



Lovetorn

Kavita Daswani

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When Shalini's father gets a new job in L.A., she is torn away from her life in India and the boy to whom she's been betrothed since she was three. L.A. is so different, and Shalini dresses and talks all wrong. She isn't sure she'll survive high school in America without her fiancé, Vikram, and now she has to cope with her mom's homesickness and depression. A new friend, chill and confident Renuka, helps Shalini find her way and get up the courage to join the Food4Life club at school. But she gets more than just a friend when she meets Toby—she gets a major crush. Shalini thinks she loves Vikram, but he never made her feel like this.

In Lovetorn, Shalini discovers that your heart ultimately makes its own choices, even when it seems as if your destiny has already been chosen.

Author Kavita Daswani has always been fascinated by child marriages and betrothals, and this story of a traditional girl from India, who is exposed to so many more freedoms and experiences after being dropped in a completely alien culture, is a fresh and contemporary look at the subject.

Lovetorn Details

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Author : Kavita Daswani

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From Reader Review Lovetorn for online ebook

Aura says

Extremely sweet , written pretty well -the reason I love kavita daswanis work .

<3

Jessica Magdanz says

Personal Response:

Lovetorn is one of the best books I have ever read. It teaches you a lot about Indian culture and about their everyday lifestyle. It keeps you hooked and is always getting better. My favorite part is when Toby and Shalu are hiking through the woods. I laughed when Toby went running down the hill to catch Shalu's backpack that ended up in the creek. I can relate to Shalu because she has a little sister, and how she is torn between two things. I like how in the end how Shalu's family recreates the moment they had years before.

Summary:

It all starts off when Shalu, a sixteen year old girl from India, and her family come to America for two years. Her dad had gotten a better job, but nobody wanted to move. Their first days in America are miserable. Shalu gets picked on at school and her mom won't stop complaining and fighting with her dad. Her mom goes into depression, so the Shalu and her sister have to do all the chores. Shalu is really sad about leaving behind Vikram, her fiance since she was three(arranged by parents). Mr. Jeremy, her dads boss, comes over for dinner one night, The next day Shalu, her dad, and her sister go meet Mr. Jeremy's family. Renuka is his daughter that is Shalu's age. They end up becoming best friends, and Ranuka persuades Shalu to get involved with school. Shalu joins Food4Life, an organization that raises money for women to raise their families. They organize a concert to raise money, and she meets Toby. Toby is a flute player and the leader of the orchestra. Shalu develops a major crush on Toby, but almost doesn't like it because of Vikram. Toby and Shalu become close friends and go to summer school together. On the last day a group of people go hiking. Toby and Shalu walk together, and then Toby brings her off to his special place. He ends up kissing her, but she pulls back and tells him about Vikram. Four days later Vikram shows up in America and surprises Shalu for a week. She shows him her new life, but he ends up seeing her with Toby at school. When she gets home they talk and he ends up saying that she is not engaged until she is ready to be. He leaves that night, and the next time she sees Toby she tells him. A week later her father brings the family to an ocean shore where they have been when they were little. Everyone is happy for the first time since they moved.

Recommendation:

I would recommend this book to anyone thirteen on up. There are cultural things that would be hard to understand if you were younger. If you like a romance or a culture book then this would be a good read. I give Lovetorn five out of five stars.

Clara says

Personal Response

Lovetorn was not exactly the type of book that I thought it was going to be. Even though it was a pretty easy book to follow, it seemed to be a very basic romance. One of the things that I did not expect was that the characters were mainly from India. With that being said, the novel gave me some perspective on the Indian

life that I did not know from the beginning. Altogether, *Lovetorn* was a fairly decent book, but it is not something that I would like to read again.

Plot Summary

Lovetorn's characters cause the book to have separate places in the world to explore. Shalini and her family are originally from India but they moved to America due to her father's job change. Starting in India, Shalini lived in a house with about 30 of her relatives. This meant that finding a friend in school would not be very difficult due to the fact that she lives with most of her classmates. By the age of 3, she was already engaged to a family friend's son who was 6 at the time. When Shalini, her sister, and her parents moved to America, she was farther away from her relatives than she has ever been in her life. Throughout the book, Shalini could not seem to find a good friend, but her sister got along easily with her classmates. Later on though she finds a lovely guy that plays the flute and is semi-popular. She finds him when planning a fundraiser for the poor back in India. Eventually her fiance found out about the flutist and flipped out. Though the children in the novel could possibly find someone to get along with, their mother is a whole different story. Shalini's mother did not want to move to America in the first place, which caused her to hate it upon first glance. She had depression from the move and was not adapting to it whatsoever. After taking multiple prescriptions and going to therapy sessions, nothing had seemed to work. Altogether, *Lovetorn* had plenty of ups and downs to make it interesting.

Recommendation

I would recommend this book to eighth graders and up, but in the end I would not recommend this novel to many people. It would not be my first choice of a romance novel. Also, if you were to read this book having very basic knowledge about the Indian culture helps. This would allow you to sort of follow the parts where they talk about India. Overall, *Lovetorn* was not my favorite book, but if someone wants a basic romance with some cultural parts to it, this novel would qualify.

Christina (Reading Extensively) says

Lovetorn on the surface sounds like a romance with a love triangle however the novel focuses more on Shalini and her family than on romantic relationships. Toby doesn't even appear until more than halfway through the story. When he does show up, he does not make enough of an impression. Readers who pick up this book solely for the romantic aspect might find themselves disappointed but I am glad that the author chose to spend so much time on other things. The portrayal of the culture shock and the adjustments her family must make are well portrayed. I liked seeing how Shalini grew and changed from the dutiful girl she was in India to someone who makes her own decisions.

Readers may not agree with arranged marriages for children but the author does a good job of making sure it is written with sensitivity. I also liked how Vikram was not painted as a bad option. He genuinely cares for Shalini and loves her. The immigrant experience is central to the novel and I think it was depicted believably with both the exciting opportunities as well as the fears and the struggles to fit in. I was also pleased with the ending which felt realistic. The one weakness of the book is Shalini's relationship with Toby. It might serve as an important catalyst in Shalini's growth as a person but it seemed like instant infatuation and I didn't like seeing Shalini become so boy crazy for Toby after months of pining for Vikram. Thankfully the strengths of the novel outweighed the weaknesses for me. I would suggest this to fans of Neesha Meminger, Anjali Banerjee, and Mitali Perkins.

Readalikes: *Jazz in Love* by Neesha Meminger, *Blue Jasmine* by Kashmiri Sheth, *Shine*, *Coconut Moon* by Neesha Meminger, *Maya Running* by Anjali Banerjee, *Koyal Dark*, *Mango Sweet* by Kashmiri Sheth

Note: I read an ARC of this book courtesy of Around the World ARC Tours in exchange for an honest review

Jennifer Wrage says

Through this book I learned a lot about Indian culture in a simple, unobtrusive way. The protagonist, Shalini, struggled with first love as many 16 year olds do. Her thoughts and feelings were believable. It also touched on what it is like to live with someone with depression. Students who have moved and had trouble fitting in could certainly identify with Shalini.

Pamela Kramer says

Lovetorn by Kavita Daswani is the young adult book for those whose mothers love books by Shobhan Bantwal, the wonderful author of books (like *The Full Moon Bride*) about love that either are set in India or feature families from India.

In Lovetorn, Shalini, her mother and her sister have just arrived in the United States to be with their father. He is excited and proud of the job he was hired to do, and he plans to live and work in the USA for two years and then return to India to success and much respect.

Shalini's younger sister has no problem acclimating and making friends. It's not so easy for Shalini, and her first few weeks in high school are very unpleasant. Other students make fun of her clothes, her accent, and her unibrow.

It's only when she meets a girl of Indian descent (whose father is friends with Shalini's father's boss) that Shalini makes a true friend. Renuka helps Shalini adjust to American customs and encourages her to find her own niche at school.

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Peg says

Lovetorn by Kavita Daswani was provided to me free-of-charge as an Uncorrected Proof from GoodReads, FirstReads. This is a young adult novel which presents an educational opportunity to learn about the customs and traditions of India. I found it to be interesting since I know very little about India. A nice touch was the glossary found at the back of the book which was very helpful since some, but not a lot, of the words in the book were not in English. It was also refreshing that not a single character was a vampire, a werewolf or a demon!

The main character, Shalini, a 16-year-old high school student, is the narrator. She tells her story of moving to Los Angeles with her family and how hard it is to fit in at the new school, make new friends, know how to

dress, and to cope with all the other changes she and her family must go through. Her 11-year-old sister does well but her mother is unable to adjust and descends into clinical depression which is extremely hard on the rest of the family. Her father tries to take charge but it is difficult for him since he has a new job, a sick wife and two daughters. Shalini has to learn to make her own choices and decisions which had always been made for her in the past. She has been engaged to Vikram since she was 3-years-old and misses him very much even though they are in constant contact. When Shalini meets Toby, she starts to doubt her love for Vikram. She questions her future - exactly what a 16-year-old girl should do!

This novel is more about a teenager learning to live in a new country and putting aside some of Indian ways than it is about her romantic life. The ending seemed rushed and left the way open for a follow-up novel.

Faith Wisniewski says

Resub

Name: Faith Wisniewski

Book title: Lovetorn

Personal Response:

Personally I did not like *Lovetorn*. It was very boring and it felt like it took me forever just to read one page. I also did not relate to this book at all. There is no romance or big drama in the book, also the author is not very descriptive.

Summary:

Lovetorn is a book about a fifteen year old girl named Shalini. Shalini moved to America from India because of her father's job. Shalini and her family have to spend a year in America.(view spoiler) Sent Shalini eventually has to attend school, where she really stands out. Because of her different culture, the kids in her class constantly pick on her and make her miserable. Along the way, Shalini makes a friend through her dad. Even though they were set up the girls get along very well and Renuka helps Shalini become more American. Shalini never mentioned her fiance. Shalini was promised to marry Vikram. Their parents worked out the deal when Shalini was three. Moving to America opened up a new window. Boys and girls date can talk freely with one another. Shalini met a boy that she now thinks she might be in love with. (view spoiler)

Recommendation:

I would recommend *Lovetorn* to a younger audience of girls. There is nothing graphic or too descriptive in this book. The most they do is hold hands.

Anastasia L. says

Shalini is a girl that was born into a traditional indian family and was engaged to her fianc'e at the age of three. When her dad gets a job in Los angeles , her life crumbles. her mom becomes depressed and she is having a hard time at school and mostly of all, she misses her love . Over the months life gets better until she meets Toby, A prodigious flute player and she instantly falls in love but she goes into the most toughest decision of her life,disappoint her family over a boy or stay with her first love.

I thought was ok. It was not really a love story because Toby does not come in until the last ten chapters and it was mostly focused on her family and her. My favorite thing about this book is that over the book her

feelings change for her fiance and later she realizes that what her life has she becomes and she quotes "I hate what has become of my sane, planned, prepared life" . In the beginning, she depends on her fianc'e and her family but once she moves to America hse becomes more independent and less reliable on people. I would recommend this book to anyone that enjoys watching people going throu a quiet transition .

Shivangi Rai says

The reason for me loving this book was it reflected my story

Kat (Lost in Neverland) says

3.5 Stars, really good!

I got this book free as an uncorrected proof from Goodreads Giveaways, it's actual release date is 1-17-12.

Shalini has lived in India her whole life, she was born, raised, and engaged there. Her father gets a once-in-a-lifetime job in Los Angeles, America, where she moves along with her sister, and mother. Shalini's been engaged since she was three years old, to her handsome Indian friend/love Vikram.

The beginning and middle of the book is quite depressing, to say the least. Shalini is missing her fiance, she doesn't fit in at her new school, her mother is depressed and homesick...Joining Food4Life, a charity at her school, seems like her last resort.

In Food4Life, not only does she finally fit in somewhere, she meets the shmexy flute player, Toby. She finds herself torn (pun intended) between her fiance who's over nine thousand miles away, but still talks to several times a week, and the new boy who she can't get out of her mind.

I found Toby and Shalini's relationship too fast, like why is she falling for this boy so fast? She's been in America (Los Angeles!) for eight months, and she suddenly sees a rich and cute boy? Half of the male population in Los Angeles must be rich and cute! Anyways...

A lot of the book is about Shalini and her family, her supporting father, her depressed mother, and her sister, who's adjusting much more than Shalini is. Her mother's homesickness got really old towards the end of the book, I felt myself wanting to grab her mother by the shoulders and say "Get. Over. It. It's been almost a year!" Maybe I don't understand because I've never been thrust away from my culture and home, being forced to move into another country.

When Toby finally started to like Shalini, it was kinda weird, because some of the things he said weren't things a teenage boy would say. Like randomly saying that Shalini's 'cute' in the middle of a conversation, and the reason she is, is because she 'cares about things'.

His exact words "You care about people. I think that's kinda hot."

Okay. Shalini feels embarrassed at that point, which I don't blame her.

Alright, the good marks;

It was really refreshing to get away from the werewolves, demons, and dystopias of the modern-day YA novel. This book felt real, not imaginary and magical. It was real in the way it was kind of depressing...okay, A LOT depressing at times.

I learned a lot about Indian culture and many different words and their meanings. (thanks to the glossary at the end of the book)

Slight Spoilers in here

The ending was my favorite part, because it was really interesting compared to the rest of the book, which mostly felt like 'The daily life of Shalini'. For some reason, I really liked the ending. No, she doesn't get swept off her feet by her beloved Vikram, or get a romantic kiss from her secret love Toby. I felt so bad for Vikram in the end, when he leaves heartbroken. Well, he also left Shalini heartbroken, but she got over it...after three days of crying into her pillow. She still remained friends with Toby, and that about wraps it up. It leaves room for expansion, I almost wish it were longer, but since Vikram is gone again, it would have probably gotten boring and back to the 'Daily Life of Shalini'. Except with Toby making more appearances.

Personally, I wish she would stay with Vikram. He's so sweet, and he loves her. They've been together for thirteen years, she shouldn't throw all that away over one rich L.A. boy, who has a whole lot of girls he could happily date. Toby's sweet too, but I just like Vikram. ;)

Thank you to Goodreads Giveaways and HarperTeen for my ARC copy of the book!

Pooja Dimba says

Lovetorn by Kavita Daswani disappointed me from the beginning. The writing style is plain and has no uniqueness to it at all. Similar to other books about girls of Asian descent, they always fall for guys who are well, not Asian. Kind of disappointing, since every book I read about them has the same outcome. I found the main character Shalini to be really naive and well, stupid. She fell in love with her fiance Vikram but then comes to America and realized what love really is when she meets Toby. I really hoped she would have stuck with Vikram but I guess she liked the boring and monotone Toby more. The ending was pretty abrupt and confusing, like all of a sudden her mom came over her severe depression and they were all a happy family. One thing that really bugged me about this book is the actual school Shalini goes to. I mean first of all kids don't really act like that in high school. The Halloween scenes were really annoying because most of the time only 1/4 of the students actually dress up for Halloween. Also about the teasing of Indians at school for facial hair, dress style, etc ... it doesn't happen as much as she made it seem.

Overall I thought most of the characters in this book were dull and one dimensional. Most of them, including the main character Shalini, lacked personality. Definitely not worth reading again.

Si Yun says

This is story of a girl from India, named Shalini is engaged to a boy 3 years older than her since she was 3 and really loves him. But because of her father's job, she had to leave him and move to the states. At first she didn't feel too comfortable, but later, she started to have a crush on someone else, a feeling and emotion she has never had before. I gave this book only 3 stars because I think that this book is not too bad, the plot is a bit too normal and simple in which is was not that exciting and fun, but what is really good about this book is that it is really meaningful, and can teach people lessons. In this book, I think the theme is for people more mature than others it is because it is talking about relationships and love between 2 people. This book is a great read through to chill with!

Chrissy says

I became interested in reading *Lovetorn* by Kavita Daswani because of the multicultural aspect. I love reading about other cultures and I think it's important to have more YA books on the market that incorporate diverse characters. For that reason, I was super excited to read *Lovetorn*. Unfortunately, I wasn't completely satisfied with it. It has some great aspects, but overall, I wanted a little more.

I'll discuss the good points first. The multicultural aspect was very well done. I have basic knowledge of some Indian customs and culture, but this book provided a lot more information without sounding like a tutorial. I thought the storyline itself was an interesting idea. An Indian teenage girl who is already engaged moves to America and begins to wonder about her future and her options. This seems natural and plays out organically. Her relationships with friends, family, and loved ones change at a reasonable pace.

I also appreciated how Daswani describes the reactions to the move of all family members. Each member has a different experience transitioning, and I think they are all reasonable given the circumstances and ages of each person. They all go through a journey which impacts each other. Unlike some other YA novels, each family member is important to the plot and overall story. No Disappearing Parent Syndrome here.

Clearly, there's lots of good stuff in this novel. Unfortunately, there were also aspects I didn't like. First, I thought some of the relationships between the smaller characters developed unrealistically. While changes in the family members were gradual and organic, the friendships, social enemies, and crush relationships did not develop at a natural pace (in my opinion). This might sound strange, but the characters turned out too nice. Even the mean girls, who were really mean, came out sounding too nice by the end. The crush was the most realistic in my view.

Second, I didn't know who to root for. Maybe it's just me, but when there's going to be some kind of love triangle, I like to know who I should be rooting for and the reasons why. I had a sense that maybe I should root for the new guy because he's a new guy, but I really liked what I'd read about Vikram. Part of me really wanted her to stay with him, even though I wasn't sure how that would turn out. This is purely personal preference, so it may not bother other readers.

Third, and this is really, really nitpicky, there was misinformation about the psychologist. Psychologists can't prescribe medications. Psychiatrists can. This very small distinction bothers me purely because it's a common misconception and I'm in the field of psychology. By all means, this did not ruin the book for me, but it is irritating when the facts aren't right.

So, overall, *Lovetorn* was an enjoyable read. I just wish I'd gotten a little more from the novel. It's definitely worth the read, especially if you're interested in reading about other cultures.

>b?Final thoughts: Borrow.

Katherine Wren says

This was a cute book. I read it not for my own enjoyment or choice, but to preview it for my students before putting it in my classroom library. I'm always trying to find diverse characters, and I feel like my romance genre books are lacking in diversity.

I enjoyed the immigrant experience in this book. I think that is the book's best quality. The way Kavita Daswani writes about India makes me feel like I am there. Then, the way she writes about leaving India makes me feel as if I have left a beloved homeland behind as well, just like the character Shalini.

The romance in this book is very soft and understated. There's nothing more than a quick kiss, so I feel very comfortable with this book in my classroom library. I look forward to recommending it when I teach about India and to my romance readers in general.
