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Glen Duncan

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Falling in love with someone allows for two possible narratives of your future: in one your love is returned, in the other it is betrayed. That is all. Nicholas and Chloe knew you couldn't create one possibility without the other. This is an exploration of love in the modern age.

Love Remains Details

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Author : Glen Duncan

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From Reader Review Love Remains for online ebook

Fence says

This is a very different book in many ways from I Lucifer. There is no light relief and it is most defo not a funny book. What the two do have in common, however, is that both are very well written, and almost brutally honest. Sure I, Lucifer dealt with the devil and how he saw history, obviously rewritten in many ways yet it still pointed out through dark humour what it is to be human. Love Remains does likewise. It deals with emotion, love, pain and hate. Never shirking away from the big issues. The very first line “When the future ended, Nicholas discovered, you left London and went to New York” made me want to read on. What did he mean by the future ending? Well it takes a while but eventually we find out and in some ways dislike the character of Nick, yet I couldn’t help but sympathise in some way

Full review: <http://www.susanhatedliterature.net/2...>

Barry says

The four stars is for the first half of the book, which was without doubt one of the finest portrayals of a relationship I have ever come across. The painfully beautiful portrayal of the romantic life of the two main characters will echo universally.

Unfortunately, the second half of the book becomes sensational and plot-driven and is all the worse for it. For me, this is ultimately a wasted opportunity but the glorious first half of this novel and its achingly truthful exposition of human interactions is utterly worth it. Recommended.

Tessa says

I love this book, it's bleak, unrelenting, tender and generous. It's the birth and death of a relationship that should have lasted forever. It's something Duncan revisits with lesser effect in Death of an Ordinary man, that horror exists and you can survive it.

Chloe and Nicholas are a perfect couple, sweet and innocent, but simultaneously they have fallen apart from a tragedy they could not predict. i won't spoil it by saying what it is.
It's interesting how it's Chloe who truly survives it.

This is a book I must have purchased six or seven times because I lend it out to friends and they will not give it back.

I read this on the back of I Lucifer when a friend who read it said I would like this more.
She was right.

Madeleine says

To be a reader is to have encountered the boy-meets-girl, boy-loves-girl, boy-loses-girl tale many, many

times. But it's the details that make the various incarnations of such a common structure either impossible to read or impossible to put down. "Love Remains" falls squarely into the latter category, and not just because I'm shamelessly smitten with Glen Duncan's writing.

The characters Duncan crafts are achingly human, which makes the whole premise believable. You know Chloe and Nicholas are doomed: Their perfect marriage has one flaw that would have been left to fester if not for a damning coincidence thrusting it into the light. But it's the way they move from being wholly consumed with their relationship toward their marriage's inevitable conclusion that gives weight and shape to what would have been a hackneyed paradigm in a lesser writer's hands. It's not a story about love, per se: It's a story of how love changes people, how people change love and how life changes everything. And it's Duncan's broad scope and dead-on writing that lets this story blossom into something more than the same overly sentimental death-of-love fare.

Trin says

"The writer is a sadist and his book is horrible. You really must read it." <--Does this review of Love Remains make you want to read it or not? *That's* an interesting personality test, I think.

(Personally, having read three other books by Duncan, I want to read it but I'm also a little afraid.)

Lauren says

Ok, well-written but a HORRIFIC story that made me cry and gave me nightmares. Great piece of writing, not one I'd lend to anyone else :/

Christie says

Despite the fact that Glen Duncan's novel *Love Remains* is only 277 pages long, it took me about a month to finish because I could never read anymore than a few pages at a time before my head started to swim. But I mean that as a compliment rather than a criticism. Duncan is a well-known and much-praised British author who was new to me when I purchased the book. *Love Remains*, Duncan's second novel, is almost relentlessly grim. Again – it's a compliment, honest. There's no way you could tackle the topic Duncan does in this book without being a skillful craftsman, and Duncan really is an amazing writer.

Nick and Chloe meet in university.

The possibility of love revealed itself to Chloe immediately, in a shock. When they sat opposite each other that first Wednesday, with rain streaking the steamed windows and the delicious reek of frying bacon in the air, she felt (thinking, stunned, of the billions who had felt it, down the long bloodied canvas of history) the first murderous utterance of romance: It's him.

Nick's feelings for Chloe are slightly more ambivalent, although he does concede that "he was so curious about what was going on inside her that lust only followed along afterwards, like an obligatory bit of luggage."

The trajectory of Chloe and Nick's love story is mostly straightforward. They get married, start jobs, eventually move into "their first proper home" in Clapham and then, as with many marriages, the romantic impetus drains from their lives as they deal with life's mundane and often inane decisions: "Do you think we should get a futon, Nick." As their marriage closes in around them, "They suffered, periodically, the ache of familiarity." Chloe feels "suffocated by the sound of his breath escaping through his nostrils" and Nick "hated her for having finished the shape of him."

Duncan masterfully builds a marriage from the ground up and then, just as masterfully, wrenches it apart in the most violent way possible. In some ways, it's almost as though Duncan has written two different, but equally compelling, novels.

When the novel opens, Nick has already left London because that's what you do "when the future ended." He is on a journey, it seems, of self-destruction comprised of smoking, drinking and having sadomasochistic sex. None of it makes sense until we learn what has happened to Chloe and, even then, it'd difficult to wrap your head around. Is Nick reprehensible for having abandoned his wife? That's just one of the moral questions Duncan asks you to consider in this book.

Chloe is on a journey of her own. It is equally compelling, although perhaps more heartbreaking. The random and horrific experience she has endured has sharpened her: "Her face in the mirror, barely recognizable, rewritten."

What was once a path traveled together, has now been cleaved. I commend Duncan for his resisting the urge to offer a tidy ending, but the ending, nonetheless, is remarkable.

Highly recommended.

Freya Marske says

So, here's a quote from this book:

She thinks Tom knows her body. In one way he does. Then a man comes along and shows you another way he can know your body. She's wondering about Tom now. Is secretly miserable with wondering. What would Tom do if it happened to her? That's Liz. Not what would she do if it happened to her. Not what if Tom did it to someone. Not what if Tom did it to her.

And the single most frustrating thing about this book is that this quote exists within it, pointing out the absurdity of taking a story about a terrible thing happening to a woman and making it a story about how much pain it gives *her husband*. Because that's the book. It's trying not to be, in a weird and half-hearted way; it does give you a lot of the woman's story, and I found Chloe's sections to be compelling and well-realised and interesting. I think I would have liked this if it were only Chloe's book.

But the entire first half of the book, and some of the second half, is Nick's book. And I *hated* Nick's book.

If I want the self-absorbed, whiny, Did I Mention I Work In Publishing dude half of this story then I can rewatch *The Last Five Years* (which has the benefit of being a musical) or reread *Gone Girl* (which has the benefit of being ten times more conscious of the man's faults and then gleefully punishing him for them).

It's a pity. I've liked some of Duncan's other work a lot. This one, for all it contains some excellent prose, left me disgruntled and cold.

Alan says

I picked this up in the library not knowing what to expect. It blasted me out of the water. (I was in the bath, or if the librarian is reading I wasn't it's just a metaphor). It's bloody, sexy, bold. Not everyone will like it.

Matthew Fray says

This is an intense read. The prose grabs you first; it's eloquent and almost frantic. Duncan never uses the obvious adjective and most of them are brilliantly unusual, yet appropriate. And it's always related back to what the characters are thinking and particularly feeling. The articulate way he details the inner workings of relationships is spot on. You know from the start that something has gone wrong in Nick's life but Duncan let's you get to know (and like) Nicholas and Chloe before dropping the bombshell on them. Large parts of this novel are not nice but they are very well written and believable. Particularly in the second half of the novel told from Chloe's point of view. There's never a wrong step in dealing with Chloe's feelings on something which (I hope) is so far out of Glen Duncan's experience that the imaginative leap he made to describe it was truly impressive. Actually about a quarter of the way through I thought it was going to go down an even darker path to the one it eventually took. Having said that there is humour in the book (particularly the earlier parts) and it did make me laugh out loud. Thoroughly recommended. But I'm not sure this would ever be anyone's favourite book.

Loren Cafferty says

I predicted the plot within about four pages but with description this good who care. The guy is the best descriptive writer in the UK I think.

Julia says

This book was entirely too hard to read for me. Several times I had to put it aside just to get my head straight again. And I can honestly say I don't think I've cried while reading a book in the same way I did while reading this one.

The story was very harsh and deep. And the characters, in my opinion were either too blase, or too anxious about their relationship. It almost gave me a feeling of bipolarity.

Not to say it was badly written, it's a very good book and a very strong story. But its like watching a horror movie when your 5, it's just too much.

In the end, I was left feeling emotionally depleted by also experiencing the roller coaster of events along with the characters.

Not sure if I would recommend this book. It will definitely change you...

Jen says

1.5 stars....here's why for me. There just wasn't enough description where there needed to be. I found the writing very hard to follow. I felt that Nicholas and Chloe's relationship wasn't really even there. I had no connection to either of them. I never really got a feel for the love they shared for each other. I was never sure...did they love each other or hate each other? There were no "magic moments". I just felt completely unconnected to them and their relationship. I pretty much felt indifferent. I just didn't care because there were no emotions for me. I never felt the passion they shared for each other. If there even was any! It's hard for me to explain. I think mostly, I just really disliked the writing style. It was very hard for me to follow. Then the "tragic event" was never really described. You got hints, but no real details. What happened to her? You were left to imagine. The time Nick was in New York...what was the point? He never talked, you barely got to know the character. What happened there? It never said what actually happened in the bedroom after he left the bathroom. Again, you had to guess. Frustrating...

I was so looking forward to this book. It's almost impossible to find. I had to order a used copy from the UK. Once I got it (yesterday) I dove right in and read most of the night and all day today. I wanted to stop reading it just because I was so unimpressed, but figured I had to read it all to give it a fair chance. Oh well... not what I expected at all. I guess I had my hopes up for some tragic, dark, demented story and there just weren't enough details for this to be that.

Cliff says

Did a reviewer say this book made them cry but still they read on? That's about right. Duncan reveals the deep disgusting part of us that at times I wish I didn't know about. This book IS upsetting because it is true (the purpose of literature?) - I just wish it weren't.

Sandra says

Another novel where I thank my lucky stars I picked it off the shelf with no more than an indefinable sense of "This one", and once again it is sobering just how many hugely talented writers there are out there I've never heard of.

This, as an exploration into the inner selves and relationship of two people - Nicholas and Chloe - is astonishing in its ability to entrap the reader into shocked, throat-aching suspense, and to force them to ask questions of their own understanding of what love is, exactly.

Having only remembered that I enjoyed this enough to immediately buy everything else Glen Duncan has written, I was glad to find, on re-reading this, that I'd forgotten the plot itself, so was once again sandbagged with the impact of it as well, of course, with its telling.
