



If You Lived Here, You'd Be Home Now

Claire LaZebnik

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From the well-loved author of *Knitting Under the Influence* and *The Smart One and the Pretty One* comes a new novel about a young single mother trying to move out of her family's shadow.

Rickie left home a long time ago-so how is it that at the age of twenty-five, she's living with her parents again, and sleeping in the bedroom of her childhood home?

At least one thing has changed since high school: She now has a very sweet but frequently challenging son named Noah, who attends the same tony private LA school she herself attended. Rickie fit in fine when she was a student, but now her age and tattoos make her stand out from all the blond Stepford moms, who are desperate to know why someone so young-and so unmarried-has a kid in first grade.

Already on the defensive, Rickie goes into full mother-tigress mode when her small and unathletic son tells her that the gym teacher is out to get him. She storms the principal's office, only to discover that Andrew Fulton, the coach, is no dumb jock. As her friendship with Andrew develops, Rickie finds herself questioning her assumptions-about motherhood, being a grown-up, and falling in love.

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From Reader Review If You Lived Here, You'd Be Home Now for online ebook

Vicki Jaeger says

So the front cover included a review of her last book as a "good rollicking romp," or something like that. Let me tell you, that really didn't apply to this one for me.

The protagonist is a 20-ish single mother living with her parents, not very sure of who she is or where she is going. It's kind of an adult version of the young adult novel: she's perpetually unhappy and rebelling against everyone's attempts to help, complement, or improve her life situation. Waaaaay too much angst to really be adult fiction. I say pass.

Stephanie says

First things first: I. LOVED. THIS. BOOK!

Smart-ass, single, tattooed, 25 year old Rickie never thought she'd still be living at home with her parents, in her old bedroom, but she is. She doesn't have a job or a college degree, her mom still drives her nuts, and now, she has a first grade son, Noah, with a whole slew of problems, both medically and emotionally. She loves him to death, but he is a handful to deal with, as is her controlling mother, who Rickie rarely feels a connection with. Throw in a heartbroken sister, a cheating brother in law, and you have dysfunctional family to a T. When Noah comes home from his fancy, snobby school one day crying about his gym teacher, Andrew Fulton, Rickie fully anticipates stomping into the school and encountering a big bad jock who indeed picks on her needy son. What she finds instead is a kindhearted man who may just change all of her perceptions on family, love, and life.

This book reminded me of why I love reading so much! Seriously! All of last week, I would rush home from work so that I could delve back into the story, after thinking about it during my whole shift. It was just one of "those" books for me, and you book people know what I'm talking about! One of "those" books that you stay up late reading (I know I did!), that you think about, and read for hours on end. I was just SO drawn into this story and felt so involved in it. The characters were so realistically drawn out and I was SAD to see their stories end. Rickie was really funny and a total wise-ass. She was negative, sarcastic, and snarky, but I could totally understand why. Despite her many flaws, I liked her a lot, and found myself rooting for her and her son, Noah.

This book also had a lot of heart and spoke volumes on family and familial relationships, especially dysfunctional, or "unique" ones. Noah was a very needy child, and though the family often grew frustrated with him, their love was unwavering. Rickie's sister was also dealing with a separation and had also moved in with Rickie and their parents for a time. It was heartrending to see her sadness over being away from her children and feeling betrayed by her husband. At the same time, the family grew stronger and was supportive of her needs. Rickie and her mother had a very dysfunctional relationship throughout as well, and it was painful to watch, but at the same time, we were able to hang onto some hope.

Gahhh! I could go on... but I won't. I'll just say, I think you ought to read this book. I already ordered, and received, one of Claire LaZebnik's other novels, Knitting Under the Influence, and I am really looking forward to reading it (B&N – \$1.99!). This book just spoke volumes to me. It was so realistic and full of

compassion and truth.

Seriously? Just read it. One of my favorites of the year.

Note: I received a copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

Heidi Brydon says

I loved this book, but in the interests of full disclosure, let me say that I have read all of this author's novels, and my mother has a copy of her amazing non-fiction book "Overcoming Autism," which was given to her when my brother was diagnosed.

The fact that this author writes incredibly popular, funny, romantic fiction AND co-authors bestselling non-fiction on such a complicated topic gives you an idea of what an amazing writer she is.

"If You Lived Here, You'd Be Home Now," is her latest, equally brilliant book. Like the other reviewer on here, I was the lucky recipient of an advanced copy, unlike that reviewer I don't happen to be offended by a character who has a tough time with her mother.

I don't know a single woman who DOESN'T have a tough time with her mother. Of course, I live on earth, I have no idea where this other reviewer lives, but she must have a pretty tough mom, if she can't handle a little disagreement with a daughter from time to time.

And this is the essence of why I've loved every book I've read by this author: She gets that families are messy. Messy and annoying and maddening and yet, and yet, in the end it always comes back to the strong love. Strong family ENCOURAGES people to disagree, knowing that they are safe to work out their differences without swallowing their individuality.

The other thing I love about her books, and this book in particular, is that the love story feels real, and true, and, again...messy.

In short, if you're family isn't perfect (mine isn't, but I love them) and your love life isn't one hundred percent smooth sailing (uh, don't have that either) you will RELATE to this author, laugh at her wit, smile at the mistakes her characters make and cheer for them when finally, despite all their flaws, manage to grow, and improve, and find love.

Sounds like life, doesn't it? That's why it's great fiction and a satisfying read.

If your life is perfect, don't bother, like the other reviewer here you won't like this book one bit.

Teryl says

I wasn't going into this book with high expectations, so I was so happy that it hooked me in. Many people (other reviews) thought that Rickie was selfish. Yes and No on that one. Part of the reason for the way she acted was that she lived at home with her son, Noah, and her parents didn't make her get out and get a job.

Yes she took care of Noah, but that was about it. She didn't really have any aspirations to move out or do anything.

She did grow and that is the whole point of the book. She realized she didn't have to be so defiant all the time with her mother. She went back to school so she could do something with her life instead of just hanging around all the time. She met someone who cared for her the way she was and loved her child also.

Laurel-Rain says

Rickie Allen, twenty-five year old single mother to Noah, age six, seems like someone you could root for. At first glance, you can feel sympathy for her situation, living at home with her parents and locking horns constantly with what appears to be an over-controlling mother, Laurel.

Her half-sister Melanie, newly separated from husband Gabriel, has two children, and occasionally stays at the family home, too. But she gets along great with her stepmother, Laurel.

Rickie's first person narrative is definitely showing us her view of things only, and it's when we see her interact with others that we begin to suspect that Rickie's issues with her mother are only the tip of the iceberg.

Why is Rickie unable to commit to anyone or anything? Why does she oppose everything her mother suggests? What happened to derail her life when she was a teenage college student? And why is she constantly pulled into an unfulfilling relationship in a friends-with-benefits pairing with Ryan, her former brother-in-law's brother?

Noah has many problems, too. He is small, with celiac disease and food issues. He isn't very athletic, and as a student in a private school with lots of athletic kids around him, he bears the brunt of some bullying. Do some of his behaviors (whining, inability to try anything that is challenging) have anything to do with his mother's behavior?

By the time I neared the end of *If You Lived Here*, I was pretty frustrated with Rickie. But there was also something appealing about her, so I wanted her to find her way. I wanted her to finally discover a path and stick to it. I hoped that she would care enough about herself to make some changes.

There were some predictable elements, in that Ricki has a conflict with the school coach at first, and then begins to like him. As a friend. And perhaps more.

The relationship between the mother and daughter suddenly started to smooth out, with understanding all around. A nice, soothing touch, but again...predictable.

Nevertheless, I enjoyed this novel and was happy at how the author tied things up in the end. 4 stars.

M says

Yes, this book is as dumb as it looks, but you know what? I could not get through three pages of so called literary (read: pretentious and overwritten) Elegance of the Hedgehog and the what did my sister see in THIS one Family Album, whereas this here novel took me about five minutes to read. So while that begs all sorts of questions of what makes a good book/a good read, I still think there's what to be said for that.

IYLHYBHB, aside from being a reaaaally long title, is everything a bad romantic comedy is supposed to be - true to the die hard formula, there will be a heroine who meets a man she does not like (yet!) and after enough cheesy moments she WILL (thank you, Jane Austen, for what was probably a revolutionary plot twist in your day but by now is REALLY OLD). The changes here are that Rickie, the narrator, is a 25 year old saddled with a seven year old because of a really stupid idea she had (I guess it would be a plot spoiler if I shared this but in truth this angle was spoiler enough for my taste, but ok) and is now living at home with no BA and no direction. To combat her unhappy life she decides to get lots of tattoos and piercings so that she can be all the less appealing to the other moms at the snooty LA private school her parents insists on sending Noah to.

Rickie has got to be the most unlikable character ever. Now, I am not opposed to unlikable characters per se (hello my man Franzen) and in fact one rather obnoxious goodreadser once dropped by a review of mine to say outright that my not liking a book's characters was indicative of my being an idiot (if you're still around, Tanya, then just know I am so over it) when really, I like characters who are complex, but being flat out awful is just as not complex as being all good or bad. Meaning, making Rickie a smart mouthed sarcastic hyper sensitive person who always needs to be in control and make her rather innocuous seeming mother feel bad didn't exactly make me want her to succeed. This was no Elizabeth Bennett, this was: teen years, the nightmare. Then we have Rickie's amazingly holy half sister, Melanie, who is a whopping wimp that is just so perfect and so sweet and meanwhile so insecure and so irritating.

Anyway. Noah is small and scrawny and the coach takes an interest in him, and then his mom, who follows suit.

The thing with this book, predictable and sappy as it was, was that it had occasional moments of - well, not insight per se, but something resembling insight (enough to inspire "thought questions" at the back of the book - you know the type: Rickie does not like her mother. Do you have a mother? Do you like her? Imagine how it would feel. Discuss.") which made it both better and worse - so it wasn't total trash, for the most part, but then that just made the rest of its shallowness all the more apparent.

Why am I bothering ripping into a book that basically lived up to exactly what it promised? Because that is way more fun than trying to read the better reviewed yet somehow harder to read other books on my night table.

Cheryl says

I am not really sure how I came across this book- but I am glad I did. It is just the type of book i like. Characters who are dysfunctional enough to be real.. It is a quick easy read about relationships that are somewhat complicated.

Amy says

I just really liked this novel. Exactly what I like to read in "chick lit." Light and very funny, but messages are laced throughout and there are several poignant moments. Love Rickie's sarcasm and dry sense of humor - an

honest and refreshing take on being a mom. This is my first book by this author and I am looking forward to reading the others she has written!

Jennifer Comeaux says

I've tried a couple of this author's books recently, and I don't think her characters are a good fit for me. I wasn't a fan of the main characters in this book, just as I wasn't in her YA book that I read, *Things I Should Have Known*. The mom and the little boy in this one were both a little too whiny for me, and the love interest didn't impress me with the way he handled his relationships. The story in the YA book was much stronger. I thought this one kind of muddled along without enough action.

Leonel says

I confess I started reading this book because I liked the title: "If You Lived Here, You'd Be Home By Now." Plus, I liked a previous novel of Claire Lazebnik. This is a story of a young mother raising her child while also living at her parent's house. And...there really is nothing else happening. I must confess I found the book very slow and once things started to happen, the book was already ending. But, Lazebnik is good at giving her characters very distinct voices, and even if the main character, Rickie can be a trying one, I felt myself connecting and empathizing with her, making this book marginally enjoyable.

<http://luhathoughts.blogspot.com/2015...>

Lisa M. says

I want to preface this by saying I really liked both of Claire LaZebnik's previous novels: *Knitting Under the Influence* and *The Smart One and The Pretty One*. I wish I liked this one half as much.

In all fairness, I read an ARC, so maybe some of the problems will be fixed by the time the book drops.

The set-up:

Rickie left home a long time ago-so how is it that at the age of twenty-five, she's living with her parents again, and sleeping in the bedroom of her childhood home?

At least one thing has changed since high school: She now has a very sweet but frequently challenging son named Noah, who attends the same tony private LA school she herself attended. Rickie fit in fine when she was a student, but now her age and tattoos make her stand out from all the blond Stepford moms, who are desperate to know why someone so young-and so unmarried-has a kid in first grade.

Already on the defensive, Rickie goes into full mother-tigress mode when her small and unathletic son tells her that the gym teacher is out to get him. She storms the principal's office, only to discover that Andrew Fulton, the coach, is no dumb jock. As her friendship with Andrew develops, Rickie finds herself questioning her assumptions-about motherhood, being a grown-up, and falling in love.

The reality:

I just wanted to slap Rickie into next week for the first 80% of the book. She was an unlikeable character for whom I had little sympathy and even less interest in seeing her get her Prince Charming. She is an immature brat and a bad mother - selfish, self-centered and, well, a bitch. It's to LaZebnik's credit that Rickie is a completely believable and well-drawn selfish, self-centered bitch; but if I hadn't been home sick in bed, I would probably have set the book aside in frustration long before I got to the part where Rickie starts to redeem herself.

Sandy Kemp says

Can't begin to express how much I disliked the main character. She is a rebel without a clue, self destructive, immature, selfish and generally a monstrous brat. And the parenting skills displayed all around are pretty abysmal. There are no consequences for anything from her parents, who seem to have zero expectations of her. She is 25, with a 7 yr old, no job, not going to school - and her parents are enabling this. They are completely supportive (too supportive in my opinion). She is reactive against anything her mom says. Many of her actions are based completely on doing exactly the opposite of whatever her mother said - for example, her mother asks her to slow down when driving, she speeds up. The stupidity is incredible. Not to mention her complete disregard for her kid's safety, he's in the car. This is her mother's car, for heaven's sake. She wouldn't be driving my car again for a long, long, long time.

I guess she reminds me of myself at 15, but she's 25, not a silly teenager, and she's a mom - time to grow up. She has nothing to rebel against, and everything to be grateful for. Her parents are rich, kind and she's just an ungrateful cow. Time to see that she is the cause of every one of your terrible "problems". If she quit making such dumbass decisions - for example the dead end relationship with her jackass brother-in-law - her life would quickly change for the better. She has all the basics for a great life - supportive family (with money!), intelligence, her health, the chance for college.

But, it all works out in the end, because she finally meets a nice guy, takes out her piercings, cuts her hair into a "style", buys some nice clothes and starts acting like a grownup. Saved by romance.

Yuk.

The other thing I found hard to swallow was her crap parenting of her kid, and everyone telling her what a great mom she was. She is sarcastic, impatient and selfish - not the qualities one associates with great parenting.

A poster child for why 18 yr olds should not have babies.

Alexa says

This book was my little tonic, my little palate cleanser - the break I took from reading a tragic, disturbing memoir about a mother and a son who disappears into psychosis - I just had to take a break and I grabbed the

frothiest looking book I could find on my bookshelf.

I've read LaZebnik's other two books, also frothy chick lit, and I think she's getting better as an author. I enjoyed this the most of the three. I didn't find (as some of the other reviewers felt) that the lead character was annoying - I actually found her refreshing, and her relationship with her son was sweet and charming and realistic. Yeah, you could see a mile away what was going to happen, who the Prince charming was going to be, but I didn't mind a bit.

A great book to take to the beach, the day spa, the table at your favorite cupcake bakery - somewhere relaxing and/or girly. Enjoy, and don't think too much about it. It's meant to entertain, not change your life...altogether enjoyable.

Moon Love says

This is the 2nd book by Claire LaZebnik that I've read and I've loved it every bit as much as the first one.

I loved Rickie. Her dialogues were great. I loved her one line zingers. I loved her relationship with her step-sister Melanie. Rickie's relationship with her mother on the other hand is not so great. She tends to take out her frustrations with everything in her life out on her mom. Noah was really cute. Having an autoimmune disease is not easy on the person who has it, and not for their family members either. Noah is 6 years old and he has Celiac Disease. He's small for his age and doesn't have any friends, making him an easy target for bullies. Rickie worries for him and lets him usually lets him take the easy way out. Andrew was an amazing guy. I really liked the way he was doing all he could to help kids who were left out and picked on. I like and admire his integrity. I was really rooting for him and Rickie.

There was a lot going on in the book, but I never once felt lost or confused. I also had no problem getting involved in the book. Now I'm eager to get my hands on more books by Claire LaZebnik.

Katie Kenig says

I wanted to like this book more than I did, but I found it very difficult to relate to the main character. The title and the cover were what grabbed me, and - to be honest - if I'd read the blurb or the beginning of the book I probably wouldn't have chosen it.

Rickie is a 25-year-old single mom, living at home with her wealthy parents while raising her son Noah. She struggles with the fact that her parents provide her with everything she could want, including clothing, support, and free babysitting, and with the fact that her gluten-intolerant son needs a special diet and is occasionally flighty. These horrors of her terrible, tragic life are also complicated by her relationship with her brother-in-law's brother, who travels out of town frequently.

She's very put upon. As you can see, I'm terribly sympathetic. Especially since her family is incredibly accepting of how rude she is to them, despite their best efforts to smother her by buying her expensive clothes and giving her a credit card (that they pay the bill for) to use for her personal expenses.

But hey, life can always get better! Her son Noah has an incredible new PE teacher and T-ball coach, who not only is hot and smart, but is great with kids and loves Noah, giving him special attention and helping him make friends and learn about sports - since his mom can't even be bothered to play catch with him once in a while. He does have a girl friend, but that's okay! Rickie can solve that problem too.

I think if you can relate to Rickie and her "problems" you might relate to this book. I spent my time reading it being frustrated with her and wishing she'd grow up.
