



## **When I Knew You**

*K.E. Payne*

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When Ash Wells and Nat Braithwaite are thrown together after seventeen years apart, old resentments and passions are rekindled. The days of their heady teenage relationship are long gone—or are they? As they put aside their differences to honor the memory of a friend, Ash and Nat learn that sometimes, to build a future, you have to be willing to let go of the past.

## **When I Knew You Details**

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Author : K.E. Payne

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## From Reader Review When I Knew You for online ebook

### Tiff says

When I Knew You by KE Payne is angst filled roller coaster. When I say angst, let me clarify, this is the ultimate angst fest and it was so good.

Ashley "Ash" Wells runs a tourist boat tour in Cornwall (yup in the UK). She never intended to come back to her hometown of London, but the death of her childhood best friend forces her hand. Ash has not returned to London since she fled the city when she was eighteen. Why did she run? Her girlfriend, Natalie Braithwaite broke her heart, and Ash has never recovered.

Dr. Natalie "Nat" Braithwaite is a well respected, highly skilled heart surgeon. You would think she has it all, great career, tons of money, but no. While Nat may look like her would be ideal, she is literally coming apart at the seams. Panic attacks have left her in a constant state of stress and anxiety. Her one regret in life, letting her parents talk her into breaking up with Ash all those years ago.

This angst fest was a delight to read. It's well written, the characters are interesting, and KE Payne really lets the reader feel their pain. These two ladies have one foot in the past and one in the present. Their breakup sixteen years ago has defined their lives in so many ways. So, when their friend that passed on, Livvy, asks them to fulfill her final wishes. They have no choice but to confront each other, no the pain they both carry.

Great book, I thoroughly enjoyed reading Ash and Nat's journey. I love a good amount of angst in my stories, so this was spot on a fantastic way to spend some downtime. I will say, the angsty goes way into the book, 80-plus percent. So, if that's not your thing you may become frustrated. I thoroughly loved it, but maybe I'm just a weirdo though (no way I'm totally hip & cool).

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### Marilyn says

I enjoyed listening to this book on my commute. It is well written, the characters were likable and the adventures around London and Cornwall were entertaining. As the other reviews have mentioned, it is notably angsty.

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### Kate says

When I read the other reviews about this book being angst filled I had my doubts about reading it. I thought I didn't like angst filled books but I think they've grown on me.

17 years after a not so nice break up Nat and Ash are thrown together after a close friends death. In order to follow this friends last wishes they are going to have to spend a lot of time together.

This is angst filled, there's no doubt about it. Watching both of these women attempting to work through past issues in order to move forward was tough. Especially Ash who didn't see the break up coming and who's university and planned out life was thrown completely off course. Nat has her own family and self esteem issues, add all of this together and you have angst.

The characters of this book were really well developed, I even felt like I knew Livvy who had passed away. The romance was nicely done and I'd definitely recommend it.

ARC received from publisher via NetGalley

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## Alex says

What happens when you substitute extreme teenage angst for a perfectly good story? "When I knew you" happens. (TLDR: 35year olds behaving like 14year olds, - read this for the angst only.) Unless you are a major fan of angst you REALLY won't like this. I love angst and my YA reads are usually riddled with this stuff, but I still found it somewhat boring due to lack of an interesting story. With that said, I did like it. It's just a huge angst-y overkill, and if all of this sound enticing to you, this is your kind of read!

It's a fragile 3star, somewhere in the middle I found myself wanting it to just be over already since little to nothing ever happens. Near the end Chloe asks "what happened", Ash says "long story." It really isn't though, it's an incredibly short story(view spoiler) and that sums it up pretty nicely. Because it's about the only thing that happens in the book. Which says a lot about the lacking story. With nothing further to fuel the story or the angst train that's so wholly overdone to little effect, the story turns plain boring. It runs on an empty fuel tank so to speak. That said, I liked some of the book. The sad reminiscing start was good and the ending left me feeling decent, but otherwise it felt lacking.

Not really having grown apart after 16years, it's also evident they never grew up either as they both behave like teenagers through the entire (lack of) story. The book is filled with angst all the way, but it's rather mild, and far from heart-wrenching. It's more of a small ache that eventually proves more annoying than painful. It's way too repetitive with angst conclusions all over, and with no development to really spark them so it feels a little redundant. It forms a really repetitive and predictable pattern that always starts in a positive situation that for no reason spirals into negative thought patterns as if both protagonists are troubled with severe depression. Only Nat has the backstory for anxiety and even then there is no triggers, it just goes off; I was going to say "willy-nilly," but at the end of each perspective switch is rather more correct... Again, extremely predictable.

I'm not a fan of perspective switching, it often takes away anticipation and mystery, always knowing the state of mind of the other, especially when its done TWICE a chapter, killing the suspense. On top of this all the talk about them knowing each other is borderline delusional, they wouldn't know a spark between themselves if the other one was doused in gasoline and set on fire. After love confessions and right-out pleads for the other to stay they still turn 180 and go all "next week she will be gone, not giving me a second thought." It got even more annoying when the book ironically addressed this itself (at p233) as Gabe put it: "It's time you grew up, you two aren't teenagers anymore." There is NO complexity what so ever apart from extreme teenage level romance angst.

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## Eva says

You should not expect a fair review from me this time, because I'm highly partial to angsty love stories. Anyway, I'll do my best in giving you an honest review.

I don't understand romance without angst. Most of the times, stories that have no angst seem fluffy to me,

and hardly credible, because we all know how rare love is and much it hurts. However writing an angsty love story is neither an easy task, because angst needs also to be credible and justified.

While this book was no masterpiece, I found myself completely captured by this lovely love story. I enjoyed the fact that the main characters were sweetly flawed and I enjoyed the slow pace settled by author through the series of letters.

The only complaint I have, as regards this book, is the fact that we know almost nothing about the secondary characters, which is specially critical if we bear in mind that that we hardly know anything about Livvy or her daughter Chloe who are the main reason behind the letters and our couple's second chance at love.

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### **Diane Wallace says**

Ok writing but i was a little confuse at times with the way this storyline was heading. Way too long in the details and even long dialogues..nay on their chemistry and the storytelling. Puzzling storyline where someone breaks up back when they were 18 years old, then try to get back together now that they are older like 30 years--i got so lost in this story..

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### **Pippa says**

Ash Wells and Nat Braithwaite were lovers at high school, their intense friendship rounded out by a third, Livvy. The trio were known as the Untouchables, because nothing ever got in the way of their friendship. In the last week of school however, Nat, pushed by her parents, ended her grand passion with Ash, determined to focus on her studies to become a surgeon. Destroyed by the love of her life, Ash tanked her finals and bolted overseas.

Seventeen years later, and Ash and Nat meet at Livvy's funeral. The heat is still there, but so is the pain and the anger. Both Ash and Nat appear to be successful in their own lives, but perhaps things are more complicated than that.

This was a much more clever book than I anticipated. The characters were gutsy and intelligent, and there was definite heat generated on the page between them. The authors have created a much more sympathetic character in Ash, who is strong and bold. I had a bit of trouble with the speed at which she seemed to lose such intense anger, but perhaps she's a better person than me. And Nat did come across as fairly selfish at the start, but the authors were clever in how they opened up the possibilities between the characters. The plotting was clear, I really liked Ash, and the story worked for the characters.

This was fun to read, and a clever, entertaining diversion.

Advanced reading copy provided by NetGallery for an honest review.

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### **Netty says**

Livvy was my favourite character

## **M. Ullrich says**

First, let me start by saying that I'd like to give this book 4.5 stars, but I can't.

I love any book that speaks of a past together, one that tells of characters sweet and sour memories. So of course *When I Knew You* hit a very soft spot in my heart. What a sweet story of old friendships, broken hearts, and misconceptions of people you truly thought you knew. This book delved into issues I believe many people deal with: unrealistic expectations, anxieties, feeling as if you'll never be good enough- this story was so relatable at times, I almost found it therapeutic in a way. Every character, even the deceased one, was developed well and were entertaining. The only reason I rounded down as opposed to up with my half-star, was because of the constant tug of war going on between the characters. That's purely a personal preference though. It was very back and forth between Ash and Nat, which many readers may find appealing, but for me it's not my preferred play of conflict. Other than that, I felt transported to England, I felt loss, I felt love, and I felt like slapping these two women upside the head!

I would gladly and highly recommend this book to any romance reader. The biggest problem I face now is trying to shake the accent that has managed to wedge its way into my subconscious. Tally ho!

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## **Catherine says**

I really enjoyed this read despite the fact that it is 90% angst. K.E.Payne did a fantastic job to create two likable characters with realistic self doubt. What I really liked about this book was that we were shown the point of view from both characters who are strong and successful women but have a huge amount self doubt when it comes to their relationship. This was displayed so well by having one character see how beautiful the other was whilst the other is thinking how plain they are. I think that is a big part of love seeing all the best parts of a person and K.E.Payne did a fantastic job displaying this.

I loved the story line concept and found myself not wanting to put the book down wanting to know what the next wish was. I thought all the secondary characters were great additions to the book. I would have liked to see Chloe at the end as I felt she was such an important part of the journey these two women have taken to find each other again.

Great book and if you can stick out the angst it is definitely enjoyable!

I was given this book by NetGalley for an honest review.

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## **Jem says**

It's very easy to decide whether this book is for you or not. If you love angst--intense, overpowering and maddeningly drawn-out angst--then you are in for one of the most heart-squeezing, chest-aching rides of your life. Of course, you'll also need the patience of Job to enjoy it. :)

I was piqued by the book's rather unusual premise. Two former and long-estranged lovers Ash and Nat, meet up once again after not seeing each other for 16 years...at the funeral of their mutual best friend Livvy. Livvy

left each of them a series of her last 'wishes'--basically a bucket list of things that they had at one time, planned to do when the three of them were still in their teens and virtually inseparable. To honor her wishes, Ash and Nat are to accomplish the tasks set forth in the bucket list with Livvy's teenage daughter Chloe.

But Ash and Nat aren't just any old pair of ex-lovers. Their breakup or more accurately, Nat's breakup with Ash had been one of the most devastating I've ever read in lesfic. It completely shattered all of Ash's dreams, while Nat has seemingly gone on to become a very successful doctor with a lengthy trail of letters after her name. Just imagine the extreme unresolved emotional baggage that these two have been carrying around for the past 16 years (anger for Ash and guilt for Nat), and you can just imagine how much angst-lovers are in for a treat. :) Now that Livvy has posthumously guilt-tripped the two into chaperoning Chloe around London and rural Cornwall, they have no choice but to face their old demons and we readers are in for the ultimate angst-trip of our lives.

At this point I'm pretty sure I've either sold you on the book or repelled you completely. So the rest of my review won't really matter anymore except for people who've actually read the book. So it all goes under the (view spoiler)

4.4 stars

ARC from Netgalley / BSB

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~ \* **K E L L I E** \* ~ says

WOW – When I Knew You would have to take the gold medal for ‘most angst in a novel’ that I’ve ever read. I’m usually not a fan of angst filled novels - my usual preference is fluffy romances where I can float away and immerse myself into the sappy storyline for a few feel good hours. Don’t get me wrong, I completely immersed myself into When I Knew You, just in a different way. Who knew I’d actually love such an angst filled book – I certainly didn’t.

Ash Wells and Nat Braithwaite dated in high school, however their relationship didn’t end well. Nat remained in London, went to medical school and became a doctor like she (and Ash) had always planned. Deeply hurt and in pain, Ash failed her final exams and took off travelling. She threw her dreams and plans of becoming a doctor to the wind and got as far away from London as she could. She finally settled in Cornwall in an old fisherman’s cottage, overlooking the sea.

Seventeen years after their break up both ladies attend the funeral of their other best friend, Livvy Fancourt, and during the following days discover Livvy has a plan for them. She would like them to take her 14yo daughter, Chloe, and complete eight wishes (four in London and four in Cornwall) from the ‘wish list’ the three best friends put together when they were teenagers. Ash and Nat reluctantly agree to honor the wishes of their late friend and that’s where the adventure begins...

I love, love, loved this story and the characters. The book was well written and the emotion, pain and love leapt off the pages. Call me cold-hearted or whatever – I usually don’t cry in books. However, this one had me wiping away a few stray tears, especially reading Livvy’s letters to ‘Flash’ (Ash) and ‘Crackles’ (Nat) at the beginning of the book. Yes, only a few pages into the book and I was reaching for the tissue box! Well done, Ms Payne, well done!

If you love angst filled novels then you’ll have a field day with this one. It’s a great story well deserving of 5 stars! Bravo!

\*ARC provided by publisher via NetGalley\*

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## **Agirlcandream says**

Ashley and Natalie haven't spoken to each other for seventeen years, not since their relationship fell apart. Now their mutual best friend Livvy has died leaving a final request that will force Nat and Ash to work together to honour Livvy's wishes. Both have moved on with their lives with varying success. Forcing them together is going to open old wounds but Ash and Nat agree to set aside the past and accept Livvy's request.

\*\*\*Warning: There may be spoiler-ish comments in the following review. Read at your own risk\*\*

I liked the concept of this novel and enjoyed the story in spite of the mixed and often conflicting emotions rolling off the two leading ladies. They are on a quest to honour their late friend (view spoiler) but Ash and Natalie find themselves on a journey of discovery and hopefully some resolution to past wrongs. While the plot is entertaining, the character study drives the novel.

Natalie is a highly respected researcher, surgeon and a bundle of insecurities. I have come to expect the surgeons in my real and fictional (\*cough\* Radclyffe ) worlds to be arrogant, confident and at times detached. Here we have a woman about to return to general surgery yet she suffers from panic attacks. It twisted my brain a bit to imagine that the past has impacted her life to this degree and still she considers returning to the operating theatre. I love a complex character like Nat.

Ashley is an entertaining and eclectic character. She has remained true to her self in her need to behave and to think independently. She doesn't follow cultural norms, but lives her life wearing the clothes and attitude she chooses. She also cannot forgive or forget how devastated she was with Natalie's rejection of their love as teenagers. Cannot, will not, even when she weakens she is too stubborn to admit she still has feelings for Natalie. This does wear a bit thin and I found myself wanting to shake her occasionally, but that I assume was the author's intent.

Mixed emotional vibes aside, I love a book that begs to be picked up and read and When I Knew You was a pleasure to read. Whether I bought into the emotional rollercoaster experienced by our leading ladies or not, I really enjoyed the ride.

ARC provided with thanks by Bold Strokes Books via NetGalley for review.

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## **Pin says**

It is well known that angsty romances are not for everyone, but personally I like these stories where the protagonists really have to work hard through the pain and earn their happily ever after.

When I Knew You is a very angsty story -- one big lovely angst-fest -- so beware! For angst lovers this is a must read, because the "quality" of angst and heartfelt emotion in this book is among the most powerful I have read.

On top of that, the writing is very good, the plot interesting and unique (the eight wishes), and the characterization excellent -- every single character is well-developed and believable. Even the character who is no longer alive.

All in all, a great book, but not for everyone.  
4.5 stars

\*ARC provided by publisher via NetGalley\*

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### **Heinerway says**

If you love angst and second chance stories, then this is perfect for you.

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