long as it has a point, it can be as depressing as it wants to be. And even though all these stories have that white/middle class perspective, the messages in it are universal so I never feel like these are strictly lame white people problems. And even though the protagonists are all very similar, I felt like there was some progression in the stories. It wasn't just repeating itself. By the end, I felt there was some development of her main idea, and the stories by the end of the book seemed to offer an alternative to just being a terrible person. There's actually a way to survive and possibly be happy.

Her prose are simple. Cool, imaginative descriptions that hint at her point. She's not reinventing the wheel or forcing me to recognize her awesomeness. All the metaphors and perspectives add up to an emotionally satisfying story which is where the action is. The plots are all subtle but familiar. Serious problems that usually end up being melodramatic in the hands of a bad writer, but she straddles the line between those two with mostly positive results.

I don't regret reading this collection at all, except for the fact that now there's nothing left for me to read by Kyle right now. She can make a simple & powerful story, and even when I don't like them at all I still get it. And I love the title, because it's from a song that was originally supposed to be in *Meet Me in St. Louis*, which is a movie I've seen about 4 times. Maybe if the kids in *Brides* did that musical I'd have like it better?

Misha says

"Boys and girls like you and me" is a book of short stories by Aryn Kyle that I have recently read.

Kyle's stories seem like facets of her own life and personality, warts and all. A British girl coming to America and having to adjust to the local culture and navigate her way among cliques of popular girls. A child of a traumatic divorce. A college girl who does not care about education, wants to smoke pot and drink instead. Somebody who does not possess any particular talent or drive to succeed, but just happen to be gifted with an ability to write and cursed with a bleeding heart. A girl who fell deeply in love in high-school and was left devastated afterwards. And then again, she fell for a married man. The second time around the love was so destructive that she completely fell apart and lost her desire to do anything but to love the person who is neither deserving of her love nor man enough to be with her.

The characters/author is never quite grown or mature. She is self-centered and inward looking. Her own mental anguish crowds out everything else in life. One of the characters decides to join Peace Corps as a means of escaping her own wretched existence. When she finds out that she would likely be doing something less than glamorous and heroic in the faraway place, she quickly drops the idea.

Recently, my short-stories benchmark is "Drown" by Junot Diaz. I think this book measures up. Kyle is being forthright and talks about what she knows best: her own life. Her style is unsophisticated. She does not bother with long descriptions. Instead, she grabs the reader's attention with brutal, occasionally over the top, honesty. How about this for a beginning paragraph? "[my boyfriend], I knew, was not in love with me the way that I was in love with him and would quickly abandon the idea of me without the actual me around to keep him distracted with bl0wj0bs." She then keeps the reader off balance with dispassionate narrative that reveals how f@cked up the lives and the relationships of her characters are. She does not sugar coat the stories with happy endings. Neither does she dwell on particularly gruesome scenes. She just gives the glimpse of the proverbial train wreck with the twisted metal mingled with body parts and then quietly walks away.

Her plots are themselves often gripping. Nobody reads my shidt, anyway, right? So it does not matter if I throw in spoilers to a few stories I liked best.

* A teenage girl puts out for her drama teacher. Out of teen angst and boredom I am guessing. The teacher is in desperate and hopeless love with her talented but vain classmate. He makes love

to this stand-in with closed eyes without ever kissing her.

* A spoiled pre-teen jock goes on a Mediterranean cruise with his divorced father. By chance, his peer from a poor family gets to accompany him. The father brings his new girlfriend who is significantly younger than he is. The girl quit her job and dropped everything to come on this trip. However, the father ends up going to the ship's casino and chasing tour guides most of the trip while his son is playing games in the arcade. So the girl spends her time with the poor boy: shopping for his family's presents and visiting antique sites. The boy falls in his first puppy-love. Later, the father sends the boys away from the cabin for the evening while the girl, it seems, needs a good helping of liquor to get with the program. To the poor boy the whole thing feels like a betrayal. He goes on deck and sees a once-in-a-lifetime sight of an incredible Mediterranean sunset. He noticed that the father left so he runs back to the cabin to tell the girl about the sight only to find her in a drunken imbecile stupor.

* The family of a middle-school girl just moves from England to the US. While living in England the girl's American father cheated on her mother. The mother wants to get away from the place so they come to the US. The mother finds everything there foreign. She clings to her daughter as the only thing left dear to her. Meanwhile, the girl struggles for acceptance in school. She is treated like an outsider by the clique of girls. Finally, she is given a chance to get in by jointly humiliating a bumbling naive classmate who thought that the British girl was her friend. Then, the British girl is invited to a sleepover party to the house of one of the popular girls. The British girl sees this as an opportunity to gain further acceptance. However, her mother finds this American custom objectionable and does not allow her to go. Her father sees nothing wrong with it. The parents get into an argument which quickly becomes heated with the mother's hatred of America and the father's infidelity coming up. While her mother is sobbing in the bathroom, the girl quietly asks the father if she can go to the sleepover party.

I usually find it hard to relate to exactly these topics covered by women-writers. But I guess Kyle has just caught me at the right (or wrong?) time. Oh, well.

Doug says

My friend Terri wrote a scathing review of this book, and it acted on me like the classic spoiled milk skit: "Ugh, it's terrible! Here, taste it!" I was perversely curious, and after noticing that other reviews of the book seemed wildly polarized -- love it/hate it, not much inbetween -- I was downright intrigued.

I'm in the "love it" camp. I thought it was sharply observed, with snappy, vivid dialog. It's frequently very funny (if in a sometimes uncomfortably dark or "OMG that's SO inappropriate!" sort of way). I was reminded in various ways of other modern writers I like whose characters often make selfish and/or dangerous choices: Erich Puchner, Mary Gaitskill, Wells Tower, Sara Levine, Charlie Houston, and (perhaps especially) Lena Dunham. I can't completely dispute Terri's criticism that Kyle's characters

have just given in to the worst of life in a defeatist way. They can't get over anything, they can't make anything of themselves, they are defined by their victimhood, they choose debasement, they are spiteful.

but it does seem a bit reductive. And if it describes the characters as they are seen in these stories, there are some indications that the characters don't necessarily *stay* that way. They're mostly college-aged, and maybe they'll grow up a bit. But if they're awful until they do, I found them awfully entertaining.

Dani says

Page 33- "Love. It is a word that means nothing and everything at the same time."

Page 34- "I love you, I love you," her father's voice says on the other side of the wall, and Tess wants to rush to him and cover his lips with her hand. She wants to save him from all the things he hopes it means, from all the promises it cannot keep.

Page 48- "Today will just be something else that they don't talk about, something else that probably never happened."

Page 59- "She had spent her whole life working as hard as she could to make a place for herself. But what she hadn't known was that her place was really a person."

Page 61- "Just a train passing through a station, a college girl in a college bar, a girl who might go on to anywhere, to do anything."

Page 123- "Of all the things he had been, he had not been a liar. He'd written those words a long time ago. Probably, when he wrote the word forever, he had thought it was the truth. That was the real bitch about time: Everything true would become false, if only you waited long enough."

Page 124- "And in that foggy place between sleep and waking, he could have been anyone. That was what she liked most about him: In the darkness, he became whomever she wanted."

Page 128- "Through the exhalation of her cigarette smoke, she saw the slight tremble of chill in the rails of Bernie's arms, the open, endless place of waiting inside of him."

Page 150- "In school, Kate read novels about girls who were kleptomaniacs or drug addicts or in love with their brothers, and the absence of such suffering in her own life was a source of perpetual anguish to her. Kate's unhappiness was like weather, a storm rolling constantly toward or away from her, a force she could feel approaching like a hum of electrical current across her skin before it broke open, soaking her in sadness, and she would have no choice but to brace against the misery until it wore itself out on her and passed on to

someone else."

Page 171- "You could live with a secret for so long, she told Kate, that the secret became the only thing you knew was true about yourself."

Page 194- "The whole wide world was just a big pile of strangers, thinking the time about everything they were missing."

Page 221- "I'd thought that a conflict with so many dramatic elements would end in screams and blood and breaking glass. But really, it ended the way that most things end: silently, invisibly, without us ever knowing why or how."

Page 224- "And so I wish now that I could have that day to live again, that golden walk to the car. I should have told you how the light fell on you in that classroom, the way the atmosphere softened and brightened around you as you played. And - how had I never seen it before? - you were so beautiful and elegant and beloved."

Page 225- "That moment lives in my head, a thing with breath and blood. A present tense. An always - the sudden blossoming of grace and beauty and competence, all of it so unexpected, all of it so undeserved, and the feeling or knowledge or faith that somehow, someday, everything was going to be all right."

Gina says

This anthology of stories was just not for me. Even though the writing and characterization were good, I found that the stories were morose and in general made me feel uncomfortable due to the content. For example an implied rape scene, abuse, etc. Normally these don't bother me, but for some reason this author's writing got into my head. I had a yucky feeling in my stomach the entire time I was reading and was just glad this one was over. 2 stars.

Stacy says

well-written stories about people with seriously messed up lives

Terri says

Two stories here work for me: "Captains Club" and the title story, "Boys and Girls Like You and Me". I'd give "Captains Club" 3.5 or 4 stars and "Boys and Girls Like You and Me" 3 or 3.5. In the rest, most of the characters (mostly female), except some children who come out pretty well, are just awful, and not in particularly poignant or interesting ways. They seem to have just given in to the worst of life in a defeatist way. They can't get over anything, they can't make anything of themselves, they are defined by their victimhood, they choose debasement, they are spiteful. As a reader, rather than feeling bad for them or empathizing with them, I just felt polluted by their attitudes, their selfishness, their laziness.

