



Live

Mary Ann Rivers

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Mary Ann Rivers kicks off a new contemporary romance series—sure to please readers of Ruthie Knox, Kristan Higgins, and Jill Shalvis—where love can be found unexpectedly.

If there's an upside to unemployment, Destiny Burnside may have found it. Job searching at her local library in Lakefield, Ohio, gives her plenty of time to ogle the hottest man she has ever laid eyes on: the sexy wood-carver who's restoring the building. But as the rejection letters pile up, Destiny finds an unexpected shoulder to cry on. With his rich Welsh accent, Hefin Thomas stirs Destiny so completely that, even though he's leaving soon, she lets herself believe the memory of his scorching kisses will be enough.

Hefin can't help but notice the slender, confident woman with ginger hair who returns each day, so hopeful and determined. So when the tears start to fall, his silence—penance for a failed marriage—finally cracks. Once he's touched her, what Hefin wants is to take her back to Wales and hold her forever. But Destiny's roots run too deep. What they both need is each other—to learn how to live and love again.

Live Details

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Author : Mary Ann Rivers

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From Reader Review Live for online ebook

Pam Faste aka Peejakers says

This is warm and lovely and full of all the feelz. Real people with real, human problems in a tender, beautiful, deeply romantic, deeply loving, and *very* sexy love story, with wonderful stuff about family and roots and the healing of broken hearts.

I love this book.

willaful says

(reviewed from e-arc provided by NetGalley.)

There are some romance novels in which the conflict feels forced, like the characters are just making trouble for themselves. *Live* isn't one of those: from almost the first meeting of Destiny and Hefin, they -- and we -- know that there's a serious obstacle in the way of them having more than an ephemeral relationship. It gave the story quite a different feel from usual, because there's no anticipation of an upcoming dark moment -- their conflict is how to appreciate the moment they have.

And of course, as a reader, I'm dying to figure out how this issue can possibly be satisfactorily resolved, because it seems so impossible. (I kept thinking of Bob Newhart as Superman, with his suit lost at the dry cleaners: "I don't know if we're going to be able to get you out of this one, Lois.") But gradually, beautifully, it comes to the perfect ending.

Des is firmly rooted in her Lakefield, Ohio community. (This is a small town novel without the small town, believably set in a city neighborhood.) Having recently lost her job, her family home, and her one remaining parent, she clings to pieces of the past. Helping her siblings and neighbors is one way she tries to fill what seems like an emptiness inside her:

After she got laid off six months ago, when Des looked down inside herself, she mostly saw time. Empty time. But not how to live.

Not a life.

The people most closely related to her saw their entire lives inside themselves.

Hefin, the quietly sexy woodcarver she's been noticing restoring the atrium of the library, is on the verge of beginning a new future. A vacation romance that turned into marriage brought him to the United States; now divorced, he wants to reconnect with his family in Wales and then move on to the work he was meant to be doing. He doesn't particularly want to start something with no future -- as Des correctly points out, he is a "goose" person, the kind who wants to mate for life -- but the attraction between them is very strong. As the attraction becomes love and they begin to truly know each other, their conflict between their needs becomes less rigidly obvious... if they can see it.

The story is written very carefully and deliberately, especially during the sex scenes. Lots of noticing, lots of descriptions of small details -- a lavish depiction of sexual attraction that fits well with their personalities, since they're both people who love to lavish care on others. As is often the case when authors are trying hard

to write about sex in fresh language, it occasionally hit a wrong note for me, but I think it pays off in the end.

As any city-set story should be, *Live* is filled with casual diversity. Hefin, who was adopted from England as a baby, is an undefined racial mix. Destiny's landlady made an interracial marriage in a far more difficult time. Destiny's mother was Jewish, her father Irish Catholic. None of this is particularly important to the story, though the last two have some personal meaning to offer Destiny -- it's just part of the random weave of life.

This is a rich, tender story, not at all the usual contemporary family series fare. I'm looking forward to seeing where life takes the Burnsides next.

namericanwordcat says

Review

When I read a book as good as this, I feel lucky, lucky, lucky. What a grand feeling!

I am so pleased that Mary Ann Rivers is adding her amazing voice and vision to the world of Romance. I loved *The Story Guy* and I loved *Live* as well...maybe more even.

This love story is utterly smart, completely tender, vividly detailed, and achingly real.

The hero and heroine could be called plain if you went by the descriptions of them we get from the book. They certainly are not a part of the conventional beauty set in our culture or that of Romance's mainland.

But, of course, no one is really plain or ordinary and we get to see that sheer shining beauty of the body and soul through the switching points of view of the hero and heroine.

Our heroine is a Ginger (a red head for those of you uninitiated in the ways of our people lol). Rivers captures in the sensuality of this book all the more pleasurable aspects of being a Ginger and the men that love them. Take this from a Ginger married to a Ginger loving man. She is dead on. Fans self. Destiny also has knobby knees, sweat in her hair line, and is skinny.

Our hero is tall but rangy, thin even. The size of his member isn't detailed but it seems to do a fine job. He has a hairy chest. Thank the Goddess. He is Welsh of a mixed unnamed racial background. Hefin. Sigh.

The romance starts with a crush, settles in with bad timing for both of them, sings its glory in small and large gestures of true seeing another and some damn good sexy times, and gives a HEA that is joyous but also achievable.

This is the start of a series where we get a peek into the lives of Carrie and Brian from *The Story Guy* and the foundation is well laid for the tales of Destiny's siblings.

The writing style here is notable as it is poetic and philosophical. It has air and light though. There are very funny and surprising moments. I think I have already mentioned the sheer YUM of the love making--its a little bit dirty actually for all the beauty but the kind of dirty we all enjoy in our own beds (or in the back of limos) from time to lucky time. The sex is hot, messy, sometimes full of laughter, emotional and real.

The side stories and secondaries are pitch perfect and the conflicts are so raw and human they hurt but they also heal and give us the wonders of this genre done well--an understanding of others, a belief in love of all kinds, and joy in the body, the mind, and the soul.

I could tell you all kinds of other wonderful things about this book like the great girl talk, the insights on mortality, grief, illness, care taking, divorce, the love of art and its healing powers as well as those of friendship and family and the pondering on place and home but this book is one of those that unfolds before each reader differently and magically. It whispers just to you. Go, discover all the little wonders to be had in here. Go.

I hope you enjoy it as much as I did!

Sam's story comes out in May of 2014. Ho! Ho! Grumpy Ginger Man--you are gonna get yours!

I was given this book for my honest review. So there you have it!

Regina says

I am a fan of Mary Ann Rivers, we reviewed her novella *The Story Guy*. So when I learned she had a new novel and a new series out I was thrilled. Mary Ann Rivers writes witty, clever and sweet romances. She captures real life so well and uniquely. Her new book did not disappoint me. *Live* is different than romance books I have read recently, but very close to what Mary Ann Rivers did in *The Story Guy*. For me, her writing style feels different because of the style of writing and the focus of the story. The style of writing is very full and detailed but that doesn't alone describe what I mean.

“He would have liked to play it cool, to lean back on the stoop and raise an eyebrow, cross his feet at the ankles. Instead, he was grinning like a child, stumbling off the last step in his eagerness to get to her.”

The text is beautiful. Every sentence is intentionally crafted. Every sentence is emotional. That is the other difference about *Live* for me, the story and the romance is centered on the emotional growth of the two main characters.

“He laughed, and the way she lit up made him realize that his laugh was giving her something she wanted.”

The story is told through alternating points of view between the main male and female characters. First we have Destiny or Des. She is without a job, her sister is ill, her last living parent recently passed away and she is trying to hold her siblings together. Then we have Hefin. He is temporarily working in the US, recovering from a failed marriage and planning to move back to Wales. Both are hurting and trying to figure out their lives and how they fit into the world. Neither is physically perfect, in fact Hefin is described as skinny. I don't think I have read a romance where the male character, while strong and attractive to the female love interest, is skinny. These differences in description and the difficult point in their lives that we find these characters make this story unique. So many times, the male romantic lead is over powering, dominant and wildly successful but that is not Hefin. Hefin can't carry Destiny off to a perfect life because he doesn't have those resources. Mary Ann Rivers gives her readers two characters that are unique to romance literature but realistic.

While I was reading this book, in my head I kept pronouncing the title is "Liiive" (l?v) (like, "Live from New York!") but at the end I realized it is "Live" (short vowel sound) (like, Live your life to the fullest). This is significant, because how the name is pronounced is important to the novel. The book is about living life, not holding yourself back because of fear or emotional pain. It is about getting up when you have been knocked down, even when you don't have anyone to help you get back up again.

I just started thinking about what would happen if I really started going after what I wanted instead of being afraid I didn't want the right thing, or that I'd lose what it was I wanted or thought I wanted, or of messin' up.

Live is beautifully written, well done and I just fell in love with the characters. The story includes a beautifully done back story that really makes the characters feel like they belong in a community.

"She was accustomed to small houses, big families, front stoops, peering neighbors, and older brother and sister who took over conversations, took over everything, and a younger brother who lived in her shadow."

I love romances that have the characters interacting in a larger world; it gives the story context and richness. Live is like that. Mary Ann Rivers wrote about people I know or people I can imagine living and working.

I agree with some reviewers that Live is wordy but personally I loved that. There are many thoughtful inner monologues. Inner monologues are risky, depending on the author these can really fail — but in my opinion they did not fail in Live. This is where the readers get to know Hefin and Destiny. This is where we see their pain, their love — and how they grow as people. Oh yeah, importantly Live is a very sweet romance with steamy sex scenes.

The author set the book up to be a series and the sequel centers on Destiny's brother — I am looking forward to it.

To read more of this review and others like it check out Badass Book Reviews

Molly O'keefe says

This book hit remarkably close to home for me. I moved to Canada from the states when I got married and many of the conversations that happened in the book - happened in my life. Or perhaps I wished they had happened. Moving to another country for love can seem very romantic and when you're twenty-five and in love it's all an adventure. Reading this book I am reminded of how young I was, how I couldn't in the two years that passed before I could work legally - fully explain all the ways that I was upset and sad and angry and resentful.

I find as I get older I only want to read romances with characters - who no matter their age - act with self-awareness. With a certain adult perspective on the world. Mary Ann's books hit this romance sweet spot for me.

Claire Robinson says

3.5 Stars.

Mary-Ann Rivers is definitely one of my ones to watch for 2014. I read and loved *The Story Guy*, as well as *Snowfall* (which is in the *Heating up the Holidays* collection). *Live* is her first foray into the full length book universe.

One of the things that I loved about both of the aforementioned novellas was the highly detailed and visually descriptive writing, and although that is the same style used in *Live*, it at points went a little bit too far and I found myself losing the drift of the story because of the description of something or someone mid paragraph.

That-said the story is a little different from the norm and still extremely enjoyable. I loved that

Des isn't your usual, skinny, blond or brunette nymph, with perfectly proportioned body parts as so many of our book heroines are these days...She has ginger hair, freckles and knobbly knees and it's a refreshing change to be able to visualize someone a little bit different.

Hefin – Des was a woman, that's all. Smart and sweet, grey-eyed and skinny, prone to tears and questions.

Hefin is from Wales, 100% hands down love him, a man from my neck of the woods (Wales is part of the U.K, so I'm taking him), dark, brooding and not afraid to approach a woman in distress, not so-much an alpha male and more of a "I'll let you lead the way" type of guy. I have to say that I pictured Richard Burton in my head from the way Mary-Ann described him, and that is an image I am definitely not going to complain about any time soon!

Hefin – He was a Welshman. Land of the Dragons and Rugby.

There attraction is mutual, but for one problem Hefin is returning to Wales when his commission (he is a woodcarver) at the library (this is where they met) finishes, so he is reluctant to make a commitment to Des. They then have 8 weeks with each other. Hefin understands what it is like to give up your life and aspirations

for another, and although he wants Des to journey back to Wales with him, is nervous of how her feelings towards him might change if it isn't as she imagined.

Hefin – “I’m ready, you see. To go back”... “I can’t stay for someone, not again. I can’t live for someone else again. I can’t ask”...

Des has issues with her family, and although they are no longer the perfect unit, she is not sure that she can uproot herself to follow Hefin, and leave her siblings behind.

This is quite a deep book, I think the emotion and heavy descriptiveness of the writing makes it so. That’s not a bad thing, but it is definitely the type of book you need to be in the right frame of mind for.

I look forward to seeing what Mary-Ann surprises us with next. ARC provided through Netgalley, in exchange for the above honest review.

Kisha Briscoe says

thanks to netgalley and the publisher for this arc for my honest review.

I absolutely enjoyed this book. it was a really refreshing departure from the alpha male skittish female book. don't get me wrong Hefin had his alpha moments. but I really loved his quiet shy strength. Destiny was really well written as well. I can't wait to read about the rest of the supportibg cast as the series continues

Danielle (Love at First Page) says

Thanks to Netgalley and the publisher for a copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

3-3.5 stars

I fell in love with Mary Ann Rivers' writing after reading her novella *The Story Guy*, and it's just as beautiful in her first full-length novel *Live*. They share a lot of similarities that are beginning to feel like Rivers' "personal stamps": a somber, melancholic tone; meditative characters who internalize their feelings but nevertheless embrace those feelings fully; prose that drifts like the movement of the sea; and, most of all, a true understanding of the depths of human emotions. While I did not fall quite as hard for *Live* as I did for *The Story Guy*, it's still an achingly real portrait of a man and woman falling in love and learning how to fit that love into their prospective lives.

Destiny Burnside has lived in Lakefield, Ohio her entire life. It's where she has always felt like she belongs. However, life right now is not easy, and she's beginning to crumble beneath its weight. She's coping not only with the loss of her job but also with the recent death of her father, and in the middle of that grief she's trying her hardest to keep her siblings knitted together. I loved her courage, her generosity, and her strength of character. She wants to *live* while at the same time unsure how to do that in the midst of her family's problems.

Hefin Thomas is from a small seaside town in Wales. He moved to the United States with his soon-to-be wife, thinking he'd make a home for himself with her there. It was a very spontaneous decision on both of their parts, born out of one very intense week together while she was on vacation near his home. At the time, Hefin held a promising future as an engineer, and he felt like he could make a name for himself anywhere. What followed was the dissolution of his self and then his marriage. He couldn't find work, couldn't make his big plans come true, and he felt trapped. He felt homesick. He let himself go before he was truly ready. Now, he's a shell of a man, working as a woodcarver, and weeks away from finally returning home. Hefin is a sweet, sweet man, totally swoon-worthy and heartbreaking. He puts others in front of himself and hates seeing anyone in pain. He's a physical guy, too, and the intimate scenes with Destiny are some unexplainable combination of sexy, sad, and tender.

The problem this couple faces is immediately obvious: she wants to stay, and he needs to go. Destiny has obligations to her family and can't imagine living anywhere else, whereas Hefin must return home to feel like himself again. They agree to keep their relationship casual, but Rivers never writes about characters who stunt their emotions or who are not in tune with them. On the contrary, her characters are acutely aware of what they're feeling, and they take those feelings into themselves to the point where it can be almost painful to read about.

He wanted to know what it was to live beside another and still know who you were. He wanted to know who he was, and to know who his beloved was, and still weave his legs in with hers at the end of every day and make love sideways. Facing the other. He wanted the world where that was possible.

This is a very romantic, character-driven story. At times it is slow and even a bit depressing; my heart often felt very heavy. But the journey to get to the couple's happy ending is worth it. It's amazing to see how Hefin and Destiny's love transforms them and opens their eyes to new possibilities. They give each other what they need:

He opened up a space around her, one with only her inside it, and not only let her say whatever it was that she wanted, but took her words inside of himself and let them break against him and change him.

This is the first of a new series, each Burnside sibling getting his or her own book, and big brother Sam is next. With writing like this:

That kind [of] loss must move the way the ground feels under your feet, the way you look at other people when they cry or when they laugh or when they do anything. That kind of loss must change the number of breaths you're supposed to breathe in an hour until you can imagine just not breathing at all. Loss like a crater that you sit on the edge of, throwing things into it in the hopes you can hear them hit the bottom.

I look forward to anything Mary Ann Rivers has coming out next.

This review can also be found at [Love at First Page](#).

Jill says

2.5 stars

Destiny Burnside, unemployed and usually hopeful, finally cracks one day at the library where she's been spending her time applying for jobs. Hefin Thomas, working at the library's restoration project as a woodcarver, has been watching Destiny for a couple of weeks. When he sees her upset, he comforts her.

The Good

The plot. A little different, which I always like.

The Protagonists. Both Hefin and Destiny were very likable. Hefin especially was an admirable, realistic hero. A Welshman, trained as an engineering consultant and now using his skills as a woodcarving artisan. At thirty-seven, a decade older than Destiny. Also enjoyed that he was a beta, and wish more writers would vary contemporary romance heroes like this and not concentrate on the the chest-beating, *she's mine!* drooling, heavy-browed cavemen that so dominate CRs at the moment.

His ex-wife was nice and they still got on well.

Liked the ending, because it wasn't quite what I was expecting. Surprises are always good.

The Not So Good

My biggest issue was with the writing itself. I appreciate elegant prose, especially any author that can pull it off in contemporary romance, that doesn't come off as pretentious or lavender in hue. Unfortunately, *Live* was at times, overwritten and flowery. I often found it difficult to understand, and therefore not engaging. Usually I would read this in a day or so; it took me over a week.

What I found quite appealing ('*lovely*' was my exact word) in the writing in Mary Ann Rivers' debut, this time around was overdone, trying too hard to wax lyrical. The prose which was supposed to be sophisticated and poetic just came off as awkward, convoluted and confusing, taking several reads of a sentence or phrase for me to work out exactly what the author was trying to say.

Examples: (view spoiler)

Sometimes straightforward and simple writing works just fine.

Some very long, run-on sentences were reminiscent of Kristen Ashley.

Example: (view spoiler)

Though there were some light moments, overall it was just so serious and *deep*. Because Hefin was going back home to Wales, they spent almost the entire book saying goodbye before they'd barely got together.

I also found Destiny's whole family unlikable. And the *35 references* to her freckles about 30 too many.

Finally

Put this low rating down to my vulgar, low-brow, plebeian tastes in literature. Other reviewers loved this, I see that I'm the only one who wasn't blown away. Rounding up to 3 stars for the actual story and likable protagonists.

I think this is an author whose writing just doesn't work for me. I'd imagine though, there are many readers of contemporary romance who would enjoy this story and Mary Ann Rivers' writing style.

Steam: 3.5

ARC courtesy of Loveswept via NetGalley

Mandi Schreiner says

Reading this book made me think of a cloudy day. The romance in this book is super hot, and the characters and the storyline in general are composed in such a way – a Mary Ann Rivers type way. Such care is taken to craft the characters lives, and the words she uses make me just want to roll around with my Kindle. But this isn't your normal, small town happy, happy book. It's a bit gloomy, which is not necessarily a bad thing, there is just a more heavier feel to this book.

Destiny Burnside, known more as Des, has never left her small Ohio hometown. Neither have her siblings. Her mother died when she was eight and her father just recently died. To add to the misery, Des has been unemployed for some time, having to move into a very small rental house owned by a nosy neighbor and she had to sell her car. She now drives her dad's old limo around, which adds some quirkiness to the story. Right after her father died, her sister Sarah got into a very bad bike accident. She is not healing well – physically or emotionally, and Des spends much energy trying to get Sarah better. Her brother Sam is an overworked doctor who is always yelling and screaming (and his book is next which excites me greatly. He needs love. And some dirty action.) She has another brother PJ who is in an orchestra. Enough about them – let's talk about Hefin!

Yes, our hero's name is Hefin. He is from Wales. He met an American and followed her back to the states, then resented her, and resented her some more until they got a divorce. Now, Hefin who is a woodcarver (is that an awesome hero profession or what?) took a job doing some wood carving at the library – the same library that Des is currently working. They notice each other. Oh do they notice each other.

She watched him center his chocolate cream-filled pastry on his own napkin. She wasn't sure she would

survive the tidal wave of lust that would be watching him eat it.

And finally, Hefin makes his move. And there is romance and sadness because Hefin is moving back to Wales. He needs to go back to his roots, see his family, and eventually take up his former engineering job. He craves it. It's just that he is going to learn he also craves Des.

One thing that stands out in this book is that Des and Hefin know from day one that he is going to leave. They plan for it, they try to accept it as best they can. God the tension and sex between them is hot. Hefin is a muscular yet wiry type guy. He has hairy forearms (this excites me). He blushes. He adores Des's millions of freckles and her 'knobby knees.' His exploration of her is so intense it just makes you shiver. It's so sexy and romantic and their chemistry is very well done.

As I mentioned earlier, Sarah's injury plays a very big part in this book. Sarah isn't really the nicest person – extreme pain will do that to you. She is very sick and puts a lot of darkness on the sibling relationship. It's not always pretty in this book. It's sad and angry. It brings forth that dark cloud I mentioned at the beginning of the book. It's realistic and well done, but it's a heavy weight, especially for Des's character. She is the caregiver, the sister, the one people lean on for support – yet drowning herself with no money and the grief over her late father.

But don't fear. Just when things get really heavy there is naughtiness in a batting cage and sex in a limo. And Hefin, with his stubble and curls about his ears make things very steamy and put a smile on my face. He is such a good guy, and just what Des needed.

Rating: B+

Baba says

1 pretentious star. DNF at 60 %. Review completed January 12, 2014

Let me start by saying something positive. I enjoyed their first kisses and the smexin' in the car.

What killed the entire book for me, however, was the bloated writing itself. It's pompous and pretentious. I still feel kinda sucker-punched because I requested the ARC based on my fondness for Mary Ann Rivers' *The Story Guy* which I enjoyed very much. Yes, I also loved the somewhat poetic and flowery writing and I felt very partial to the *otherness* of *The Story Guy*.

So, while I do love flowery, lyrical or poetic prose, I'm perfectly fine with one beautiful rose...

...yet I obviously have an issue with OTT flowery and pompous writing that explodes in a full-blown bouquet of distracting and all-consuming flowers where the scent of the blossoms obliterates everything else.

Even though the heroine's background was littered with tragedies, to me she came across as bland as her incredibly pale skin. Simply put, I found *Desbaby* terribly boring. Also, it really annoys the heck out of me when I initially hear the sentence '*I never cry*', even though tears became a common commodity of Live. I mean it's fine by me when women AND men have a good cry once in a while, but when the tears and sobs, the thoughts of many overwhelming good-byes, and the tragic and sad character of Sarah threaten to monopolize the story, then I need to whip out my red card. It's. Just. Too. Much.

Although it's not my arm I assure you the card is red.

Also, I assume that Sarah will get her own story and I hope for her that she's going to catch some tough alpha man who's going to kick her stubborn ass, telling her what she's got to do to get out of her pathetic state of mind. Come on, Sarah, enough is enough! Pick up the pieces and start living again.

That quote is going to strangle your tongue...or maybe your brain:

He hadn't wanted to negotiate the good-bye in the morning. Or not saying good-bye, then making every minute an excuse to spend another minute together, until the entire time they spent in the other's arms was an excuse to keep way from anything else beyond the borders of the bed.

Until leaving the bed was leaving.

Jesus christ on a crutch. Baba hadn't wanted to negotiate with the MCs, arguing over so many spoken and unspoken good-byes, then making every minute spent on this book an excuse to spend no time with her kids, until the entire time she spent in their company playing the judge over yet another verbal or physical fight was an excuse to keep way from anything else beyond the borders of their rooms.

Until leaving the house to take a breather was leaving.

How does this sound? Did you just call me goofy? I'm going to shrug it off coz I was being goofy. I think you get the gist. *facepalm*

My elder son who's a 7th grader is reading a book by Friedrich Dürrenmatt with his classmates. If you are acquainted with the European literary world then you might be familiar with his name. Maybe I should start reading real literature because Dürrenmatt's writing is easier to grasp...than...what the heck is that?

While I found Hefin's past and provenance very intriguing, I just couldn't quite warm up to him either. I don't have a problem with beta heroes but Hefin was a bit too demure and subservient--even shy at times--for my taste. Also, I completely understand that people enjoy fetishes. Some have a foot fetish and others like Hefin are mesmerized by freckles. In this case, however, I found the fetish utterly overdone. After the freckles had

been mentioned for the umpteenth time, I really got it. After all, I'm not a dense person.

Live provides tons of not so elegant style blossoms. In German we say '*Stilblüten*'. I love that term. Here are a few to your perusal:

He had watched her smile at the guard and remembered the freckles that had ignored the boundary of her lip line, small ones that had sifted themselves into the pink of her lips, themselves.

Her breasts had the palest freckles of all, like gold leaf shattered over porcelain. He ignored the heavy, dark pulse in his prick.

When she had looked so gorgeous like that, sitting straight with her perfect posture and her color washing through her freckles, roses on her throat, he hadn't wanted to look like that.

I know that something is wrong when the writing distracts from the storyline or the characters. Good writing draws a reader to the heart of a story and I'm very sorry to say that I felt anything but. I just think that sometimes less is more and it would have been better to dial it down a notch. **Give a story and its characters room to breathe. It was like the author suffocated her own words.** Lots of sentences felt forced and stilted, like she tried hard to accomplish something that wasn't even needed in the first place. Just...let a story flow on its own, don't force it and first and foremost don't smother it.

Her breath was warm, and she had either drank (I hope the proofreader caught that mistake coz it's "she had either drunk...") her own tea, or snuck a bit of his--his spine softened in Pavlovian response to the bergamot.

I think I just swallowed my last brain cell.

Or this...

She was stripped to elements--she wore what she could move her body in, she let her own features show her intelligence without distractions.

Seriously? I won't even bother commenting that quote.

She dropped the glue into the cut carefully, and it did sting, but watching her, her body close, was such a tenderness that the sting just brought up all of the sweet dark feelings in his chest and arranged them against his skin like salve.

When she softly blew her breath over the sealed cut, his skin tightened into thousands of sharp prickles all over, and the resulting sensation that tugged at his cock was too gentle, yet, to be completely pleasurable. The ache of wanting her was leaning a bit too hard against him.

I flat out refuse to comment that quote.

Yet wonders never cease coz I found one that I LOVED:

He coughed out a laugh. (That's NOT what I loved but the following...): "Nothing wrong with your name."

"A lot to live up to."

"Maybe. More likely that destiny just is what it is. Nothing you have to do or live for."

Very lovely.

I couldn't help rolling my eyes whenever Hefin had to cough out a laugh. What's up with that anyway?

Another issue of mine was the incredibly sl-o-o-o-w-w-w-w pace. It made me think over and over again if I'd be able to finish the book. My thoughts were wandering to my next read numerous times and that's never a good sign. Live was very easy to put down because it wasn't engaging. **Unfortunately, my bum secured itself a window seat in BoredomVille.**

That's when I felt it was time to clear the field. Hey, I made it to fourth base, though. There is that, right?

Bottom line, while I don't remember every detail anymore I KNOW that I enjoyed the writing much more in The Story Guy. Add in the fact that the MCs appealed way more to me as well and I have my validation why I wasn't partial to Live. At all.

I told one of my friends that I need to take a lesson how to become a demure reviewer but I think that ship has sailed. I can't help being bitchy when a book irritates me so much. Come to think of it, I was pretty civil because I never dropped the f-bomb (the shelves don't count). That's progressive, isn't it?

Looking at the high average rating, Live goes straight on my shelf *books-everyone-loved-but-baba*. I'm very sorry it wasn't my cup of tea.

All quotes are taken from the pre-published copy and may be altered or omitted in the final copy.

ARC courtesy of Loveswept via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review

Gisele says

Review in English e em Português

5 beautifully LIVED stars

**Don't you cry for the lost
Smile for the living
Get what you need and give what you're given
Life's for the living so LIVE it
Or you better off dead**

Passenger – Life's for the Living

Mary Ann Rivers is one of my favorite authors. Since I read *The Story Guy* earlier this year, I fell in love with her work. She has such a way with words. Her histories are not easy ones. They're full of feelings.. from angst to happiness, everything. And what I like her best is that her stories are so real. Her characters are not those super beautiful men and women, but normal people, like the ones you see across the street.

In **Live** she tell us the history of two beautifully damaged people, *Destiny* and *Hefin*

*I am lost for words, so lost in love
I'm sweetly broken, wholly surrendered*

Both of them feel things deep, very deep and somehow are not living their lives to the fullest. Some things from the past are still holding them and in this book, we see them break free and learn to just **live**.

Destiny has just lost her father and her job, and she's struggling to keep her herself and her family together, but everything seems to be falling apart, 'cause she can't find another job and her brothers and sister (who is very sick) are slowly drifting apart. And in the middle of this mess, she meets Hefin.

Hefin is a Welshman, a woodcarver, who has left Wales to follow his heart and marry Jessica in the US, but somewhere along the way, he lost himself, his dreams and ultimately his marriage. Now he wants to go back to Wales, to his parents and everything that is familiar to him, in order to regain what his lost, or so he thinks.

Are you seeing how things are complicated? He's not staying long and she's in the middle of serious family problems.. How can this work?

Their relationship is beautiful, sometimes painful but at the same time revealing. With each other, they learn they can be themselves and just live. Live is not always easy, but with the right person by your side you can

get through anything.

I can't even begin to explain how beautiful their love story is. The ones who already read one of Mary Ann's histories can imagine how she can work her magic... I loved both of them, their strength, their fragility.

Hefin is very unique. He's a beta, kind of taciturn and romantic hero. Even if he's so afraid to fall in love again hurt Destiny in the process, he embraces this feeling so fully. He helps Destiny and himself to see that you can't be afraid to live and experiment new things in life, even though you have to sacrifice things in order to do that, because in the end everything you've been through is worth, because you just LIVED.

You can't avoid bad things to happen in your life, but you can learn to take good lessons from the hard times.

I can't wait for the next books in this series! The Burnside family still has much to tell.

ARC provided by the publisher and the author via Netgalley in exchange for an honest review.

Mary Ann Rivers é uma das minhas autoras favoritas. Desde que eu li *The Story Guy* no início deste ano, eu me apaixonei por seu trabalho. Ela tem esse jeito com as palavras. Suas histórias não são fáceis. Elas são cheias de sentimentos.. da angústia para a felicidade, tudo. E o que eu mais gosto dela é que as suas histórias são reais. Seus personagens não são sobre homens e mulheres super lindos e perfeitos, mas sobre pessoas normais, como as que você vê na rua.

Em **Live** ela nos conta a história de duas pessoas lindamente danificadas, *Destiny* e *Hefin*

Ambos sentem tudo profundamente e de alguma forma não estão vivendo suas vidas ao máximo. Algumas coisas do passado ainda estão segurando-os e, neste livro, podemos vê-los se libertar e aprender a apenas **viver**.

Destiny acaba de perder seu pai e seu trabalho, e ela está lutando para manter a si e sua família vivos, mas tudo parece estar caindo aos pedaços, porque ela não consegue encontrar outro emprego e seus irmãos e irmã (que está muito doente) estão lentamente se afastando. E no meio dessa bagunça, ela conhece Hefin.

Hefin é galês, um entalhador, que deixou Gales para seguir seu coração e se casar com Jessica nos EUA, mas em algum lugar ao longo do caminho ele se perdeu, perdeu seus sonhos e finalmente, o seu casamento. Agora, ele quer voltar ao País de Gales, para seus pais e tudo o que é familiar para ele, a fim de recuperar o que foi perdido, ou assim ele pensa...

Você está vendo como as coisas são complicadas? Ele não vai ficar muito tempo e ela está no meio de problemas familiares graves.. Como isso pode funcionar ?

O relacionamento deles é lindo, às vezes doloroso, mas ao mesmo tempo revelador. Com o outro, eles aprendem que podem ser eles mesmos e apenas viver. Viver nem sempre é fácil, mas com a pessoa certa ao seu lado você pode conseguir qualquer coisa.

Eu não posso nem começar a explicar o quanto linda é a história de amor desses dois. Os que já leram uma das histórias de Mary Ann podem imaginar como ela faz a sua mágica... Eu amei os dois, sua força, sua fragilidade.

Hefin é muito original. Ele é um beta, uma espécie de herói taciturno e romântico. Mesmo que ele tenha

medo de se apaixonar novamente e acabar por machucar Destiny no processo, ele abraça esse sentimento plenamente.

Ele ajuda Destiny e a si mesmo a ver que você não pode ter medo de viver e experimentar coisas novas na vida, mesmo que você tenha que sacrificar algumas coisas para fazer isso, porque no final tudo o que você passou por vale a pena, porque você simplesmente viveu.

Você não pode evitar que coisas ruins aconteçam em sua vida, mas você pode aprender a tirar boas lições dos tempos difíceis.

Eu não posso esperar pelos próximos livros desta série! A família Burnside ainda tem muito para contar.

ARC fornecido pela editora e pela autora via Netgalley em troca de uma resenha sincera.

Tracie Payne says

Wow did I love this book. I mean this just snuck up on me where I could not put it down and read until my eyes crossed. I first read this author's fantastic novella *The Story Guy* and gave this full length a shot and I am so glad I did. Mary Ann Rivers has a wonderful way with words and dialogue that had me smiling and chuckling and sighing throughout the entire book. These characters all felt like real people having real conversations with real reactions. Destiny and Hefin have been admiring each other from afar and when he finally approaches her you just know their relationship is going to be special. They were so awkward yet honest with each other and that was so refreshing. They each have their own baggage and are up front with their expectations, but they tackle a relationship anyways. Their chemistry was quietly explosive and I swear to god I was in the same room with them during their sexy times. There was no ridiculous drama or angst, the pacing was perfect I would not change a thing. For me this is just a perfect romance novel and I can't wait to read about her brother Sam. I would highly recommend this book.

Ellie says

Can't believe I waited so long to read this! It's tender and intense and lovely!

I read my first book by Mary Ann Rivers, *The Story Guy*, back when it was released in 2013 and have been meaning to try her Burnside series ever since but as it often happens, I got sidetracked. Recently a recommendation of *Live* by a trusted friend on Twitter brought this book back to my attention and it was just the right time to dive into it.

Now, having read it in just two days, I wonder what I was thinking waiting so long.

This a tender love story of a Welshman, stranded in Ohio, the wonderful caring beta hero Hefin and a local girl, rooted in her neighbourhood and her family with the mystical name of Destiny.

I really enjoyed this very introverted, slow-burning but very deep and intense romance. I liked how the author focused on the complexity of life and love in modern times - the efforts it take to keep your family together, the struggles with unemployment and a dire financial situation, moving across the world for the

person you love.

Life and love are not simple, they are not just about us but they also affect all the people we care about and who care about us. There are no easy solutions and both Des and Hefin's problems seem real and easy to understand. The struggles they face, the decisions they have to make are unique to them but in a way also, universal to people in love.

The plot is rather simple - what do you do when you meet the right person at the wrong time. How do you make it work? And there is no easy answer but I do believe the right one is really to look into your heart and follow it.

Des had to deal with a lot of family-related stress and problems and grief, oh there was so much grief both characters experienced, that at times their HEA seemed impossible. She was strong and determined in an unobtrusive way, and I very much loved that about her. She is not some super woman - strong and tough and unbreakable, but she is resilient, just a human being with strengths and weaknesses, insecurities and moments of doubt.

Hefin was a rare beta hero and I absolutely loved that about him. It made him real, human, someone grieving the failure of his marriage, someone at a crossroads professionally, someone who doesn't want to hurt people but help and care about them. But at the same time he was broken inside, lost and needed the comfort and support of family, home, loved ones.

All this made their romance both intense and heart-breaking and their HEA even sweeter. On the surface the obstacles they had to overcome seemed mostly practical, but the truth is they were buried deep within them and both Hefin and Des needed to find their inner strength and resolve for their romance to happen.

I mostly enjoyed the writing, which is very lyrical and one could say flowery but it worked well for the characters. At times I found it a bit overdescriptive and felt the story needed more action and less brooding and self-doubt but I have come to realize it is just not that kind of story.

If you like tender love stories with lots of angst and self-examination and character growth, I can greatly recommend this one.

Keertana says

Live is one of those novels I feel compelled to write a review for, despite having nothing to say. Mary Ann Rivers's stories are so wrought with emotion - my heart is always too tangled up in their arcs - for me to objectively put into words what I love. For I love everything. I love these characters, sharp and hurting and bitter and true. I love their growth, unstable and unsteady and messy and hard. I love the settings, realistic to a flaw, a home away from home, and utterly lovable. But, perhaps most importantly, I love the words. Mary Ann Rivers's words, from her descriptions to her dialogue. And I love all the words that go unsaid, all the words that are conveyed with just a look, a glance, a touch. I love all the words swirling around in the minds of these far-too-real-to-be-fictional beings.

When Des receives yet another rejection e-mail, cementing the fact that she has been unemployed for months at this point, she begins to cry, very publicly, in the library. Hefin, the Welsh woodcarver Des has privately

lusted after nearly every day, cannot help himself from reaching out to Des. Des, who walks with purpose, optimism, and a smile on her face every day, even though she has no job, has just lost her father, and her indomitable older sister is injured. And Hefin, whose failed marriage has never stopped haunting him. Des and Hefin's brief contact, however, is only the beginning of a beautiful relationship...one that both Hefin and Des know will end once Hefin's contract is finished as he is returning back to Wales. But for a romance that is supposed to be temporary, love is turning out to feel a lot more permanent.

From its synopsis, *Live* reads like such a classic contemporary romance novel. And yet, as is always the case with Mary Ann Rivers, it is much, much more. Des, for instance, has always remained in her small hometown in Ohio, going no more than a few miles away to attend university and returning straight back to live surrounded by neighbors she knew and the siblings she loves. When Sarah, Des's headstrong older sister, is gravely injured in a biking accident following her father's death, these four siblings are left grasping at straws. In the midst of them all, Des frantically attempts to keep her family together.

She felt like no matter how much she loved Sam and Sarah and PJ she'd never understand the trick of how her dad held them all together.

In fact, she had never doubted that they would ever have any trouble holding together, forever, until he left them behind to scatter. His ashed swirling in the wind on the winter morning just a few months ago took longer to disappear than their Sunday dinners, the ease that his children had always had with each other.

Now she was the only one who seemed to remember that there was a way that they could all fit.

Meanwhile, though Des's actions are propelled forward by her selflessness and love for her family, Hefin's past has never been able to leave him. A whirlwind marriage brought him from Wales to America, impulsively, but left him broken by the end. Even now, years later, Hefin cannot stop blaming himself for his failed marriage, for slowly turning his love and affection into bitterness and despair. Neither Des, with her responsibilities and little time, or Hefin, with his stark emotional unavailability, are ideal for each other. Although their physical chemistry is off-the-charts, Des and Hefin are not, no matter how much they wish it, the solution to one another's problems. Watching them stumble through their own personal hurdles and attempt to make their relationship work through honesty and frankness was both heartbreakingly and hopeful.

Despite the fact that neither Hefin nor Des are ideal partners, capable of breaching the divides between them, the fact that they are able to look objectively upon one another's lives gives their relationship an uncomfortable, but necessary sense of clarity. Where Hefin is able to see only his failures from his past marriage, taking in all the hurt and pain and resentment and internalizing it, Des is able to turn around and see that Hefin's ex-wife, too, contributed to the collapse of their relationship. Similarly, where Des is only able to give love and give affection and give help to her family members, Hefin is able to identify that, sometimes, she needs to take it too.

Mary Ann Rivers has always written brilliant, provocative love stories in which characters fall, but sometimes they fall in puddles or are scraped and bruised along the way. None of her romances are easy, simple equations, especially not Des and Hefin. Moreover, the flaws these two possess are revealed right alongside their strengths, which makes falling in love falling for the bad sides as well as the good. While much of the arc of this relationship feels like saying goodbye - because, at the end, that *is* what Des and Hefin are telling one another - the conclusion to their tale is unforgettable. It is strong and empowering and oh-so-right for *both* these characters, not convenient in the least. *Live* is an incredible tale of finding your place in the world, especially when you think it belongs in a box where all your emotional needs aren't being met. It's about gathering the courage to look beyond and grasp that better opportunity that comes your way, even if it means sacrifice. It is only the first of Mary Ann Rivers's full-length novels and for that, I am

infinitely glad for if there is anything I need more of, it is her words.
