



Reason to Breathe

Rebecca Donovan

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An passionate love. A brutal betrayal. Unwavering hope.

In a town where most people worry about what to be seen in and who to be seen with, Emma Thomas would rather not be seen at all. She's more concerned with feigning perfection, pulling down her sleeves to conceal the bruises. Emma doesn't want anyone to know how far from perfect her life truly is.

When Emma unexpectedly finds love, it challenges her to recognize her own worth - but at the risk of revealing the terrible secret she's desperate to hide.

Reason to Breathe Details

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From Reader Review Reason to Breathe for online ebook

Rag says

5 'Heartbreaking' Stars

What an amazing book.

Emma's father died and her mother is an alcoholic who abandoned her so she has to live with her uncle, aunt, and two cousins. Her auntie (I'm not even sure I should call her that) is a **devil**. She's really abusive and she hates Emma, she made that pretty clear when she hits her with anything that's within reach.

In school Emma wants nothing but to be *invisible*. She is. They don't notice her and she doesn't want to be noticed. She walks in a haze. She just blocks everything and everyone out.

When Evan the new kid (he's not really "new" he's been in that school for about a week but she didn't notice him before) announces his topic for the newspaper Emma can't help but get pissed with him. She doesn't like his topic idea and he's the first person ever to get under her skin.

They become friends but you can tell that they both feel **more** for each other than just friendship.

“We were engaged in a very intricate dance of touching without touching, knowing without saying, and feeling without expressing. We were friends walking along a ledge, a very thin ledge - and I was too caught up in my heightened awareness of his existence to realize how close the ledge was to crumbling beneath my feet.”

I **DESPISED** Carol. You don't know how badly I wanted Emma to take a knife and just STAP her. I think she's just jealous of Emma. I loved the part where Evan referred to her as the devil.

“Well let's get you back to hell before the devil realizes you're not home.”

I really liked Sara. She was there supporting her best friend through everything. That's true friendship, when they stick by your side through good and bad. She would also make me smile.

“What was that about? His mother is practically gushing over you. Not to mention that he's holding your hand like it's the most natural thing in the world. Forget about dating - are you having a wedding you forgot to invite me to?”

While trying to survive through hell Emma found love. She found it and it saved her somehow.

Reason to Breathe is an amazing book that will make you cry and feel. It would take you on a roller coaster ride and let me tell you that it's one hell of a ride.

“Love helped me live life instead of just survive it.”

Aestas Book Blog says

4.5 stars

This is the story of a girl holding on to a fragile thread of hope and a love that that brought a ray of light into her world of unspeakable cruelty. It was heart wrenching, gripping and I absolutely could not put it down!

I'd been waiting to read this book for what felt like forever. This was actually one of the first series I heard about when I first started reading contemporary romance. Everyone kept telling me how amazing they were and I had a feeling I'd love them but I also knew about the brutal cliffhangers so I decided to tough it out and wait 'til I could read all three books back-to-back. So, the moment the final book was released, I was all over it.

I'd been warned to read this book with tissues and Xanax. I knew to expect painful. I knew to expect intense. But wow, the sheer cruelty in this book was just gut wrenching.

From the very beginning, you can feel how trapped Emma is. With her parents no longer in the picture, she was sent to live with her aunt, uncle and two little cousins. Her aunt was cold-hearted and brutally abusive in every way - physically, verbally, and emotionally. Emma's main goal was just to keep her head down, stay invisible, and get good marks in school while she counted down the days 'til she could escape to college - away from the hurt, abuse and brutality. She was smart, kind-hearted, and hard working. You couldn't help but desperately wish she could escape.

Enter Evan Mathews. Confident, gorgeous and new at school - something about him managed to unravel her... bringing her out of her shell. He had this way about him that was hard to ignore, he saw into her, was direct about his thoughts, and utterly determined to get to know her better. And, despite her better judgment, she carefully decided to let him in despite knowing the repercussions if they were ever found out.

What was with this guy? First I didn't notice him for almost a week, and now I could avoid him... Why wasn't I invisible to him like I was to everyone else?

"No one tried to get involved with me, and I kept to myself. This was the place where everything was supposed to be safe and easy. How could Evan Mathews unravel my constant universe in just one day?"

Her home life was brutal. I need to stress how much of a monster her aunt was. She might actually be one of the most purely evil characters I have ever read. The horrible things she said and the horrific things she did just appalled and sickened me. And her uncle just stood by and willfully ignored it despite knowing what was going on. Between the two of them, they personified "the bully and the bystander". Equally bad, equally hurtful, equally cruel.. because having the power to stop cruelty and choosing not to is really no different

from delivering it yourself.

I think the worst part was how her aunt's cruelty was directed solely at her. She was a good mother to her own children and while Emma knew that all she had to do to end her suffering was make one phone call, or walk into the school's psych department and utter one sentence, she also knew it would rip apart that family and take away her little cousins' mother and she was too good of a person to do that so she bore the pain, cruelty and abuse and lived in hell so that they could continue a normal life.

"I don't want to be angry. I don't want to let her get to me. I'm not okay with this," I said pointing to my head, "but what choice do I have? I'll deal with it. So please don't cry."

The unfairness of it all was just so poignant. It was literally just random acts of cruelty for no other reason that one woman's hatred of another human being. Pure evil.

I think every person is different. I'm not sure I personally agreed with Emma's rationalization for why she stayed but at the same time I certainly could understand and sympathize with it. The truth is what she did was incredibly brave and selfless. Too brave, too selfless perhaps... but still worthy of being recognized for what it was.

But please don't think this book is all pain and sadness. Evan was just this wonderful ray of light in her life. There was no insta-love here, but rather a quiet, slow-building love that had me smiling despite how horrible her situation was. Evan was just perfect. A gorgeous, kind hearted, endearing guy who so clearly thought the world of Emma. I couldn't help but hope that they could find a way to be together.

"That's what was bothering so much about Evan Mathews. He knew I existed. He was determined to pull me out of the shadows, and I couldn't get away from him. He wasn't deterred by my one word answers or abrupt responses. He wasn't supposed to be paying attention to me, and I was trying, without success, to ignore him. But he was getting to me, and I think he knew it."

There was this constant push and pull between them. Emma was terrified to start anything with him because of her need to keep her home life a secret but he was just so completely into her and willing to not push her to reveal more than she was willing to. He was patient, persistent, charming and into her enough to let her set the pace and rules for their relationship - almost as if he could sense that there was a reason for the distance she kept placing between them.

"I don't know how to fit you in my world without hurting you too." The truth in my words revealed more than he'd ever know.

"Don't worry about hurting me," he said calmly. "I like being a part of your world, and I understand that it's more complicated than you're willing to share with me. But I'll respect that for now."

But he didn't stop trying to figure her out. My heart was so happy for the little moments of joy they found but at the same time it was filled with dread because I knew that it would inevitably get worse before it got better.

"We were engaged in a very intimate dance of touching without touching, knowing without saying, and feeling without expressing. We were friends walking a ledge, a very thin ledge - and I was too caught up in my heightened awareness of his existence to realize how close the ledge was to crumbling beneath my feet."

I went through some frustration part way through the book with Drew. Why could she let him in but not Evan? I mean, I understood - she didn't care about him in the same way so it didn't matter but it still hurt. A lot. I hated him on principle and I hated seeing his name on the page. And when that whole issues was resolved, I just breathed this huge sigh of relief and was so happy to see how they actually talked through their issues so functionally. It definitely made me forgive and forget the heartache.

"I knew in that moment, I would never love anyone in my life the way I loved Evan Mathews."

I really can't tell you how much I loved Evan. Everything about him... the way he understood without needing to be told, the way he kept coming back for her, the way he would always find a way to bring some happiness into her life... I just really loved him.

"Even if you won't, or can't, tell me - I know. I do have to tell you that I can't ever sit in a hospital waiting room again."

"I fell -" I tried to explain.

"Don't," Evan urged. "I know. Without you or Sara telling me, I know. So, even if you can't tell me the truth, don't lie. Don't defend them like it's okay. Because it's not. I won't let them do that to you again."

I knew there was a giant cliffhanger at the end as I got closer and closer to the end of the book, the dread and anticipation built... they were so happy, so close to a shot at real permanent happiness and when it hit... ho boy! My heart was in my throat!!! It was brutal. And I am so beyond grateful that I have the next two books sitting here ready to go because there is absolutely no way I'm stopping now. I need to know what happens next!

You should also know that while some of the scenes are definitely not easy to read but you should know that they are not overly graphic. It's not that kind of book.

I love Rebecca Donovan's writing style. The descriptions and flow of the story just suck you right in. Despite the book being over 450 pages, I read it in one sitting and was unable to put it down. It's the kind of story that makes you care deeply about the characters and just **need** to know what happens next.

Tammara Webber's quote on the cover couldn't have said it better:

"When hope is a fragile thread, love is a miracle."

4.5 stars

CASTING (see above and below)

USA Today Bestselling Novel

In the affluent town of Weslyn, Connecticut, where most people worry about what to be seen in and who to be seen with, Emma Thomas would rather not be seen at all. She's more concerned with feigning perfection—pulling down her sleeves to conceal the bruises, not wanting anyone to know how far from perfect her life truly is. Without expecting it, she finds love. It challenges her to recognize her own worth? at the risk of revealing the terrible secret she's desperate to hide.

One girl's story of life-changing love, unspeakable cruelty, and her precarious grasp of hope: Reason to Breathe is the first installment of the acclaimed Breathing Series.

For more of my reviews, visit [Aestas Book Blog](#)

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Phobic Prerogative says

"No one tried to get involved with me" was a total exaggeration in this book's synopsis, considering Emma had a best friend who was always looking out for her.

Nevertheless, even with the tragic abuse theme in the story, I found *Reason to Breathe* completely ridiculous and a bit unrealistic.

Here you have a girl who is 'invisible' and wants to blend in, and perhaps I'm turning her into a stereotype but she's too "well-rounded" for an abusee. 4.0 GPA, editor in the school paper who plays three varsity sports, AND has a best friend (who knows what goes on behind closed doors), yet she claims she's all alone. If Emma really was a loner, she shouldn't even have a best bud.

The reaction people have to Emma whenever she speaks up or attends a friggin' party made me roll my eyes because I did not see any 'special' thing about this girl. Schoolmates gasped, gossiped and gaped when she did something as a-m-a-z-i-n-g as look up from her books...it was quite infuriating. I wouldn't have been surprised if they had given her a tiara for breaking wind in public.

Emma was also one of the most frustrating and annoying characters I've ever encountered. An abused girl whose only reason for taking abuse is to protect her abuser's image with her kids? I found that utterly stupid and shady considering the only child old enough to remember what the hell happened to Mommy is not completely clueless about what Mommy does to his cousin. Plus, her abuser almost beat her to death on a regular basis. And for Emma's best friend to not report to the authorities, even when she proclaimed how much she cared about her friend to the point of shedding tears on her behalf? Please. As her BFF, wouldn't you rather she hated you for getting her out of an abusive home rather than "supported" her claims of "I'm fine" when she harbored bruises almost daily?

Emma, had she gone forward sooner with her story, would have had options. One of her friends' father was a judge or something along those lines, and her best friend's parents liked her very much - I'm sure she wouldn't have been dropped off at a group home if she'd spoken up.

At some point, I was convinced that the abuse factor in the book was for exaggerated dramatic effect, for entertainment purposes, rather than to get a message across that domestic abuse is a problem. If this book was meant to give a real-life abusee hope of getting out of an abusive relationship, the book missed that thoroughly, abuse being tackled poorly and shittily by the author.

Emma was also...too damn unlikeable to even feel sorry for or pledge allegiance to! I'm sorry for her but damn!

I couldn't conjure up an image of this girl, or even create a personality for her...Everyone else around her seemed to have some attributes but her? She was just vacant. Was it that the abuse had turned her into an empty shell of a person, so much so that I couldn't warm to her no matter how hard I tried? I couldn't even understand why Evan was bothering so much with her when she was so snarky and mean all the time. I was just too unsympathetic to her cause, I suppose.

I ended up skipping over the last half of the book, landing on the last page only to discover that *Reason to Breathe* is part of a series.

Crap.

Kindaslick says

I had problems getting through this book and not because of the subject matter. I really couldn't get behind Emma. This waffling and the whole oh no I can't say anything, yada yada yada bullshit. It just drove me up the wall. Friends that know and don't do anything because Godforbid that a 6 yr old and a 4 yr old aren't living with a psychotic woman.

...

Really?

...

Let me say that again. In this MC's opinion it was a -good- thing that a 6 yr old and a 4 yr old were living with a woman that liked to beat the shit out of kids. *blinks*

Anyways.. I went through it and to be perfectly honest not even halfway through the book it stops being about the home life and abuse there. The book becomes about Emma and Evan and their "relationship" I have never read a MC that lied to themselves or other people more and it annoyed the shit out of me. The flat out stupid choices she would make, the lies, all the drama that -she- brought into her own life that could of ohhhhh so easily been taken care of. And her life is a mess. Well of course it's a fucking mess, you refuse to do anything about what's going on in your life except lie to everyone and yourself, make shitty choices and the dumbasses you've surrounded yourself with have no problem with this. Or if they do have a problem with it then you cut them out of your life.

Deep calming breath

Sadly enough the major cliff hanger forced me into the next book, I got around 100 pages in and had to stop because W.T.F. Here she goes again making dumbass decisions and instead of saying hey, this is a stupid decision.. she sticks with it and keeps putting herself through shit, then complaining she's being put through shit. And the relationships. Good. God. Hell, no. Freaky as hell and I'm not reading this. I have laundry to fold, dishes to wash. ANYTHING other than read this. I had to bail. And was happy to do it.

See Emma? This is how you do it. Make a decision (like me deciding to read the second book). Realize that it's a horrible decision (maybe not by beating your head into the wall but the realization comes to you all the same). And you make another decision that will make things better as you are now fully informed. (Oh yeah, I am fully informed and will not be finishing this book. Besides it probably ends with a major cliff hanger

too and I'm not doing this again.)

ETA:

In replying to a comment I realized something about this book that I should of had in this review to begin with. The abuse in this story is simply a tool to create an artificial depth so that we might think this story has great meaning and symbolism. No. It was a tool used to create angst because this story is ultimately about the teenage relationship and the abuse in this story is a cheap gimmick to drive up book sales with the massive cliff hanger and the illusion of complexity. It's insulting.

Emily says

This book sat in my recommendations for a long time, so I was looking forward to starting it. Unfortunately, I couldn't get more than 10% through without giving up.

Emma, the main character, is obviously in a very abusive situation at home with her aunt. I don't have Emma's experience exactly, and I would never assume anything about anyone else, but I can't imagine letting an aunt that didn't raise me and I don't care about beat on me for no reason over and over again and just taking it, as a 17 year old. I couldn't get past the fact that Emma never fights back. According to some of the other reviews I've read, I guess this is out of some effort to protect her cousins? You are not protecting anyone by allowing them to live with a crazy person. If Emma had lived with her aunt/the abuse her whole life, I could understand that maybe her spirit would be so beaten down that she'd think it was acceptable, but she hasn't.

Also, as many reviewers have noted, her rich, daughter-of-a-judge best friend never tells her parents? That's another part that doesn't make any sense to me. I try to think about my best friend revealing this to me as a junior in high school and what I would do...and I can't imagine staying quiet.

I couldn't get past that those things, and I don't like to read sad books just for the sake of being sad, so I had to put it down.

"That's All" Ash says

Seven Disney movies later...

Well.

I'm slightly more of an alcoholic **today** than I was two days ago.

Well played, Rebecca Donovan... well played.

WHAT I LOVED ABOUT THIS BOOK:

-♥- The story -♥-

So beautiful and very subtly powerful, “Reason to Breathe” is about Emma, a high school girl with a home life that would make Vernon and Petunia Dursley (Harry Potter’s aunt and uncle) seem warm and fuzzy. This isn’t the kind of story that gives you butterflies, guys... this is a story that’s going to make your nerves bleed a little and it’s going to make your eyelashes sparkle.

-♥- Emma -♥-

Wow. What a great heroine! Instead of an alarm clock, she has an aunt with a leather belt who’s more than willing to wake her up in the morning.

And all Emma wants is to be unnoticed. Because if she’s unnoticed, then no one can ask her about chronic bruises on her arm, the marks on her back, the burns on her hands, or the reason why she sometimes walks with a slight limp.

♦ I survived by keeping my emotions in check – by maintaining my composure and tucking it all away. I managed to stay under the radar, skating through school without anyone truly remembering I was here. I was easily forgettable.

That’s what I counted on. ♦

So when, Evan, the knew boy at school takes notice of Emma... well, that’s when things get *really* interesting!

-♥- Evan -♥-

Fuck. I loved Evan! He’s the boy who Emma didn’t want to fall in love with... but she did anyway. Because he DOES notice her, and he DOES push her boundaries.

Their story begins when he contradicts her in the classroom, and for some reason, this gets Emma SO angry. And I mean, Emma is a girl who never gets angry because she’s just so numb already. So when this boy gets her to raise her hackles a bit, Emma’s slightly confused because he gets under her skin. And no one gets under her skin.

And slowly but surely, as the story evolves... we see these two characters begin to fall in love with each other.

It doesn’t matter how hard Emma pushes Evan away-- because she’s so afraid he’s going to figure out her secrets--Evan always comes back.

However... Evan doesn’t realize that the more Emma falls in love with him...

--the more it costs her in the end.--

†† ?aisy ♥ †† says

I AM

This book was emotionally draining me. There was moments I wanted to throw my Kindle away, smiled, cried and I am lost for words.

Emma Thomas is a girl who is broken and struggling from evil heartless aunt, she wants to invisible and her only mate is Sara. She tops in her studies and sports.

Evan Matthews comes along and she sees her thru! I love him so much and he is so close to my heart! He is so caring and adorable. I was so touched by his actions ;)

Finally, when he kissed her, I was grinning! That was one sweet moments.

"And, yes, this would be a date, so that we're clear"

"I'm just trying to figure this out. Us"

"Are you having a hard time liking me?"

"Emma, you and I are dating, remember?"

"I love that picture. I think it's because I love the girl in that picture"

I so wanted to claw her heartless aunt.....I am broken. Nobody deserves to be treated in that manner especially when they are in helpless situation.

This book ends in cliffhanger... so I am going bonkers *gladly book two is out*

My Evan

My Emma

Dd says

Oh!My!God...I **HATE, HATE, HATE, HATE, HATE** that bitch Carol.I swear I felt like killing her throughout the novel.

And George...Lord I have rarely seen such a weak,lily-livered person.A swift kick would have done the job.

This is what I really want to say to Em's so-called MOM---

You are a grade-A b**ch

And **EVAN** (though he did some really stupid things) was just perfect for Emily.I loved **Sara**,that is how best friends are supposed to be.I also admired Emily's spirit of survival.

Alexis *Reality Bites* says

QUICK REVIEW -Spoiler Free

4STARS

Genre: YA- Romance

- **'In the balance of Love and loss, it was love that made me struggle to... Breathe.**
-Book Quote

I am really at a loss for words with this book.... I found myself breathless at certain points in this book finding my own feelings jumbled in a mass of pain held in my chest.

Reason to Breathe is about a young girl named Emily(Emma). She is a good student at Weslyn High earning straight A's,she is the editor for the Weslyn school paper and plays soccer,basketball and runs track for her school as well. Emma excels at soccer which she hopes to get a scholarship for. Her father is deceased and her mother gave her up because she is ill from the sickness we know as alcoholism.

Emma has been living with her Uncle his wife and their 2 young kids for 4 yrs. She is counting down the day til she leaves knowing they are too. Emma's Best friend is Sara a tall pretty red head. In school Emma keeps to herself and only talks to Sara, but a new boy Evan Matthews comes to school and in just one day everything changes.

I do not want to give away the book so i advise you to read it. It's that good. The only thing i will say is that Emma's home life is bad it is filled with hate. Hatred that i spent a good 55% of the book trying to find reasons for, then i realized you can not rationalize or understand hate. We should never have to understand it... Hate is just wrong. PERIOD.

MY CASTING

My Ratings

Characters- Lovable, Raw and Honest

Writing Style- Good, Raw and Honest

Plot/Storyline- Excellent

Overall- A MUST READ

Now go forth and read. Then come tell us about it on Goodreads!

For more reviews got to <http://realitybites-letsgetlost.blogs...>

Jenny - TotallybookedBlog says

First off...this should be 4.5 stars!

I started reading this book and literally could not put it down - I HAD to know how it ended, so I was up until 4am devouring every moment. It was a long book and I've read a couple of the deleted scenes and really wouldn't have minded if it was even longer.

We had a chance to really get to know the characters - minor and major characters - they all worked so well together.

There was a plot about 3/4 in the book that frustrated me (not sure if anyone else felt this, probably just me)- I don't want to give anything away - but I understand now why the plot and character were in there and now I realise it added to the character of Emma.

I really did feel as if I knew these characters and cared about them.

My heart was pounding at some bits and I really rallied for Emma - sometimes I would get frustrated with her but I understood why she put up with what she did - she was selfless and her relationship with Evan was just wonderful. The interaction between these two was just beautiful.

The ending!!!!!! Say no more!

I am eagerly awaiting the sequel and know it will be another allnighter when it is available.

Rebecca if you're reading this.....hurry and finish that book!!! I can't stand the wait.

Why 4.5 stars and not 5? Drew!

You really need to read this book!

Alyssa says

I have a hard time understanding why people enjoyed this book. The quality of the writing was very poor. It got a bit better later on, but especially in the sample and the first few chapters of the book, it was just really juvenile and seemed like it had never been edited. I have read so many non-published stories that were of much higher quality and it was a bit of a struggle to connect fully with the characters and what was happening because the writing style itself was so distracting.

Aside from the writing quality, the plot and development of both the characters and story was also lacking. There just didn't seem to be much direction, and the story was kind of all over the place. Emma was being abused, and from there, there wasn't much other direction.

The relationship between Evan and Emma is cute and is probably the only reason I stuck with the story, but that was pretty much all the story had going for it. I think the rave about this story is covers the topic of abuse, which is a touchy, emotional, and relatively still unexplored theme. I can agree with this line of reasoning to some extent: the theme is intriguing. But the execution of it could have been so much better and I just feel like the story itself was hyped up merely because of the topic it addresses rather than the actual

quality of the writing and the story itself.

My other problem with the story is that a lot of it just didn't make sense. There wasn't much motive behind Carol's abuse. There seemed to be way too much hatred between the two of them just for the inconvenience of having another mouth to feed. Things would have made a lot more sense if say... Emma turned out to be George's illegitimate child, so Carol hates her.

I tried to like this story but I couldn't. I'm actually not sure why I bothered reading the entirety of it but I think it was because I was just in the mood for not an exceptionally great story.

Melissa ♥ Dog/Wolf Lover ♥ Martin says

This book was way too sad and messed up!

Mel ???

Danielle says

Rating: ★????

I really didn't like this book, and I wish I hadn't bought it. The premise itself I had no problem with – a girl struggling with abuse and falling in love – but everyone was so one-dimensional!

The main character (I don't even remember her name, she was that uninteresting) was forced to live with her aunt and uncle because her dad had died and her mom was unable to care for her. The entire book focuses on her waffling around about 1-whether or not she should pursue the love interest and 2-if she should report her abusive family. Oh, and apparently all the guys love her for some reasons unexplained to me.

The best friend likes boys and dressing up the main character in pink sweaters, and gets marginally upset about the abuse once in a while. That's it.

The story itself was too long and drawn out, especially for the pathetic non-ending, and honestly just started to bore me to death. I cry over lots of books, but this one really didn't have any effect on me. The only feeling the book evoked from me was "Whatever, who cares." The narrator herself doesn't have any reaction to any events she experiences. I'll admit the author did a good job on the abuse scenes – I was furious on her behalf (but the narrator herself didn't seem to feel it at all). The only reason I kept reading was to see if she could eventually overcome the abuse and hopefully get her life in order. But wow, she must channel her pent-up emotions into a love for decor, because she spends a RIDICULOUS amount of time describing houses. Everybody is rich and fabulous, the best friend has a three-story house and I apparently needed to know the amount of spiral staircases or whatever. I was disappointed that she spent so much time talking about the scenery when I couldn't even conjure up an image of the main girl in my head.

I definitely wouldn't recommend this or read it again.

Tessamari ♥Many Waters...♥ ~ Sweet Spot Book Blog says

4.75 Stars

I am one hot mess right now. One. Hot. Freaking. Mess. I seriously felt like I took a punch in the gut. I was so emotionally absorbed in this story; I barely had enough time to catch my breath when it just abruptly ended. WTF just happened?

I'm not a huge fan of any story that doesn't have a HEA. I knew going into this, that this was not going to end well, but I decided to pick it up anyway. However, I did purposely wait for Barely Breathing (Book #2) to come out before reading this. This put me and my fragile emotions through the wringer. I love stories that evoke all your feelings. This story had my heart aching, had me crying and even had me feeling like I was on cloud nine. Everything that makes us feel alive, this had it. I loved feeling like that and when it abruptly ended, I didn't care that it didn't end happy, I just cared that I *felt* so much. Does that make any sense?

Emma, Emma, Emma. You are one brave girl. Everything that happened to you in this story, I felt it. I felt the fear, the anxiety, the pain, and the heartache. But most of all, I felt your happiness because it didn't come often. You deserved everything good that came your way. You deserved having an awesome best friend in Sara, and you definitely deserve your happiness with the very sweet, loving, and extremely persistent, Evan.

Evan has now become one of my favorite book boyfriends. I freaking LOVE him. Even after Emma consistently tells him she just wants to be friends, he never gave up just being there for her. Ultimately, he wins the girl. Thank God! It seemed like it took forever, but man, it made it a hundred times sweeter.

Fair warning to those considering reading this: Yes, this story has teenage characters, but it's far from your usual YA. This book deals with abuse and the author does not hold back any punches. Emma's aunt is beyond cruel. She's a terrible person, with serious mental issues, and some of the scenes were extremely disturbing and very cringe-worthy. I couldn't fathom going through all that. It was insane. The story was achingly good and extremely well written. Highly recommend for those looking for an emotional read.

Eunice says

3.75 of 5 stars

I hate and love this book. There were parts that totally got me swooning and there were those that made me wanna throw up the book and curse. So here, I'll just enumerate the things I love and hate about this book.

Love:

1. The plot. It was interesting. With all the struggles, abuse and loss I was curious on how Emma would survive everything.
2. Sara. Emma's best friend. I so love her! Even though she's the most popular girl in school I saw how much she cares and loves Emma. They were the opposites but she's been really kind to her and it was genuine. I love that she cried when she saw Emma's bruises, I love her when she dresses Emma and run a make-over, I love her that she's gave Emma a phone just so she could check her out if she's okay. She's a lovely character.
3. Evan. Totally. LOL. Of course I love him! Who would not? He's the kind of guy you would really want to date. The perfect one. Really. Haha. Everything he did was so real and genuine. Absolutely swooning. And definitely...fictional. :/ But still, he's a really wonderful character.
4. Vivien. Evan's mom. I love her because she loves and cares for Emma. LOL. :DD

5. The last part before the ending. It was one of the happiest parts. And Evan's birthdaaayyy~! >:DD

Hate:

1. The story is effin' long. And I think some parts were a little irrelevant.
2. I just don't get why Emma doesn't want to report her aunt and that she needs to protect her cousins and that it would be worse if she did that. Well, at first I understand her. She knows what it feels to not to have a parent and she really love her cousins. But as the abuse grew I totally hate that she keeps on thinking like that. I know she's scared but...ughhh. That was way too much. It was really frustrating.
3. The Drew phase. I was so annoyed at this part, when Emma dated Drew. She dated Drew but before that she cannot date Evan? This phase was a bit long that I start to consider dropping the book. I sort of don't understand the essence.

Hate and Love:

1. Emma. I adore her but sometimes she's just seriously frustrating and annoying. I love her for she cares so much for her love ones. But I hate her for being so selfless. She was a wonderful character but sometimes I don't get her decisions.
2. The ending. It was heartwarming and heart breaking at the same time. I don't know really if I liked how it ended. What I love about the ending was that those few paragraphs of the epilogue was able to contain a great amount of emotion, and well, it was like a sucker punch. I get a bit teary at that part. Those paragraphs was able to cover up what Emma had been feeling throughout the story. However it was still heart breaking and disappointing. If I haven't checked if there's a sequel I would really think Emma died in the ending. I figured out the author wanted the story to be open-ended, to make the reader make their own conclusion. But I think that kind of ending does not fit for a realistic kind of novel. I've read books and watched movies which endings are open-ended, without definite conclusion, but most of it are mystery, paranormal or super naturals. Well, that's what I think. But its a relief to know that there would be a sequel. :))

So all in all, 3.75 of 5 stars for this book. Looking forward for the next book. :))

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