



Patchwork Paradise

Indra Vaughn

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Oliver and Samuel's relationship is fairy-tale perfect. They share a gorgeous house in Antwerp, go out with their friends every weekend, and count down the days to their dream wedding. But their happy ending is shattered one late night, and just like that, Ollie is left bereft and alone.

The months that follow are long and dark, but slowly Ollie emerges from his grief. He even braves the waters of online dating, though deep down he doesn't believe he can find that connection again. He doesn't think to look for love right in front of him: his bisexual friend Thomas, the gentle giant with a kind heart and sad eyes who's wanted him all along.

When Thomas suddenly discovers he has a son who needs him, he's ill prepared. Ollie opens up his house—Sam's house—and lets them in. Ollie doesn't know what scares him more: the responsibility of caring for a baby, or the way Thomas is steadily winning his heart. It will take all the courage he has to discover whether or not fairy tales can happen for real.

Patchwork Paradise Details

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Author : Indra Vaughn

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From Reader Review Patchwork Paradise for online ebook

Heather K (dentist in my spare time) says

Kindle freebie 10/1/18!!

4.5 stars

This is one seriously good book. Heartbreaking, heartwarming, and really skillfully written, all fans of hurt/comfort and friends-to-lovers stories should give this one a shot.

I see you looking at that cover and I KNOW what you are thinking. And no, this book isn't cheesy or lame in the least. Despite the fact that these two look like they are in a commercial for foot fungus cream and are wearing matching cable-knit sweaters (*groan*), there is a really touching story within.

My only warning for all of you is that if you like your MCs to hook up ONLY with each other over the course of a story, don't try this one. It takes the main characters a long time to get together, and there are many bumps along the road getting to that point.

I went into this book with fairly low expectations, if I'm being honest. I've never read Indra Vaughn before, and I have an abysmal track record with new-to-me authors. However, I was really, *really* surprised at how much I enjoyed this one. I'm SO glad that I already own a bunch of Indra Vaughn's other works because she has some impressive writing chops.

I think some of the trickiest stories to write are those that involve people getting over the death of their first love. However, I tend to LOVE these second chance at love type stories, and they rank as some of my all-time favorites (Second Chances, After Ben). Indra Vaughn really did this trope justice. **The relationship between Ollie and Sam felt authentic, Ollie's grieving period after Sam's death felt authentic, and Ollie's evolution of his relationship with Thomas felt authentic.** It all felt true and heart-wrenching and meaningful.

My only issue with this story is that it takes a looong time to get to where our two MCs are together. Granted, that is also a positive for me because the author had time to really make us *know* that Ollie's feelings were real, but still there are a LOT of details of our MCs with other people, which grew to be a bit distracting.

There is also the kid issue, which can be tricky in stories, but I think that the author did a beautiful job with it. The child aspect to the story really ratcheted up the emotion and intensity between Ollie and Thomas, in a good way. In fact, this book was so intense and so hard for me to put down, that I ended up staying up until 3 am to finish it.

This is a **long, emotionally difficult story with a beautiful HEA in the end.** You will be rooting for our MCs to get together and for Oliver to find peace and happiness once more. All fans of hard-fought, friends-to-lovers stories should not let this one pass them by.

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~Mindy Lynn~ says

3.5/4 Stars

Elsa Bravante says

Un libro que se aleja de la mayoría de lo que leo en MM. Uno de los protagonistas principales pierde a su pareja y entra en un agujero negro del que va saliendo con ayuda de familia y amigos, en ese proceso se enamora de alguien que siempre había estado cerca. El proceso de duelo ocupa gran parte del libro, se transmite la pena del que sobrevive. Ha habido un momento en el que me ha parecido que ese duelo era más importante que la historia de amor que sigue, que la nueva pareja nunca podría alcanzar la perfección con la que se dibuja al fallecido. Al final se me ha quedado un gusto amargo, feliz por la pareja que se enamora, pero con la sensación de que el protagonista siempre habría elegido primero a su pareja muerta y el otro es la consolación, la autora no me ha sabido vender bien cómo se vuelve a enamorar.

Es interesante que el entorno no sea el de siempre, USA, UK, Australia... y sea un escenario europeo. Horror de portada.

Sheziss says

I truly didn't expect to like this one so much.

I'd read nothing of Indra Vaughn so I was pleasantly surprised when I found out this author has it in herself to write solid and complex stories like this one.

Because, wow, this is one of those books that is built in such a effective and thoughtful way you can't stop yourself from noticing.

Let's begin with the plot. Ollie and Sam have been together since they were 16, and BFF even earlier. They are going to get married in a month. But all this happiness and the illusion is cut short when Sam is killed in a burglary.

At this point, you are probably thinking "Oh no, not this again, drama-llama, tears-to-fill-rivers, blablabla". I'm not embarrassed to say that's how I was reacting as soon as I read the first pages. I thought this would be the typical: overcome your last boyfriend, who now that he is dead, will be far from perfect, and cry and cry and cry, and then, voilà, you are ready for a new relationship. A rey muerto, rey puesto (dead King, new King).

Well, things turned out to be a little more complicated.

For starters, yes, there are tears, but I never felt "blackmailed" or "manipulated" to feel empathy in any moment of the play. It came naturally, nothing was forced or artificial. The duel is tough and long. And by

that I don't mean you get the itching of "Come on, I'm getting impatient, is this phase going to be over soon? In the next 50 pages at least?".

Keep calm, you never want things to move faster, you want to savour them. Because you have already realized this is not going to go sour if you fail to keep your eyes open all the time. It only gets better.

It's a very slow-paced love story, but a solid one at that. Every character has his own place, and it could not be played by anybody else. They are defined and believable, and sometimes they made me smile, because the friends are there but they are not glued to the MCs as if they didn't have a life of their own. They aren't distant, either. We get to know them very well, and worry for them, too. This comes from me, who, by the way, hates having interferences in the way. But here the secondary characters were precious. I loved Ollie's mom. And tried to feel sympathy towards Sam's parents, but failed.

And the couple? Ollie really loves Thomas, as a friend, that is. Thomas, on the other hand... may have forbidden feelings for a little while now. Oooops. Okaaaaaaaay, he has had for years, but Thomas apparently enjoys sleeping around, so Ollie is none the wiser. When I think about Thomas and all his pain my heart wrenches.

But somehow Ollie begins to see Thomas in different light. He's not ready for changes in his life, he misses Sam too much, and it hurts. But more often than not, he's thinking about Thomas, he wonders what he is doing, where did he go, will he disappear with that girl or that boy over there and why does that thought upset him so much?

Everything is so subtle and genuine the package resulted in a gift of excellent taste. I wanted them to be together, and then I *craved* them being together. The wait is deliciously agonizing and you enjoy the process. Don't get me wrong, it's not a heavy book, in spite of everything I've told above. In fact, it's quite easy to read and not that much on the "angsty" side as it leads you to believe.

It's a hurt/comfort and a feel-good kind of book. Everything gave me good vibes. I loved the pair. I read it with pleasure and delight.

I love the idea of the plot set in Belgium. I didn't realize we were in this country until the mention of Namur and I was shocked by this because I think this is a first in my M/M experience. I've visited the country several times and I learnt to carry an umbrella and a raincoat, just in case. Even in summer. Once they mention a traffic jam and I laughed out loud. The novel in truth reminded me of good times.

The drawback? That cover. I mean, when I first saw it I thought it was the gay version of an Aryan family propaganda or maybe a vitro fertilization advertisement for childless families. Seriously, I was attracted by the cover because it's not horrid, but I can't deny I had my doubts about going for it, too.

Fortunately, the author came out victorious from the baby part. Every piece in the puzzle fit and it didn't make me grind my teeth as I feared. Those scenes are some of the cutest, and I don't mean baby things only,

but everything that goes over the baby's head, everything that happens between his two daddies. I wanted to squeeze them together and make lemonade. They were so sweet I wanted to grab a spoon!

In case you didn't notice, I loved the book, and I recommend it.

****Copy provided by the publisher via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.****

Heather K (dentist in my spare time) says

***4.5 stars* - Same rating as my original ebook rating on audio reread. Lovely narrator.**

This is one seriously good book. Heartbreaking, heartwarming, and really skillfully written, all fans of hurt/comfort and friends-to-lovers stories should give this one a shot.

I see you looking at that cover and I KNOW what you are thinking. And no, this book isn't cheesy or lame in the least. Despite the fact that these two look like they are in a commercial for foot fungus cream and are wearing matching cable-knit sweaters (*groan*), there is a really touching story within.

My only warning for all of you is that if you like your MCs to hook up ONLY with each other over the course of a story, don't try this one. It takes the main characters a long time to get together, and there are many bumps along the road getting to that point.

I read the book first in ebook form, so this was my second time around with this story. Audiobooks are sometimes funny things, and I book that I LOVED in ebook format sometimes has a crappy narrator or doesn't translate well when read aloud, and vice versa. **This story was just as lovely the second time**, and I was again impressed with Indra Vaughn's abilities as a writer. The audiobook narrator, Craig Beck, did a great job, and I'd listen to him again any day of the week.

I think some of the trickiest stories to write are those that involve people getting over the death of their first love. However, I tend to LOVE these second chance at love type stories, and they rank as some of my all-time favorites (Second Chances, After Ben). Indra Vaughn really did this trope justice. The relationship between Ollie and Sam felt authentic, Ollie's grieving period after Sam's death felt authentic, and Ollie's evolution of his relationship with Thomas felt authentic. It all felt true and heart-wrenching and meaningful.

My only issue with this story is that it takes a looong time to get to where our two MCs are together. Granted, that is also a positive for me because the author had time to really make us know that Ollie's feelings were real, but still there are a LOT of details of our MCs with other people, which grew to be a bit distracting.

There is also the kid issue, which can be tricky in stories, but I think that the author did a beautiful job with it. The child aspect to the story really ratcheted up the emotion and intensity between Ollie and Thomas, in a good way.

This was a long, emotionally difficult story with a beautiful HEA in the end. You will be rooting for our MCs to get together and for Oliver to find peace and happiness once more. All fans of hard-fought, friends-to-lovers stories should not let this one pass them by.

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Aerin says

I have a hard time finding my words when it comes to writing a review for this one, and I had to wait a few days after finishing it, because I didn't want any fucking tears on my laptop while writing the review.

This book is angst heavy people, really, really heartbreaking, and I wasn't expecting it. I realized after reading the blurb that Oliver lost the love of his life (Sam) but never in a million years did I imagine I'd be crying my heart out while "living" through the whole series of events that led to Sam's death. I was hoping I didn't get to meet Sam in this book, I thought for sure he would be already dead at the beginning, and once I realized that was not the case, I REALLY hoped I wouldn't like him very much. WRONG!!! I LOVED HIM!!!!.... for as little as I got to know him, I loved Sam and thought he was perfect for Oliver. There was lots of crying people, like "tear-your-heart-out" crying, because that's what it felt like when Sam died and Oliver submerged into his grief.

When the period of grieving got a little easier to read through, I seriously doubted that I'd like Thomas and Oliver together; Sam was just too perfect for Oliver and I couldn't imagine Thomas taking his place. I gotta give it to Indra, because she managed to make me love Thomas and accept him as a suitable replacement for Sam; in fact, I really didn't have to compare them to one another because to me, Thomas wasn't any sloppy seconds. The dude is hot as fuck, and he's been in love with Oliver for years, since the very first time they met. Thomas kept his feelings to himself because he realized what Sam and Oliver had was special, but I can't imagine how bad it hurt him to be close friends with them, watch them be so in love with each other, and know deep down that the only person he's ever loved will never his.

And then.... there's a baby! I'm telling you people, there's nothing hotter than a half-naked Thomas holding a sleeping baby on his chest! Whew, be advised ladies, your hearts will melt and your panties will catch fire, because Thomas+baby is just that adorably hot! There was some humor after the baby came to live with Thomas and Oliver, because nasty baby diapers and projectile vomit on unsuspecting men is freaking hilarious, and after all that angst, the humor was more than welcome.

I love angst in my books, it's usually a must for me, but this was a dash too much even for me. Or maybe not exactly too much angst, but not enough happy times to overcompensate for all the suffering I've done. My philosophy is if you're going to make me bleed for your books (go ahead, I like it) give me at LEAST the same amount of happy, joyful, and don't forget sexy times to make up for it. I didn't feel like I got enough happy, and I definitely didn't get enough sexy; I know Indra can write a sex scene hot enough to catch my IPad on fire, so I was disappointed we didn't get more "set-the-sheets-on-fire" times.

Another thing that prevented me from giving this book 5 stars was Cleo, Imran, and all that drama that came

from Thomas sleeping with Cleo (relax, it was before him and Oliver got together). This was an angst-heavy book to start with, so I felt that all the secondary characters' drama was unnecessary and unwelcome. Please don't think this is one of those dramatic books that make you roll your eyes, because it's really NOT, but even the realistic drama added too much heaviness to the book.

Overall this was a great book, nicely written, but don't make the mistake of starting it without a ton of tissues handy. And yes, there's a HEA (a beautiful one, full of smiles and warm feelings), so you won't be suffering in vain.

Julio Genao says

that cover looks like something you'd find in the pamphlet for an assisted living facility.

but at least The Gays are smiling on it, though.

almost never see that in MM; apparently we are only allowed to be grumpy or suffering the sekrat fires of our agony.

Jaime says

This was an amazing book that is full of emotional ups and downs. You definitely need to have a box of tissues with you while you read it and then get ready for your heart to be ripped to shreds. However the author does a great job of putting your shredded heart back together again...after a lot of angsty goodness in the middle!! Ollie is thrown into a pit of despair when he loses his fiancé in a mugging - only to then have to deal with his previous future-in-laws trying to kick him out of his house because they don't want to honor their deceased sons Will. Next Ollie has to deal with the fact that one of his best friends, Thomas, has secretly been in love with him for years. Just when Ollie decided that maybe he can love his friend the same way...Thomas, starts a relationship with an American he met while traveling. At this point, I have to wonder if the author just hates Ollie or maybe had a past boyfriend named Ollie because she is really putting this poor guy through the ringer. But never fear, Ollie is in for some happiness even if it's temporary when Thomas, is suddenly single and finds out he is a dad. Thomas is in need of a place to stay and help with his son..guess who volunteers? That's right, Ollie does - he puts Thomas and his son up into the house that his previous almost in-laws are still trying to have him thrown out of, yes I know what a mess!!

The thing is that now these two men are living together and feelings start to develop and chemistry ignites and **Finally** Ollie and Thomas get some time to explore their feelings towards one another - in between midnight feedings and dirty diapers that is, so yeah not an easy task! But then our author decides that once again, Ollie isn't going to get any happiness..and Thomas feels like he isn't ready to have Ollie commit to a ready made family so he moves out - leaving poor Ollie bereft again!

The good news is these two do finally get their act together and get their happy ending but it is after many ups and downs in the story - so as mentioned before, bring your tissue and hang on!!!

4.5 Stars!!!

~◊~Doxni(ela) ♥ ?? love & semi-colons~◊~ says

~3.5~

If you're in need of a good cry, grab a blanket, a bottle of wine (glass optional), and tissues (a must!), and settle down to read *Patchwork Paradise*.

In many ways, this is a brilliant story. It's incredibly well written and evocative. It shows the many subtle ways grief breaks and remodels us. The characters are complex and multi-layered. The theme of hurt/comfort (more hurt than comfort) is always present.

I read this story in one sitting, and, man, did I ever ugly cry. The first few chapters, which show us Sam dying in Ollie's arms after a petty, senseless crime, were brutal. And the angst never stopped. Just when Ollie climbs out of the fog, he has to deal with his friends' infidelity, Sam's parents' greed, and the trial of Sam's murderer.

Thomas has been Ollie's friends for several years, but, blind to anything but his own happiness with Sam, Ollie never noticed that Thomas has been in love with him since forever.

I wanted to root for Thomas and Ollie, but I just didn't like Thomas. The constant sleeping around, the sudden revelation from a past lover, the American boyfriend ... it was so much. TOO much.

I saw absolutely no reason to include the Thomas/Cleo side plot; what purpose did that serve besides making the story even more complicated and angsty? I also didn't need to know so much about Cleo and her boyfriend and their relationship drama.

There's but one steamy scene between Thomas and Ollie, but an on-page sex snippet of Thomas and a random woman that, again, didn't need to be there.

This book isn't really a romance; it's a novel of loss, grief, and healing.

The man who loved Ollie more than anything, the only man I wanted to see Ollie with, dies in the first chapter. I didn't begrudge Ollie a second chance at love, but the romance between Ollie and Thomas didn't begin until the 70 percent mark. That's a long time to wait, especially since the second Ollie and Thomas get together, Thomas, after pining for Ollie for YEARS, immediately runs away.

The epilogue is sweet; there is rebirth after death. But I felt completely depleted when the book ended. **I didn't feel hopeful; I felt like I'd been ran over by a Mack truck.** My response is entirely personal, of course, but that's not the way I want to feel after reading a romance novel.

MLE says

I received this book as an ARC through NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

I have to admit I was surprised by how much I enjoyed this book. The maturity, and sensitivity that the author brought to the characters, and their story was a refreshing change from so many other romance novels. The author's understanding of the complex nature of the grieving process was nice. I didn't feel that Ollie's loss was glossed over, but it didn't feel like it was drowning in melancholy, overwrought angst either. The writing really drew me into the story, and I had a hard time putting it down.

I found the characters to be well drawn, and relatable. I really liked Ollie, and his journey. I felt like he grew to understand himself, and his friends so much over the course of the story. I loved his relationship with Sam, and I appreciated that the author didn't feel the need to vilify Sam to legitimize Ollie's new relationship with Thomas. A nice change of pace from a lot of other romance novels I have read. Thomas was an interesting character, and I appreciated getting to know all sides of him, and that it wasn't just Ollie that had relationship issues. I really appreciated that Milo's mother was presented in a positive light, and her issues were treated with the gravity they deserved. I liked that those issues didn't prevent her from caring for Milo, and that she was a part of the story, and not just a throw away antagonist. I appreciated that the secondary cast was well drawn, and had their own issues and plot lines. They didn't just exist to drive the story, or act on the main characters. Baby Milo was a highlight for me as well, and it was nice to see a baby in a romance novel act like a baby, and not a fluffy bit of plot driver.

The plot was well drawn, and I enjoyed the slow build between Thomas and Ollie. Considering the issues, and the events facing both men it made sense for things to move at the pace that they did. I also could feel for Ollie, and his problems with Sam's parents. Death does not always bring out the best in people, and this problem felt very true to life. I also like how Simon's parents felt like two different people, and had a backstory of their own that I felt added to the problem with Ollie.

Overall this was a really well written story, about love, friendship, and family. About responsibility, fear, and change, and I look forward to reading more from this author.

Vanessa North says

Grab your tissues, lovelies, this one will tug your heartstrings and overrun your tear ducts.

I'm having a hard time writing this review, because this is such a unique book in the genre--not in that it deals with the loss of a loved one, because bereavement porn could be its own subgenre in M/M--but in the ways it handles the friends to lovers trope, the growing intimacy between Thomas and Ollie, the way friends and family both help and hurt the grieving process.

It's unique, and it's very well written. It's heartbreakingly sad in many places, and tender, sweet, and sexy in others. It's grippingly real, and still manages to build not one, but two, larger-than-life loves.

Very much recommended.

♦*Arianna♦* says

4 Stars!!

'Patchwork Paradise' was my third and definitely my favorite book I've read by this author. Equally heartbreaking and heartwarming, this story was beautifully written, gripping, intense at times and very emotional, so make sure you have your tissues ready. A friends to lovers/hurt-comfort story, *'Patchwork Paradise'* is a wonderful story of loss, second chances at life and love and learning to let go.

Oliver 'Ollie' has known Sam since he was just ten years old. They had started dating when they were sixteen and they are now getting married in one month. Ollie loves Sam with all his heart and cherishes their sweet, fairy-tale perfect relationship, loves their house, his job as a medical software engineering and their small group of friends. Their life is perfection until Ollie and Sam's happiness is shattered one night when Sam is killed in a burglary. Oliver is devastated. He doesn't know how to live with the man he loved for so long, he feels he can't function without Sam, but he knows if he wants to survive he has to at least try.

Thomas is one of Ollie's best friends. He has been in love with his friend since forever, but he accepted he doesn't have any chance since Ollie had already had someone to love. He tried to move on, to forget the man who over the years came to mean so much for him, sleeping around with both men and women, truly believing he will never will find love and happiness. Even if Sam passed away, Thomas believes he doesn't have any chance to be with Ollie. He respected Sam as a friend and he respects Ollie too much to push him in that direction.

Ollie had never known about Thomas's feelings. He feels guilty a little for not figuring out this years ago and he feels he's ready to try to move on believing his friend is the perfect man for that. Everything changes for the two men when Thomas finds out he has a son who needs him more than anything.

Indra Vaughn delivered a well done beautifully heartbreaking story that will move you to tears. I loved the fact that despite the premise the story wasn't cheesy or sappy. The plot was well developed, complex and the author did a great job with both Ollie's grief and with the relationship between Ollie and Thomas. The story wasn't full and stupid drama which to be honest pleased me to no end. However, Ollie's tries to move on felt believable.

I liked both Ollie and Thomas. The author did a fantastic job with Ollie's character portraying him and his emotions in a very realistic way. My heart broke for him. I wanted to give him a hug so badly and I desperately wanted for him to find happiness again. He was well developed and complex and I'm glad that he had friends that were so wonderful. As for Thomas, oh, man...I really sympathize with him. He was such a good, loyal friend to Ollie. He was there for him when he needed someone, he was sweet, caring, protective and so very thoughtful. Needless to say I loved him to pieces. From the beginning he proved he is what Ollie needs, a wonderful man who will do anything for those he loves. He's also a great father to his son. I loved how Ollie's help him deal with everything and how supportive he was at times.

Ollie and Thomas's relationship was wonderful and the transition from friends to something more was done in a very believable way. To be honest the slowwww burn relationship between them frustrated me a little simply because I wanted for them to finally be happy, but I appreciated it in some way because it felt more natural and nothing between them felt forced. I loved the relationship both these two main characters had with the little boy. They were so cute together and some scenes were pure and simple adorable.

I have to mention the setting – Belgium, which I found to be very interesting and refreshing and also the

supportive characters that were as well portrayed as the main characters and so engaging.

Overall, a wonderful friends to lovers story that I highly recommend!

Dia says

3,5 stars

Indra Vaughn has co-written *Vespertine* with Leta Blake and I absolutely adored that book.

Patchwork Paradise is the first book I read only by Indra Vaughn. I can't say I adored this one, but I did enjoy it pretty much.

The beginning brings us a perfect couple Oliver and Samuel. They were supposed to get married in a month, after being together for 10 years. But their bubble of love was abruptly torn as Samuel dies tragically. I always prefer angsty books than fluffy romance and I appreciate authors who can write soul wrenching stories. And Indra Vaughn is one of them. My heart ached for Oliver. Most of the book he learns to accept he lost the love of his life. It's a pretty long healing process and I wasn't pleased that it was super slow paced. But on the other hand, I didn't want him to move on too quick and rush into another love too early.

Oliver and Thomas were best friends. Actually Thomas was secretly in love with Oliver for a long time. These characters weren't in sync most of the book, but I learned to accept it. When they were finally trying to date, Thomas finds out he has a little son he has to take care for a while.

The last chapters were sweet and funny. Overall I liked this story and even if we get some hot scenes only at the end on it, I enjoyed their ride. It felt real and possible and I couldn't believe how well they fell into place. **Lovely ending for this mostly sad story.**

Sandra says

Fair warning - reading this book requires a large box of tissues, massive amounts of chocolate, and possibly alcohol. Definitely the tissues and chocolate.

There is so much heartache in this book. When I read the blurb, I thought/hoped that I wouldn't have to see Ollie losing Sam, that this was something that had recently happened, but that the actual event wasn't in the book.

Not so.

First, we get to see Oliver and Samuel happy, oh so happy, and oh so in love. They are perfect for each other, and you can tell how much they love each other, having been together since they were sixteen, best friends since they were ten, and you just know it's them against the rest of the world, and neither can wait to finally get married. Their life together is beautiful, like a fairy-tale, and you cannot imagine either without the other.

But then Samuel dies, in a horrible tragedy late one night, and you get to experience every nuance of Ollie's

grief and pain.

It's heavy. It's heart-breaking. There is grief on top of grief, guilt, and anger, denial and fear, and Ollie has no idea how to go on. He's pulled under the water, into the dark, numb with shock, grief, and pain.

If it weren't for his friends, I don't think he would have made it, but they stick around, and when Ollie finally emerges from the darkness, they're there to prop him up.

Ollie tries dating, but feels like he's betraying Sam, and that is one of the themes that carry through most of the book. Every step Ollie takes to find life after death has him wondering if he's betraying Sam's memory, if Sam would have wanted him to do what he's doing, if he's doing what's right by Sam.

It's an exploration of how to live after the one you thought you'd spend your life with is gone, it's about learning to find yourself again, and figure out who you are without that person in your life. It's one step forward, two steps back, it's not being sure of your own feelings, of seeing someone with new eyes, of being oblivious to certain truths, and finding your path.

There is so much pain and heartache in this book, it was at times difficult to see the words on the screen because my tears had made them so blurry. I don't usually read angst-heavy books, but something called me to this one, and I can't find it in me to regret the experience.

There's hope, too, and humor, and anger (especially with Sam's father, whose treatment of Ollie is abysmal), and love, such enduring love.

I wanted to hug Ollie so many times, and I loved Thomas, and how steadfast he was, even when I could see how he was hurting too. His path isn't easy either, and he tries oh so hard to do what's right, even if it may cost him the person he's wanted for most of his adult life.

Indra Vaughn wrote realistic characters with realistic emotions, actions, and reactions, and I cannot thank her enough for letting me experience this book.

Yes, it's heavy and heart-breaking, but oh so worth it. Please, I beg you, read this.

** I received a free copy of this book from its publisher via Netgalley. A positive review was not promised in return. **

Wendy says

This was such a good book, but damn did it make me do my ugly cry....

It ripped my heart right out...but thankfully it also put it back in ;)

Oliver has known Sam since he was a young boy. They have been together as a couple, since he was 16 years old. Sam is the love of his life and they have a great relationship. Until one day everything is torn to shreds.....

Oliver is devastated, he doesn't know if he will ever get over losing his love....

Thomas is Ollie's friend. He has always had feelings for Oliver, but he knew from the beginning that Oliver belonged to Sam. So he never did anything about it and he never told Ollie. He also knows that Oliver is grieving and that he needs his friend, so he tries to be there for Ollie as best as he can....

Ollie takes his time grieving his lost love and Thomas still tries to be the best friend he can be....

When Oliver eventually finds out about Thomas' feelings, things start to change for him a little bit. He starts thinking about his future. Will he be able to fall in love again...will he be ready to move on one day...

When the day finally arrives, when Ollie is ready try to move on, another shitstorm hits, and this time Thomas is the one who needs all the help he can get...

What I liked most about this book, is that it's realistic. Oliver needs a lot of time, coming to terms with what happened and dealing with his grief. These men don't just jump into a relationship together. A lot of time passes and even after all that time, Ollie has not forgotten about Sam.

This book is a slow burn and the MC's were mostly friends for a long time. They also spend time (sexually) with other people. They had to travel a long road, to end up together. It was also very refreshing that there was some humor in there.

This was a hard read at times...I cried a lot, but it was also beautiful to see how a broken heart can learn to love again....

4,5 stars from me :)
