



The Little Book of Heartbreak: Love Gone Wrong Through the Ages

Meghan Laslocky

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What's the best way to mend a broken heart? Forget ice cream, wine, or weepy movies. Award-winning journalist Meghan Laslocky advises: read through the pain. From divorce cases in ancient Rome to the art of crafting the perfect "I'm over you" mix CD, *The Little Book of Heartbreak* is a whirlwind tour through love's most crushing moments, including:

- How Ernest Hemingway cheated on his wife and then stole her job
- Painter Oscar Kokoschka's attempt to win back an ex by creating (and having liaisons with!) her life-size replica
- Morrissey's personal creed about how sex is useless
- What to watch, listen to, and read to forget an ex faster than you can say "rebound"

The Little Book of Heartbreak: Love Gone Wrong Through the Ages Details

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Author : Meghan Laslocky

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From Reader Review The Little Book of Heartbreak: Love Gone Wrong Through the Ages for online ebook

Karin says

I received this book as a goodreads giveaway and really enjoyed it even though I couldn't ever recall having had my heart broken. In school, I stayed away from literature, art and history in favor of math and science, and this book filled in a lot of holes for me. In her very conversational, matter-of-fact writing style, Meghan Laslocky walked me through so much of what I had missed in and out of the classroom decades ago.

Through the author's fun history lessons and her introductions to major figures in the worlds of art, music and literature, I finally have a background in the basics when these are referenced in conversation, books, movies or TV programs. A brief explanation of the brain chemistry of love and heartbreak was the most helpful to me -- she was speaking my language. Finally, I was able to look back at some of my own and my peers' behavior during high school and college in a whole new light.

For the heartbroken, the book is filled with suggested reading and viewing, all of which are listed in the back of the book; as well as suggested music from many different genres. In her conversational way she says, "It's okay to read in bed in your pjs in the beginning, but shake it up eventually and read in a park or a cafe." Her practical advice is spot on, straight forward and down to earth, i.e. "Exercise." At the end of the book she shares some great ideas of new things to try to make you feel better and get on with your life.

As for me, I finally have a better perspective on human behavior that will make me generally a more understanding person will be especially helpful when working with teenagers.

Sierra Gergus says

This book was a great time killer that kept me interested with some ridiculous "love" stories. Although the strained pop culture references killed it a bit, they also helped me understand some of what Laslocky was trying to get across. It was an enjoyable read, and quite a bit of history and culture was brought into the book, adding a pleasantly harsh dose of reality to the table.

Angie Fehl says

Laslocky puts together a casual collection of essays looking at some of the most iconic love-gone-wrong stories in history and literature, not to mention some laughable wooing practices from back in the day. It all made for some quick bites of fluffy & entertaining reading, minus that one bit that made me want to chuck the book at the wall when she refers to people who like / believe in monogamy as being caught up by "a little misunderstanding... or willful ignorance." Whaa? Like monogamy is too big a concept for the brain to take on so it's better we just bow out and make a sampler plate? I don't know, just seemed kinda harsh to knock the non-polyamorous type. But anyyywaaay...

I really enjoyed the section on literature and the way romance is portrayed (duh, I'm a book blogger, 'course this is gonna get my feelers up!). I especially liked the comparison of different examples from across the

world. For example, she points out that much European lit. seems to like to push the idea that romantic, passionate love is dangerous so it's better to go for more prudent, financially comfortable matches. Case in point, one of the most famous opening lines in literature: "It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife." In contrast, she explains, one can look into a fair amount of Asian literature and find passionate couples embracing healthy adventurous sex lives. (Sidenote on the lit. section -- the author does drop some spoiler bombs on some classic lit titles, so here's a heads up if you've been wanting to read and want to avoid spoilers for: Madame Bovary, Anna Karenina, or Tess of the d'Urbervilles.)

While that section was one of the more interesting ones, I think my favorite part was the Music & Art unit. I was particularly intrigued by the stories of composers Franz Liszt and Johannes Brahms (focusing largely on his friendship / maybe flirtation with pianist Clara Schumann, the wife of a close friend of Brahms). Laslocky even does a little bit on Leonard Cohen, a favorite musician of mine.

A fun read for what it is, light fluffy bits of humor and snark, having a laugh at how silly we humans can get sometimes when it comes to our hearts.

Grace says

I had no idea what this book was, but I'm so glad that I picked it up. It is such a fantastic little dalliance into the world of heartbreak and love and loss. The author is hilarious, but also provides extremely poignant insights into the world of the breakup. The texts she suggests, films, and historical anecdotes are beautifully illustrative of a history of heartbreak. I found this was a lovely book to pick up and put down and to mediate on in between sittings. A lovely, thought provoking non-fiction read (inclusive of Eternal Sunshine Of The Spotless Mind aka my favourite movie ever.)

Five out of five stars. (Or, you know, broken heart emojis.)

Kourtney says

I won this book through the First Reads Giveaway area and couldn't have been more pleased with the results. Having gone through a serious break up about 6 months ago, this book was the perfect remedy. Laslocky hits every single major point in regards to heartbreak. A lot of the stories about heartbreak through history were stories that I'd never heard of before. History loves to focus on what goes right, but Laslocky outlined what went wrong, relationship wise. She gave up ideas as to why we as humans are so prone to have to endure heartbreak and ways of coping with it. My favorite section was where she discussed music and made up theme oriented playlists. Laslocky's writing shines in this book. I'd recommend it to anyone going through a break up, anyone who's ever gone through a break up, or anyone who loves to learn about new facts in general. Thank you again for providing me with the opportunity to read this lovely, heartbreak book!

guiltlessreader says

Just after I read: How fun was that! I really enjoyed how silly and crazy love and heartbreak can be.

Peppered with trivia and lots of references to good books and music. Thoroughly entertaining, whether or not you're heartbroken! Full review coming soon!

FULL REVIEW, originally posted on my blog Guiltless Reading

Happy anti-Valentines! Loving, lovelorn, heartache and heartbreak. Yes, bring it on!

The book in one sentence: A compendium of all things lovelorn and heartbreaky that's bound to entertain, inspire, and even jumpstart you out of heartache!

This is an amazing little book that alternately put in stitches, made me scratch my head a few times, got me scribbling down some potential new reads and films to watch, but mainly made me go ahhhhh, really?

Written in the wake of her own heartbreak, Laslocky did some therapeutic research and writing and ended up with this gem of a book. It not only made her feel better, it will make countless heartbroken folks out there feel better too. Because what's better than poking fun at the very thing that you hate (well, at the time)?

For such a thin book, it sure packs a punch. The content is varied and diverse and everything is random, trivial, even mundane ... but just plain fascinating. I mean, who would think to put in the same book lurid details of historical romances then jump over to the modern-day equivalent of the diary, the mix tape? The amount of research that went into this one not only impressed me, it actually held my interest like a merry little treasure/scavenger hunt!

Another thing I love about the presentation is that it's broken up with little random factoids about the main text, or a little sidebar of a related book, film or song (hence my incessant scribbling). This is truly a reader's / film buff's / audiophile's delight. You're bound to find something to follow through when you're done with this book!

Uh-oh: My only little quibble is at the end where Laslocky actually encourages drug use for the lovelorn who desire to feel better. I think this is beyond regretful and irresponsible -- pop a pill and feel better? Sadly, she just jacked the entire premise of feeling better by wallowing in the cesspool of love and love lost -- her entire book -- with that one page at the end!

Verdict: A fascinating compendium of all things lovelorn and heartbreaky. Highly recommended for trivia lovers. The ideal read for those who suffer a broken heart and would love to heal themselves by overdosing on the best and worst all things love.

Julie Mozena says

This book is a lovely little surprise. It is a thoroughly entertaining and interesting book of what are essentially essays that look at the experience of heartbreak through a number of different (and sometimes unexpected) lenses. It's sort of an anthropological tour of the human experience of love and loss. I should also say it's damn funny - I laughed out loud many times. And seriously...you think people behave badly now? Try the 16th century!

There are of course references to historical figures (Abelard and Heloise, Edvard Munch, Schumann), and discussions about heartbreak in literature and the movies. There are many gems of stories scattered

throughout the book, to the point where I felt like I was on a treasure hunt. What I really appreciated was how the author, while teasing us with some cool little story about love gone wrong, would do a "book alert!" to tell us about how we could go deeper to learn more about the story. By doing this, she shares with us the fruits of her labor in digging up and analyzing all of these stories, encouraging us to go further. Personally I can't wait to dig deeper.

She also provides insight into the science of love and heartbreak - why does it feel like our hearts have really broken? What's happening on a chemical/physical level in our bodies as we grieve the loss of love? What is really happening when we say we are "high on love"? Amazingly, given the fairly short length of this book, Ms. Laslocky gives us a cogent and well summarized overview of the scientific side of heartbreak.

Another fun surprise is her music playlists - not just breakup lists, but many of the different stages of heartbreak! We're talking expert here.

I thoroughly and wholeheartedly recommend this book to all...at the least you will be entertained. But there's so much more you can gain from reading it. Certainly a more nuanced understanding of the history of heartbreak - how it feels, how it sounds, and what it looked like through many different times and cultures.

Marcie says

I knew from the first sentence, "The older I get, the more irked I become that time travel is not an option." I would really like this book. Why? Because I often think the very same thing. Throughout the book the author really gives you a sense of who she is. It's as if I could hear her voice coming off the page telling me the story of heartbreak. This book may sound a little depressing, but I can assure you it is anything but that. As a history buff myself, I really enjoyed this book.

The Little Book of Heartbreak is split into five sections: History, Culture, Music and Art, Film and Literature, and Conclusion and Practical Advice. Loslocky has found some really interesting facts and stories about some people you might have heard about and others that you haven't. I love that she includes a book alert or movie alert to help further illustrate her point or to help the reader learn more about the subject matter. Each section was interesting as well as entertaining. If you're getting over a break-up or you know someone who is this might be the perfect book for them. The author seems to say 'you think you got it bad? Take a look at what happened to this chick!' She also gives some good advice, as well as some things to watch or listen to while you're recouping from your heart break. However even if your heart's not broken this is still a great read. I learned a lot including there were some real jerks way back when.

Read more at <http://www.2readornot2read.com/2013/0...>

Valerie R says

Dull

Nathanael Johnson says

I'm not heartbroken now (though I certainly have been) but I still loved this book, which goes down so easily and is packed with so many gems. The author scoured history/art/literature/science for the best stories and

lessons about heartbreak and I love learning about the personality of Johannes Brahms and the intellectual musings of Nick Cave along the way. It's a wonderful guide to the human experience.

Joanna Doherty Salone says

Awful book. Thought it would have more stories about historical couples, as the title suggests. Also didn't enjoy the writer's writing style....too I'm-trying-to-be-hip with the way she weaves in her knowledge of pop culture, yet using obscure words unnecessarily in the stories. I noticed early on her stating some celebrity gossip as fact which led me to not accept any of the rest of her stories as factual accounts; I just read the rest of it like a novel.

Julie G says

This book has a pretty cute premise and is just my type of refresher book - one that can be read all at once or can be easily broken down into chapters. It's a cultural history of breakups, particularly those that are significant historically, socially, culturally, or for their just plain weirdness. From Abelard and Heloise through current celebrity gossip, Laslocky covers the many varieties of heartbreak in short, funny vignettes.

Writing

I wanted to like the writing more than I actually did. I think Laslocky did a good job of keeping the tone (which, obviously, could have become depressing easily) light and upbeat, but it was presented in a less scholarly format than I like for non-fiction. By scholarly, I don't mean dry and dull, I mean with references. I would have liked to have seen some form of citation or acknowledgment of sources or where to look for further reading, since the book dealt largely with historical relationships.

Entertainment Value

I felt like the subtitle may have been a bit off. "Love Gone Wrong Through the Ages" made me think that this would be largely historical accounts of breakups. However, I would say that the emphasis is more on the culture of breakups than it is on the history. There are sections on breakups in popular music, how to recover from heartbreak, etc that I think lend themselves more to an exploration of culture than an exploration of history.

I did appreciate the author's sense of humor, however, and I thoroughly enjoyed reading the book, even if it wasn't what I was expecting. It reminded me a lot of *Great Philosophers Who Failed At Love*. I recommend it for those who enjoy cultural histories or for those who are just looking for some short anecdotes filled with fun trivia.

Thank you NetGalley for providing me with a digital copy in exchange for this review.

Jill says

This book caught my eye after a mini-heartbreak. I couldn't be happier that I picked it up! I truly reshaped some of my beliefs on love and helped me understand the beliefs of other cultures, such as arranged marriages. I would highly recommend it to anyone - current heartbreak or not!

Stephen Kiernan says

This is a wonderfully snarky and clever historical look at how badly people have treated lovers through the ages -- in literature, among royalty, in myth and in cold blooded reality. This is an anti-valentine, containing tales with laugh out loud audacity. A light quick read.

Kelly (Belle of the Literati) says

*"Women who have gone to great lengths
to raise themselves above the ordinary level of their sex
are likely to believe, for a while at any rate,
that they will be loved the more ardently
and faithfully for their pains."*

--Meghan Laslocky, *The Little Book of Heartbreak*, originally said by Claire Tomalin

For anyone who has been through a heartbreak, so mostly everyone, this book is a definite pick-me-up in that time. The Little Book of Heartbreak reads almost like an anthology of the most infamous breakups throughout history. It's great. Laslocky goes back as far as the ancient Greeks and their somewhat crazy concoctions to make love all the way up to pop culture today as seen in music, movies and books.

The book is divided up into sections that include history, culture, art and music, and film and literature. My personal favorites (go figure) were the anecdotal true stories of the horrific breakups that occurred throughout history. And these stories are all true! The heinousness of bad breakups is not something new to the 21st century, men have pretty much been actin' a fool for hundreds of years...bastards...But further than that, my favorite stories dealt with the women who took love into their own hands. Most notably to me, the two nuns who snuck in their lovers to the convent...no, seriously, this happened. It was during this time that only one daughter of every family could marry so the rest were sent off to take the veil. Clearly frustrated they did what they had to do in order to feel loved by someone other than the Almighty. Pretty intense.

My other favorites were the breakdown of songs to listen to depending on which part of the breakup you are going through. Brilliant! Oh my gosh, I dog eared all these pages in order to be prepared for the next heartache. So clever! And yes, if you were wondering, Adele is mentioned :)

Delving into literature, of course, was another great addition. Madame Bovary, Anna Karenina and a personal favorite book of mine Never Let Me Go was also mentioned. I loved how the author discussed the implications of technological and medical advancement in regards to love. Where does love fit in with all the scientific mumbo jumbo of today's advancements? There also is a section dedicated to the science of the brain behind love and heartache. Again, so interesting!

The book concludes with a helpful guide to the reader of what to do when heartbreak finds you. Songs to listen to, activities to partake in, and a heavy suggestion to let yourself wallow...at least for a little bit. This was such a fun and quick read that left me with so many fun facts about heartbreak throughout time as well

as what to do with future heartbreak. Definite read for anyone who is going through a breakup. I think it is a really great book to empower you in times of heartache. We all go through it, we all feel bad about ourselves and this book helps us realize we are all together in this at one time or another. Very clever and fun and most definitely well-researched and unique :)
