



## First Comes Love

*Emily Giffin*

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*This is an updated cover of this Kindle edition.*

In this dazzling new novel, Emily Giffin, the #1 *New York Times* bestselling author of *Something Borrowed*, *Where We Belong*, and *The One & Only* introduces a pair of sisters who find themselves at a crossroads.

Growing up, Josie and Meredith Garland shared a loving, if sometimes contentious relationship. Josie was impulsive, spirited, and outgoing; Meredith hardworking, thoughtful, and reserved. When tragedy strikes their family, their different responses to the event splinter their delicate bond.

Fifteen years later, Josie and Meredith are in their late thirties, following very different paths. Josie, a first grade teacher, is single—and *this close* to swearing off dating for good. What she wants more than the right guy, however, is to become a mother—a feeling that is heightened when her ex-boyfriend's daughter ends up in her class. Determined to have the future she's always wanted, Josie decides to take matters into her own hands.

On the outside, Meredith is the model daughter with the perfect life. A successful attorney, she's married to a wonderful man, and together they're raising a beautiful four-year-old daughter. Yet lately, Meredith feels dissatisfied and restless, secretly wondering if she chose the life that was expected of her rather than the one she truly desired.

As the anniversary of their tragedy looms and painful secrets from the past begin to surface, Josie and Meredith must not only confront the issues that divide them, but also come to terms with their own choices. In their journey toward understanding and forgiveness, both sisters discover they need each other more than they knew . . . and that in the recipe for true happiness, love always comes first.

Emotionally honest and utterly enthralling, *First Comes Love* is a story about family, friendship, and the courage to follow your own heart—wherever that may lead.

## Praise for Emily Giffin

"Emily Giffin ranks as a grand master. . . . She has traversed the slippery slopes of true love, lost love, marriage, motherhood, betrayal, forgiveness and redemption that have led her to be called 'a modern-day Jane Austen.' " —*Chicago Sun-Times*

"A dependably down-to-earth, girlfriendly storyteller." —*The New York Times*

"Giffin's talent lies in taking relatable situations and injecting enough wit and suspense to make them feel fresh." —*People*

"Emily Giffin is the creator of characters so real and so enthrallingly flawed that people sometimes forget they are fictional." —*Atlanta Journal-Constitution*

"When it comes to writing stories that resonate with real women, bestselling author Emily Giffin has hit her

stride.” —*San Francisco Chronicle*

“Giffin knows a thing or two about writing a page turner.”—*Southern Living*

“Giffin’s writing is true, smart, and heartfelt.”—*Entertainment Weekly*

## First Comes Love Details

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# From Reader Review First Comes Love for online ebook

## Christina (Confessions of a Book Addict) says

Josie and Meredith are sisters, but they have little in common other than the fact that they share DNA. They both, along with their parents, are trying to deal with their grief surrounding their brother's untimely death. In addition to that, Josie is an elementary school teacher and feels like she is running out of time. She wants a family of her own, but feels the tick-tick-tock of her biological clock. Plus, she still can't get over Will, her last boyfriend, who ended it with her many years ago. To complicate matters further, Will's daughter is in her classroom this year; obviously, this is a constant reminder of him. Then there's Meredith. She looks like she has it all from the outside. She's got a lovely daughter, an amazing career, and a hot husband, but she isn't happy. She hates her job as a lawyer and her marriage to Nolan is starting to crumble. Both sisters decide to take charge of their lives even if the changes maybe scary ones. Also, the night of Daniel's death isn't as cut and dry as it seems. There are many secrets surrounding it and these truths will float to the surface. Emily Giffin's First Comes Love is an compelling beach read that fans of family drama will enjoy.

Read the rest of my review here:

<http://www.confessionsofabookaddict.c...>

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## Debra says

3.5 stars review to follow

Received from the Publishers and NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

I thoroughly enjoyed this book. It was a fast read for me. Perfect for the summer months or for a plane ride. It is not too heavy but does deal with grief, relationships(husband/wife, sibling, friends, etc.).

The book opens with a family tragedy 15 years in the past. The book then fast forwards (15 years) to the future as we see Josie and Meredith, two sisters who are polar opposites navigating their lives. Meredith is married to Nolan who was her older brother's best friend. She never realized her dream of being an actress and is instead an attorney with a perfect life on the outside. Josie, a school teacher, appears to have never gotten over a past love and lives in the moment, spontaneous and carefree.

The sisters have a contentious relationship. They really seem to agree on anything. Josie is the older sister but reading the book, It felt like Meredith was older and Josie was the younger one.

Both have issues they are facing in their lives and as the anniversary of their brother's death comes closer, past fears and secrets are ready to boil over.

I found this book very easy to read. I enjoyed the characters and their story lines, even the sisters arguments felt real. The book really is about relationships, being yourself, being honest with yourself and others all while dealing with grief.

This is my first book by Emily Griffin but it will not be my last.

See more of my reviews at [www.openbookpost.com](http://www.openbookpost.com)

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## Heather says

"Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, shame on me."

That's how I feel after reading *First Comes Love*. After being a big Emily Giffin fan for her first six novels, I was so disappointed in *The One and Only*. I was still hopeful for FCL though and bought my copy the day it was released. For the second time in a row though, I find myself disappointed.

Where to start? First off, Meredith is the least likeable character in a book I have read, ever. Maybe I'm exaggerating, but wow, what a negative, unpleasant person with no "root for" value. She was so mean and nasty I found myself hoping that she stays the same miserable person her entire life bc happiness shouldn't be wasted on someone like that.

Josie was a bit more likeable but slightly annoying, especially in the beginning with her Will obsession. The relationship had been over for eight years, move on. I do feel like she showed some character growth by the end at least, and I liked her friendship with Gabe (and her potential with Pete).

The big secret surrounding their brothers death elicited a big yawn from me. It didn't deserve the suspense that Giffin built throughout the story.

I don't know what it is, but something changed with Giffin's writing in the last two books. Her stories are no longer even slightly relatable, and her characters are lame. If I decide to read her next book I'm getting it from the library and saving my hard earned cash.

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## Jennifer says

*First Comes Love* is a standalone, women's fiction novel written by Emily Giffin. I have a love/hate relationship with much of Ms. Giffin's work. She acknowledges that real people in the real world are irreverently flawed and she reflects these types of characters (and their frustrating choices) in her stories. For me personally, this style doesn't offer me the escape I search for in reading. Alas, I almost always enjoy books about sisters...so I dove in.

As the synopsis indicates, a family tragedy occurs and two sisters, Josie and Meredith, internalize their grief in very different ways. Ms. Giffin starts the alternating storylines of these sisters fifteen years later when the itch for change starts digging in to both of them. Based on my personal reading experience, I felt so much of the book focused on Josie, specifically her motherhood goal, causing me to forget that all the layers were meant to thread together. When the POV would switch to Meredith, I was like, wait what? My thoughts on the two storylines in general: (view spoiler)

Overall, I liked this novel. Ms. Giffin notes one of the biggest themes in *First Comes Love* is being consciously aware that every moment we're in, every different stage in our lives, we can control and I loved that. I think these characters had to realize this for themselves and although frustrating to watch at times, I think they *finally* succeeded. If you have historically enjoyed Ms. Giffin's work then move on to this one. I may not have loved it but I did take away some food for thought. Oh, and if you have a sibling, give them a

call and tell them you love them. No one is guaranteed tomorrow.

**My favorite quote:**

*"Everyone creates a version of her life that she wishes were true and tries to believe. In other words, everyone lies on social media, or at least puts her best foot - and photos - forward."*

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**Myrna says**

I really enjoyed this book! Giffin's books have been a hit or a miss for me. Glad this was a hit. I have to say that I was engaged from beginning to end by Josie, Meredith, and the rest of the characters. Others have said the sisters were unrealistic but I beg to differ. Many themes in this novel than your usual fluff: different relationships, love, family, guilt, and survival through tragedy. Liked the Atlanta setting too. Hope her next book is just as good (or better).

Favorite Quote: *"...not only does love come first, but in the end, it's the only thing that remains."*

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**Celeste\_pewter says**

Short version: everyone in this book needs therapy.

Long version:

\*Spoilers ahead. Because this book was so meh, I just don't care.\*

I'm not really sure when Emily Giffin's characters crossed the line from being complex and realistic to whiny and unlikable, but the latter is absolutely on full display in First Comes Love.

?Giffin introduces us to Meredith and Josie, two sisters who have let their entire lives be defined by the early, stereotypical prologue death of their older brother. Since that point in time, Meredith has gone on to marry her deceased brother's best friend (and question every minute of that marriage), while Josie is obnoxious, and eternally obsessed with relationships and babies.

Guys, I'm going to be honest: it's been a few weeks since I've finished reading this book, and I still can't figure what the point of this book was supposed to be.

Was it:

- \* learning how to not make impulsive decisions after grief?
- \* Learning not to be creepy and having a baby with your best friend, when you're flirting with another guy?
- \* Or was it not being a complete brat to your sibling, especially when you are a grown-ass adult?

Whatever the point of Giffin's book was supposed to be, it was lost on me in the pure drudgery of this story. Because Meredith and Josie are two deeply unlikable people, who are selfish, self-centered, and clear-cut examples of why it's healthy to get grief counseling after a traumatic event.

Honestly, between the sisters bickering like absolute brats at every possible opportunity - including a SUPER awkward family dinner- their mom's obsession with remaining connected with her deceased son's one-time girlfriend who has clearly moved on, and Meredith and Jo generally refusing to take responsibility for their lives, I just can't recommend this book.

(Meredith LITERALLY runs away from her family at one point, because she's just so stressed by her so-called difficult life.. Suck it up and put on your big girl pants, damn it.)

Giffin's books have gotten ridiculous since *The One & Only*, and *First Comes Love* is increasingly making me think that the talent that shone in *Something Borrowed* and *Something Blue* was an aberration.

Final verdict: Don't bother.

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## **Love Fool says**

Emotionally honest and utterly enthralling, *First Comes Love* is a story about family, friendship, and the courage to follow your own heart—wherever that may lead.

Maybe I'm being generous with giving this book four stars because I'm happy that Emily Giffin has wrote a better book than that horrible *The One and Only*. I enjoyed this book, it's not her best like *Something Borrowed* and *Something Blue* but she's slowly recovering from the one we should not speak about again (*The One and Only*). Sisters Meredith and Josie are complete opposites trying to figure out their lives and what makes them happy while suffering from the lost of their brother fifteen years ago.

If you are a huge Emily Giffin fan then read it, if you just enjoy reading in general I would say no rush to read this book but it should be on your list.

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## **Cheri says**

Family trauma / family drama, sibling conflicts, personality conflicts, who we love and how we love and why we love those we love, everything that goes into family dynamics. The way something you said or did or thought about doing when you were five or ten or fifteen will be held against you or used to measure the person you should have become twenty, thirty years later. Life scars. How a seemingly strongly united family can come undone so that you're left with lives lived as individuals, connecting momentarily until some old grudge is brought up once again, and then going their separate ways, living separate lives. Still, underneath it all, there's that pause, that "if only" so and so hadn't done this or said that... and then, poof, it disappears and they go back to their day-to-day lives. Days filled with the ordinariness of life. Jobs. Friends. Co-workers. Groceries. Cooking. Sleep. Repeat. But those who lived with us long enough ago to see our personalities forming, have seen personalities "tried on", discarded, as ideologies develop over the years do they know us better than others who enter our lives midway through life?

There is a bit of romance, but this novel isn't really about romantic love. It is about love in all its many forms, regrets, guilt and forgiveness - needing forgiveness, seeking forgiveness and extending forgiveness to others.

Told from the alternating points of view of two sisters, the “practically perfect in every way” sister: “*The classic, driven firstborn. A perfectionist. But also sensitive and sentimental, quirky and kind.*” The other sister who has imperfections, a long history of poor decisions, a long list of failed relationships, a less lucrative career without a fancy title. “*It occurs to me that as different as we are in our behavior and decisions, our most basic, knee-jerk emotional reactions to really big things are often remarkably similar. And it is in these moments that I am most grateful for my sister.*”

Slowly the story unfolds, like an origami swan, until you see the way that all those dents and creases and wrinkles are what make a family, like the swan, so lovely.

*“there is one constant, one thing you can always count on, that not only does love come first, but in the end, it is the only thing that remains.*

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## Melissa says

It's been way too long since I've read an *Emily Giffin* book. It's her knack for exploring the complicated relationship and her cast of relatable characters that have landed her on my list of favorite authors. After so long, this book was a reminder of just how much I enjoy her writing. There's a big part of me that wants to go back and reread some of her greats. Starting with *Something Borrowed* and *Something Blue*.

This story is centered around two very different sisters - Josie and Meredith. Their relationship isn't easy by any stretch of the imagination. In fact, there isn't much they agree on. Except that life would be so much better if their brother hadn't been the victim of a horrible accident, fifteen years earlier. Some of the choices they made in the aftermath of his death have resulted in regrets and it's time to face some hard realities. Sit back and accept the way things are or make a drastic change?

It's a real struggle for the sisters to find common ground. They don't get one another and they aren't exactly accepting. The alternating point of view really highlights just how differently they see the world. There are a ton of emotions packed in this one and at times I wasn't sure whose side I would take.

I struggled with Meredith's character a little more than Josie's. It was hard to watch Meredith unravel her feelings for Nolan. He seemed so perfect! But I guess that was just my perception. I think she ultimately made the right decision in the end.

Josie and Gabe's relationship took me by surprise. I envisioned a different ending, which yes, would have been a total cliché. I don't know if I would have made the same choice she did, but in the end it made for a different and unexpected ending, especially for a book in this genre.

On another note, it was fun to look up some of the places the author mentioned along the way. I just recently moved to Atlanta, so it sort of made the story that much more real for me.

*\*Thanks to Ballantine Books and NetGalley for an ARC in exchange for an honest review.\**

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## Brandice says

Despite hearing praise for Emily Giffin's books for years, *First Comes Love* is the first of her books I have read. It was great!

Reading the synopsis for this book, I assumed it would be an enjoyable, somewhat light, perfect for summer read. While enjoyable, and quick because I could barely put it down, the book opens on a tragic, somber note, and had a little more depth than I gave it credit for.

Sisters Josie and Meredith are left in the aftermath of a tragedy, experiencing their grief in very different ways. Now, 15 years later, the two sisters are still pretty opposite in temperament and personality, and still dealing with their grief separately.

Josie is a single, first grade teacher, approaching the age of 40, and her longing to become a mom is growing stronger. Meredith is a few years younger, married with a 4 year old daughter, and works at a big law firm. Are either of them really happy with the life they have?

While Meredith appears to be more rigid and type A, the practical person in me identified more with her than with Josie. I thought Josie seemed immature for someone almost 40, and somewhat unrealistic. However, as the story progressed, Josie grew on me, particularly in the final third of the book. I also liked all of the various and real Atlanta references to neighborhoods, schools and restaurants in the book. Parts of the story made me sad due to the tragic elements that remained throughout, but the story was very good and I had to keep reading to find out what would happen.

*First Comes Love* is about family, the tumultuous relationship siblings often have, and grief, experienced differently by everyone and not something you just get "over". It's also about love, in all of its many forms.

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## Heather K (dentist in my spare time) says

**It's hard to read a book when you dislike the main characters so much.** And I really didn't connect with Josie and Meredith.

Josie and Meredith are sisters who are still coping with their brother's death, 15 years later. Now, some stories that I categorize as "women's fiction" that involve sisters feature a sort of love/hate relationship. This is more like a **hate/hate relationship**. Josie and Meredith fight *constantly*, and for extremely petty reasons. Honestly, I was sick of their back and forth right from the start, and their arguing lasts for the entire story.

Meredith is particularly annoying. I really hated how she was the **typical miserable shrew wife**; denying sex, angry at everyone, comparing herself to other moms around her. I know women like that exist, but I just hate how mothers and wives are often depicted this way in these types of stories. Meredith takes offense at *everything*. Nothing is ever good enough for her. On top of that, she is very self-involved. You would think being in her head for part of the story would make me like her more, but I almost DNFed this story at 90% because I was so disgusted with Meredith. And the way that she treats Nolan, her husband, was practically unforgivable to me. She never really communicated with him about her wants, and I found her to be cold and unfeeling to the point of callousness.

Josie was a little better, but she still was irritating. She was also **self-centered**, but at least she was more likable when the reader was inside her head. However, there were still problems with her parts of the story. I thought that her relationship with Gabe, her platonic best friend, was inconsistently depicted, and downright confusing at times. I also thought that her relationship with nice-guy Pete, who came across as desperate and waaaaay too agreeable, was odd, and not in a good way.

What bothered me the most about this story was how **the author would present a plot thread and then just sort of... drop it**. For example, the story-line with Will, Josie's ex, was built-up and built-up... and then, nothing. Why introduce it and put time into it and then have it lead nowhere? It felt unresolved. Also, the plot element of Gabe's girlfriend was treated similarly. One moment she was a source of tension between Josie and Gabe, and then she just disappears into the background. Same with Josie and Meredith's father's drinking and girlfriend, and the persona of Daniel, the dead brother. So many elements of this story were underdeveloped.

I think I was expecting more from Emily Giffin, who I remember fondly from my days of reading women's fiction. However, either my tastes have drastically changed or I just have no desire to read about **miserable people** making each other more miserable anymore.

**\*\*Copy provided in exchange for an honest review\*\***

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## Chelsea Humphrey says

Many thanks to Netgalley for my copy in exchange for a fair and honest review.

Yes, it may come as a shock but occasionally I DO take a break from my regular scheduled programming of blood, graphic violence, and disturbing content. Sometimes you just need to lighten the mood and feel girly for a hot minute, and this was the perfect read for that. I fell in love with Emily Giffin's strong characters (read stubborn and real), biting wit, and adult humor when I read *Something Blue* (even though I didn't realize I was supposed to read *Something Borrowed* first-oops) and I immediately went out and read the remainder of her books as fast as I could. My favorite Giffin book is *Heart of the Matter*; I was super disappointed with her last book, *The One & Only*. It wasn't a poorly written book, just completely different than EVERY OTHER BOOK SHE HAS WRITTEN and my poor heart thought I was done with her for good. This one, however, was right back on track with her previous work and I was able to breathe a sigh of relief.

*First Comes Love: A Novel* introduces us to sisters Josie and Meredith Garland. These two could not be more different which seems to cause their loving but stormy relationship hang on by a thread. Something traumatic hits their family and causes the girls to go their separate ways. Fast forward 15 years and both women are pushing 40 in the different lives they have chosen. Josie is single and an elementary school teacher who seems to be more concerned with becoming a mother than finding Mr. Right; however, she feels society does not look favorably on that order of life. Meredith is your Type-A perfectionist with the "perfect life"; she has a successful job as a lawyer, a beautiful daughter and a fabulous husband, so why does Meredith secretly wonder if she made the right life for herself?

I loved how the central theme of this novel was a combination of ownership of one's actions and forgiveness. Giffin's novels aren't just about romance; there is usually other forms of love explored in her books and I love all the dynamics that she can bring to the table without the story being confusing or off putting. I would go as far as to say she is the Harlan Coben of the women's fiction genre as she can take multiple storylines that seem unrelated and weave them together to bring forth a form of perfection that is hard to come by in fiction. A true gem of a read that would be as perfect for the beach as it is in your own home; either way you'll be transported into another story that will touch your heart.

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## Mischenko says

I'm not sure why, but couldn't really get into the story. It wasn't the flipping back and forth, I just couldn't connect. I still enjoyed it and felt that it was written well and had good character development. I just really enjoyed *Something Borrowed* much better...

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## Christina says

4 Stars!

### **Grief is a mystery to be lived through, not a problem to be solved.**

This novel centers around two sisters, Meredith and Josie Garland. The prologue opens the story with a family tragedy, but you learn a fair bit about the family in it. Josie is impulsive, a bit of a party girl. Meredith is more reserved, an introvert. They don't have the best relationship. Then the tragedy strikes.

Fast forward in time fifteen years later. Josie and Meredith are in their late thirties and their lives have gone very differently than how they thought they would. Josie is a first grade teacher, single and living with her best friend Gabe (more on him in a bit). She can feel her maternal clock ticking away and wants to be a mother very badly, whether she has found the right guy or not. That feeling is multiplied when she realizes that her most significant exes daughter is in her class.

Meredith has a seemingly perfect life. She's a successful attorney, married to a great guy she's known all her life and they have a four year old daughter together. But Meredith feels dissatisfied, wondering whether she really made the right choices in her life. Pondering some "what ifs".

The anniversary of their family tragedy is looming and secrets from the past start to surface. This story is about how Josie and Meredith confront those issues and how they come to terms with their own decisions in life. It's a story about following your heart, no matter where it may lead you.

One of the reasons I like Emily Giffin's books so much, is that the story is always original. Sure, there are some with plots that have been done before, but her characters and their actions and thoughts are so relatable. Then there are some of her novels, like this one, with a completely unique story that you haven't seen before. This book deals with a whole slew of things that I haven't seen together in a novel before, from divorce to death to artificial insemination, but Giffin really makes it work. One of my favorite things about this novel (which I haven't really seen before anywhere) was the fact that Gabe and Josie had the best friendship, a friendship that everyone should have...and the author made the friendship happen between a man and a woman, both straight. **I loved** the fact that not only did the author include an amazing friendship, but that it was between characters of the opposite sex. Nothing romantic ensues **AT ALL** between them, none of the

whole "secretly being in love with your best friend for years only to find out that the feeling is mutual" scenerio (which I was totally anticipating) and I adored their friendship!

This was a quick read, very enjoyable, despite the fact that it dealt with some tough issues. It definitely motivates you to always listen to your heart <3

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### **Giss Golabetoon says**

The four stars is for the moral lesson, otherwise it is a well written story about siblings, a nice one and a judgmental bitchy one who we were supposed to also root for because the story was told from both of their point of views, but if there's one thing that's worse than a judgmental person, is a judgmental person with a shitty life.

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