



## What It Was Like

*Peter Seth*

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“It’s really a very simple story. What happened was this: I met this girl and did a very stupid thing. I fell in love. Hard. I know that to some people that makes me an idiot and a loser. What can I say? They’re right. I did some extremely foolish things; I’m the first to say it. And they’ve left me in jail and alone.”

So begins one of the most compelling, emotionally charged, and affecting novels you are likely to read this year.

It is the summer of 1968 and a young man takes a job at a camp in upstate New York before starting his first semester at Columbia University. There, he meets Rachel Price, a fellow counselor who is as beautiful as she is haunted. Their romance will burn with a passion neither of them has ever known before...a passion with the power to destroy.

In the tradition of *Endless Love* and *Gone Girl*, *What it was Like* is an intimate, raw, and revealing journey through the landscape of all-consuming love. It announces the debut of a remarkable storyteller.

## What It Was Like Details

Date : Published September 2nd 2014 by Story Plant, The

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Author : Peter Seth

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Genre : Fiction, Thriller

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## From Reader Review What It Was Like for online ebook

### Cherei says

"What it was like" by Peter Seth will take the young adult literary world by storm! This book is the 21st century generation's, "Catcher in the Rye"! A must read book for young adults! The book starts off in one of the most unique ways ever.. It was so different that I handed the book to my husband to read for just a second.. and after fifteen minutes had to yell at him to make him give it back! lol

The story is about a young man who falls in love.. and then.. starts down a path that anyone could easily fall into.. as they go down that rabbit hole of "love". Right from the beginning you know that the young man is in prison. You know that his life has been ruined. But, as you read.. you can easily see.. how love, and proving one's love.. can lead down a path of destruction.. that sometimes.. after a series of events.. can never be reversed. Never be righted.

It could happen to anyone.

That's what makes this book so good. One that every young adult should be required to read. One that will have a far reaching impact for generations to come. A tale.. that hopefully.. will save at least one young life.. from being forever ruined by those three little words, "I love you".

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### Mira says

Reading this was a chore. It didn't only drag on; it wore me out before anything had even happened. Of the 464 pages, I think about 200 pages - minimum - could have been edited out of it without losing anything even remotely important, at all.

Reading back through the notes that I had jotted down, I apparently was hooked by the first chapter. I hardly remember that at all, because all of that interest had quickly fallen away. It's just that simply nothing happened until the final fourth of the book. It wasn't suspense - it was just the same few sentiments repeated over, and over, and over. He may as well have been repeating the same few lines five hundred times: "I really miss her. I really want to call her. I haven't seen her in a whole two days. She is perfect. I want to see her. She is gorgeous. I want to see her. Those mean ol' grown-ups think I'm crazy but I just want to see her. I just really like her. When can I call her? I really miss her. She is beautiful. I miss her. Why are these grown-ups being so mean? I want to call her. When can I call her? I don't care about homework because I want to call her but these mean grown-ups won't let me." Imagine that for 300 pages.

Even when other topics were mentioned, which was rare, they were explained in extreme repetition for far too long where entire pages could be boiled down to a few lines: "Nanci is fat. She said hi but I just noticed she has fat legs. Also, fat arms. Also, she's huge. Also, everyone else is skinny. By the way, did I mention her fat legs?" (PARAPHRASING, of course) and every other time Nanci is mentioned throughout the book, her weight comes first. Forget likable protagonist, that's not the point of this book, but a readable protagonist would have been preferred.

And the pay-off, the ending... just wasn't enough. It wasn't worth it, and I hate to say that, but it was tiring with no thrill at the end. I just kept falling asleep.

It was just exhausting.

I admit that I bought this book in a sleepy haze with some free Kindle credits after seeing a comparison to

Gone Girl in the description. I actually went back to the listing to see who that liar was, but really, it's my fault.

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## **Cheryl says**

WOW!! WOW!! WOW!!!

It has been a few days since I read the last word and closed the back cover, before putting my thoughts in writing because it took me some time to process and reflect on what I had just finished reading.

From reading the back cover/synopsis and previous reviews, I knew that somewhere in these pages, an outcome was going to be tragic. And a love story was to be told.

But before I go any further, I received a copy of this book from the publisher, I am a member of The Story Plant's Spread the Word Initiative, with a little tease "It's both romantic and suspenseful, but it's not romantic suspense." However, please know, I was asked, in return for this copy, I would provide an honest review, which I will.

Did I say WOW??!! I still don't know where to start with this review because my head is still reeling.

It is a story of, to name a few elements, a first love, obsession, manipulation, parental love, friendships, boundaries, unconditional love and one life changing decision. Characters and settings will touch every reader and will evoke memories and emotions as one turns the pages. Gripping!! A page turner!!

I could not put this book down, reading into the early hours. Riveting!! And when I read the last word I was astounded. Is what I just read a fictional novel? Or was it based on truth? Was it an autobiography? Or is this debut author a masterful, first-rate storyteller that has my head reeling still? Outstanding!!

My prediction...in the coming days, weeks, months, this book will become a bestseller!!! And Peter Seth will be a familiar name in the literary world!! An extraordinary read!!! Bravo Mr. Seth!! And kudos to publisher, Lou Aronica, for discovering this brilliant author!!

I am definitely spreading the word on this book, and I'm sure, once you read it, you will be doing the same!!!

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## **Laurie Carlson says**

I LOVED THIS BOOK!!!!!! This was by FAR the BEST love story I have EVER read! 462 pages, and I read it in 2 days!

BRAVO to this author, Peter Seth!

I'm back now with my official review now! Here it is!

MY TAKE:

5+ Stars!

WOW! WHERE has this author been hiding??? This is an outstanding book! BRAVO! What a story! It is one I will never forget! I cannot sing enough praise about this book! This book captures your attention from the second you open the cover and start to read the very first page, to everything in-between, and all the way

to the end! You are not going to put this book down, and I truly mean it! You may be tired of hearing this same ole expression of 'I couldn't put this book down' a million times, but believe me when I say I could NOT put this book down, I truly mean that, and you will end up feeling the same way. I wanted to read this, I had to read this, I had to know what was happening next. I was obsessively reading this 462 page book in less than two days! (Yes, I lost sleep!) I wish it were even longer, the story was SO good! I was GLUED to the story inside this book!

What I am going to tell you about this book only touches the surface, and not all of it, either. There is a lot to this book, but first, let's start with how this book begins.

Briefly here, the book starts with an Editor's Note. It goes on to say it was discovered among the paperwork/belongings of a Supreme Court Judge who recently passed away after serving for twenty-eight years. It goes on to say, 'this manuscript has received minimal editing as they want to preserve the writer's grammar, pronunciation, spelling, capitalization, etc. It was deemed preferable to publish it with as little editorial tampering as possible, so that the voice of the perpetrator can be heard. There is no point in publishing a book with (sic) after every third sentence. WOW! Amazing, huh?! They wanted the true writer's voice to be heard.

With that being said, I looked on the side of the book to see if it said Fiction, and nope, I did not see it. Inside the in the first few pages it does say, "This book is a work of Fiction, and any relation to . . . ", the usual blurb that is in all Fiction books, but when you flip the page, you see a cover letter from this man's attorney in which he states this 'exhibit' is in advance of the appeal, in the interest of justice. (Quoting from the book.) It's meant as a supplement to the trial transcript, not a replacement for it, and the attorney also says this is a truer account of what happened.

Well, that sure got me questioning it as it seems so convincing! Even in the back of the book there is a Publisher's Note. It goes on to give a little more information about the manuscript, that the writer reviewed the galleys and this edition of the manuscript . . . Hmmm? I'm still wondering if this really is Fact or Fiction, or maybe a little of both? What a book! I guess you'll have to read this one for yourself to try and figure it out, "IF" you can. This might just be one of those stories we'll never know the truth about, but we sure can enjoy the ride this story gives us!

This young man tells us that he never got to tell the court 'his side of the story', and this is what this letter is about. He felt it unfair that no one allowed him to hear HIS voice, and his lawyer never let him take the stand to tell 'his' side of the story. There were reasons why the attorney's felt he should not tell his story, but he feels that was the wrong decision. He needs to tell what really happened, and this is his chance.

So he starts his story. As we read in the 'Description', he says the following:

“It’s really a very simple story. What happened was this: I met this girl and did a very stupid thing. I fell in love. Hard. I know that to some people that makes me an idiot and a loser. What can I say? They’re right. I did some extremely foolish things; I’m the first to say it. And they’ve left me in jail and alone.”

The first half of this book takes place at Mooncliff Summer Camp where he meets her and falls in love immediately. What can I say but I am a sucker for camp stories! I went to camp several times as a kid and I LOVED it! I lived for summers to come so I could go to camp! I could relate to everything in this book about camp! It brought back a lot of memories, too!

This story is narrated in his own voice, which was what he was after since he never got to tell it in the courtroom, but one strange thing is we never learn his name.

He had just graduated High School and it's the summer of 1968, the summer before his first year in college at Columbia. He had scholarships, so this is one smart young man! In the meantime, he looked around for a summer job to make some money to put away for school so he could study instead of having to worry about working a job, too. He ended getting hired as a camp counselor at Camp Mooncliff. He had never gone to camp as a kid, but he felt he could do the job. He would be in a cabin for eight weeks with kids ages 10-12, and he would also have a second Counselor in the cabin with the kids so they could help each other out. He arrived, got to his cabin, and met his fellow counselor named Stewie.

That same day the rest of the kids arrived one by one, groups of kids, and some stragglers, all as the busses arrived. They had their boys all together and were ready to go to the Mess Hall for their first get-together.

That night was when he saw her. Their eyes locked, then she looked away, flirtily. He was smitten! He asked Stewie who she was. Rachel Prince. Stewie told him to forget about her. She teases guys to death and nothing ever happens. No. He could not leave her alone. Four days later they officially met. They had been square dancing with their kids, and both left to go outside because they were so hot. They struck up a conversation, and that was IT! The beginning of their relationship.

The odd thing was the more people saw these two trying to hide their interest in each other and sneak around the camp usually at nighttime, the more the other counselors warned him about her. She's related to the owner, but they also said she was moody, self-centered, dangerous to be around, she was mean, etc., but they didn't give any further explanation. He didn't care. He was already in love with her. They had a lot of great times together at camp, and I really enjoyed this entire part of the book. I was just as sorry as the kids and other counselors were when summer had ended and everyone had to go home for school.

So he and Rachel continue their relationship. She is now a Senior in High School, and he is a Freshman at Columbia. The problem was going to be the distance from Columbia back to Long Island to Rachel's house. That proved to be true, but he came home on public transportation every single weekend. I was amazed by his diligence. His studies became difficult because he was not getting his homework done as she demanded his full attention.

Problems started to arise here and there. The trouble was with her family, her mother, especially, and then her mother's live-in boyfriend who became her step-father. They treated him like they didn't like him, and they confronted him a few times, too. They had their own issues and troubles of their own, mainly selfishness, but a lot of problems with Rachel, too, so they claimed. He always felt so sorry for her, the way she had been treated while growing up, and he could see it now, but he also saw a lot of problems with all of them. Still, Rachel always looked to him for comfort, but slowly some of this started to change.

The rest of their love story is for you to read. I am stopping here. There are a LOT of twists and turns to come. Some things are just crazy! I'll leave you with another quote from this book.

"How what started so innocently became so . . . un-innocent . . . how things became twisted - even now, after so much time has passed, my mind can't quite grasp all the events even over time. Time. Why am I suspicious of "hope?"

Get this book! You won't regret it! Soon you'll be singing the praises of this book, too! The writing is truly amazing; it's mesmerizing, holds your interest sentence by sentence. The story itself is full, interesting, written really, really well. I can truly see this becoming a Bestseller as long as people know this book is out there! I know I'll be suggesting this book to everyone I can! (I already have been!) I'll admit I have read some great Psychological Thrillers, but this book - this book TRUMPS THEM ALL!

I have a little funny story about this book and how I got it. This book caught my attention at NetGalley, and I requested it from the publisher, The Story Plant, to read and review it. I am also a part of this same Publisher's program which is called 'Spread the Word Initiative'. Guess what? I ALSO got a copy of this book in the mail from The Story Plant a day or two AFTER I requested it at NetGalley! Actually, it turned out to be an advantage to have both the ebook AND the paperback, really! When I had to do things around the house I could not ignore, I carried my Kindle with me so I could keep on reading. When I sat down, I picked up the paperback book! It was great! So when I say I was 'glued to this book', I literally was! It was with me in every possible way!

One more thing. I usually always read ebooks, but I would highly suggest purchasing the paperback copy of this book so you can see the full page letters from the attorneys. They looked so convincingly real! With the ebook, they don't make as much of an impact as they did in the book. Enjoy reading this one! You won't forget this book anytime soon! It stays with you long after you are done!

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**Deanne says**

Only turned the pages of this book quickly to skip the long, overwritten chapters full of way too many details. I was halfway through the book and nothing significant had happened. Not my idea of a "page turner"!

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### **Diane Moyle says**

WOW!!!I just finished this book and what a page turner. This is the debut novel from author Peter Seth and I couldn't put it down. It is a story of a shy middle-class young man who works at a youth camp during the summer before he starts his college career at Columbia. There, he encounters his first true love, Rachael. She is a rich, spoiled manipulative, soon to be a high school senior who wraps his heart and mind around her finger. It starts off like other typical novels that you have read but that's where it ends. Just when you think you know where the story is headed it changes directions. It's a roller coaster ride to the very last page

The story is told in the first person narrative style. The author does an amazing job with this approach. You are inside the young man's mind from page one. You can almost hear his voice as you read the story. You are taken back to your own youth and the strong feelings that your first true love evoked. Maybe it was just the mother in me but I found myself thinking, Please stop and think about what you are doing! Then as you brace yourself for one outcome, a curve is thrown and you are left thinking..Oh my, I didn't see that coming!!!

I highly recommend this book but offer this warning...be careful because you won't want to put it down until the last page is turned!

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### **Nourhan says**

Boringly captivating, the kind of book where you just want to know what happened next and get it over with.

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### **Marisa Turpin says**

A very fast paced read and hard to put down. It is clear from the beginning that it's not going to end well because the main character is writing his side of the story from jail. We never learn his name, but his girlfriend's name (Rachel) is used a lot. He is clearly in over his head with her and is told so numerous times by numerous people. But like any young guy (or girl) in love, he doesn't listen. Rachel is described as beautiful throughout the book, and as far as I could see, that is ALL she had going for her. She was a narcissistic, whiney, rich bitch. About halfway through I was really hoping that he was in jail because he killed her. I was ready for her complaining to stop. And I didn't want to hear about "the Zone" anymore, either. Further, there needed to be more sex (like a description of why it was so great in order to justify his insanity) and at least a little cursing. The twin towers were mentioned at one point, but they weren't even completed until the early 70's, and this book was set in the 1960's. I think it could have been shortened by about 100 pages and nothing would have been lost. Or just maybe I am getting way too picky about my books these days. It WAS a compelling read because I finished it within a 24 hour period. But I didn't like a single character in it.

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## **Denise MacDonald says**

These days, when a book is compared to being like another hit book I usually don't pick it up. But this book was provided as an ARC from NeT Galley and it sounded interesting, so even though it was compared to *Gone Girl* in the blurb, I downloaded it anyway.

The idea of the book was good, but it seemed like there was something missing through out the entire story. I was waiting for the big reveal and there was none. I get that it was about an all consuming love, a young obsession that lead to a tragic end. There seemed to be a piece of Rachel that was left out or not fully developed. I believe this book could have been great, if only there was more of Rachel's true self in the book. Maybe having a few chapters from her point of view would have given the reader a better understanding of where exactly she was coming from. The relationship between Rachel and her parents needed more explaining, because, honestly, it didn't seem to warrant the over the top negativity described in the book. There was also a lot left unexplained- a lot of what seemed like foreshadowing that was never followed through on. For example, at the end of camp, the narrator's friend makes a statement along the lines of "get in touch with me and I'll tell you what really happened this summer." That seemed like it was going to be a major part of the story, however that character was never mentioned again. There were also incidents where people gave vague warnings or strange comments that were never followed up on later in the book. I found myself skimming quite a bit because there was a lot of unnecessary description and even entire scenes that were not needed. To me, it seemed like the author dwelled on the unimportant and completely left out things that were important.

Overall, it was okay. I didn't enjoy it as much as I had hoped I would.

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## **sue says**

I had such high hopes for this story. I really wanted to love it. I really tried to get into this but it was such a hard struggle at the beginning. I kept on going though in the hope that I would see the light of where the author Peter Seth was going with this.

I get it. I get the love story in it, I get the obsession, but what I didn't get was the hope for something to be revealed, I kept saying to myself "Right, something is going to go BANG soon and its all going to take off" I repeated that so many times when it seemed we were leading somewhere, alas, it never happened for me.

Its well written, but I just don't see any real climax there.

Unless the climax was where he was lusting after her, I really couldn't say he was 'madly in love' how could you? but yes, obsessive compulsive behavior leading into a false entrapment of belief this is 'love'? Maybe? I just didn't see it probable.

*I received my copy from The Story Plant via Net Galley in exchanged for an unbiased and honest review on my part*

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## **Jay Phillippi says**

In simplest form this is "boy meets girl and eventually it all goes terribly wrong". Same basic story line as

Romeo and Juliet. (Spoiler- this isn't R&J).

The English have this wonderful concept of the "busman's holiday". In simplest form it means that you spend your vacation doing something related or similar to what you do for a living. So a busman (bus driver) would go on a bus tour, a teacher would take classes, etc. As a youth minister, reading this book was something of a busman's holiday for me. It's about teenagers and the convoluted lives they can lead when life runs a little too far ahead of their ability to cope.

Sadly, this means that there was very little mystery about "what happens next" for me. Within a hundred pages I knew the ending, at least in broad strokes. The only question was whether it was going to be Romeo and Juliet, or Charlie Starkweather and Caril Ann Fugate. Consequently most of my reading time consisted of watching the adults in the story screw up the lives of these two young people over and over and over. The camp director, Rachel's parents, the narrator's parents, each every one of them failed these young people repeatedly. Any of them could have averted the ending but chose not to do so. From my point of view it was simply infuriating.

For me, "What It Was Like" didn't break any real new ground. The story here is all too familiar. Emotionally immature/broken teens desperately search for love, connection and stability. Poor decisions are made because they lack the background to understand what they are doing and they lack the parental support to gain it safely. Most kids get through that phase with just some minor emotional scars. Some don't make it through at all. It's just sad, depressing reading that's all too close to home.

At the same time, Seth's story telling skill is highly polished. The story is easily readable and carries the reader along quite effortlessly. While the story may have dragged at me, the storytelling kept me going. Hundreds of pages of personal and professional agony that I still wanted to plow through. I'm not sure there's any higher praise you can offer an author.

*Read my complete review, plus other independent media commentary at my blog [The View From the Phlipside](#)*

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## **Mark says**

"We were on this wild, real-life amusement park ride -- part House of Horrors, part Tunnel of Love -- and we couldn't stop now."

That sentence from Peter Seth's "What It Was Like" perfectly captures one of the most compulsively thrilling novels I've read in years. A pitch-perfect portrayal of the zeitgeist of the late '60s, the book moves easily and organically from genre to genre. It starts out as an innocent love story and reminiscence of youth at a summer camp, then gradually becomes a riveting story of emotional addiction between our two young lovers, Rachel and "Defendant X," who appear to have everyone aligned against them. Always wishing them the worst are Rachel's mother and sleazy step-dad, living in pampered decadence in their mansion and trying to control Rachel's every move.

But "Defendant X" is about to snap...and the novel turns into a breathless, fugitive thriller with its lovers on the run from the police and, it seems, the whole world! Along the way are provocative detours into a kinky card game and intimations of bisexuality. What else can I say? Although I found this to be perfect summer reading, I'd wager this book is impossible to stop reading in ANY season. "What It Was Like" is suitable for readers of all ages between young adults to Boomers because it captures the idyllic days of summer camp AND the 1960s as accurately as any time capsule. Peter Seth is a born writer and has knocked it out of the park in his first book. Stay tuned because I bet he's got a highly promising career ahead of him as a novelist.

BRAVO!

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## **Erin says**

ARC for review.

Closely akin to a *Endless Love* for our age (although without all the good sex parts and, as our narrator states upfront "no swearing" - so I guess this is geared toward the YA audience, but I missed the sex and the swearing!) and it's set in the early 70s, I believe (some stories just don't work with cell phones and texting).

Our unnamed narrator is a lower middle class kid headed to Columbia in the fall and decides to make some summer money as a camp counselor. There he meets Rachel, a CIT and falls for her immediately. It's pretty clear that he has little experience with the opposite sex and it's also immediately clear that in the eyes of a starstruck teenager (hell, in the eyes of a man) a woman's physical beauty makes up for many, many sins. The reader immediately sees that regardless of her beauty she is self-centered and annoying, but the narrator is entranced, and remains so as she pulls him into her web of dysfunction and as nearly every person on the planet tells him to steer clear.

The results are about what you would expect (though to me it was very unclear whether Rachel had a master plan or events simply unfolded). The plot was nothing we haven't seen before, but the voice of the narrator is strong and I tore through the book, just waiting to see the tragedy I knew was coming. Definitely worth a read.

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## **Larry H says**

Full disclosure: I received an advance readers copy of this book from NetGalley in exchange for an unbiased review.

"It's really a very simple story. What happened was this: I met this girl and did a very stupid thing. I fell in love. Hard. I know that to some people that makes me an idiot and a loser. What can I say? They're right. I did some extremely foolish things; I'm the first to say it. And they've left me in jail and alone."

The narrator of Peter Seth's *What It Was Like* grew up in the late 1960s on Long Island, and seemed to have everything. He was smart, planning to attend Columbia University, and the summer before college took a job as a counselor at Camp Mooncliff, a summer camp in upstate New York. He took the job to earn some money before college, and figured it would be a relatively easy job, better than staying home and working for a rich relative or in the furniture store where his father worked.

What he didn't plan for was meeting the gorgeous yet troubled Rachel Prince, a CIT (counselor-in-training) at the camp who was related to the camp's owners. Over her years at Mooncliff Rachel had developed quite a reputation for teasing and using boys, then discarding them when she got bored. Despite many of his fellow counselors' warnings, he falls hard for her, and she for him. It isn't long before the two are breaking as many camp rules as possible in order to see each other as frequently as they can, which doesn't sit well with those in charge, and they do all they can to keep the two apart.

Although his feelings for Rachel are quite strong, he is somewhat put off by the mania of her emotions. With her parents in the midst of an ugly divorce, and her desire not to go to college directly after she graduates

from high school, Rachel has tremendous anxiety about her relationship with her mother and her new live-in boyfriend, and worries whether they will try to keep Rachel from seeing the love of her life after the summer ends.

What It Was Like is the story of the intensity of young love that borders on obsession, and how we often suspend logic and don't heed the warnings and advice of others when we're in the midst of that type of love. As we learn early on in the book, the narrator's feelings for Rachel end up embroiling him in trouble he never planned on, and severely alters the course of his life. This book is apparently "the true story" the narrator writes while in prison, as he attests that the real story was never disclosed at his trial.

I thought at first this book had tremendous promise. I like the way Peter Seth writes and I particularly liked the depth he gave to the narrator, despite the fact you wanted to shake some sense into him. He hit the nail on the head in capturing the summer camp experience—many of the events and activities he talked about actually happened at the summer camp I attended when I was younger.

As the book unfolded, I became more frustrated. The story became less and less probable, and while I believe that intense love makes us blind and causes us to act irrationally, I just couldn't believe the sequence of events that occurred. I also thought that the book went on a bit too long—while I understand it was to set up what transpired later, there were far too many instances of Rachel acting emotionally and the narrator mooning over her, and since Rachel didn't seem to be that appealing of a character (apart from her beauty), I found the story dragged.

There's an old saying that "Love makes such fools of us." What It Was Like clearly demonstrates the lengths to which we will go for the ones we love, no matter how it may destroy our own lives in the process.

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## **Elaine says**

This is a story about love, first love – the sort of obsessional all consuming young love that leaves you unable to think about anything else apart from the object of your desire. The sort of love where every word you hear spoken, picture you see, TV programme you watch etcetera brings your loved one to mind. The sort of love for whom you ditch all your friends. The sort of love that means you cannot function when you are apart and literally pine for. The sort of love which blinds you to your loved one's faults. You will believe anything they tell you and do ANYTHING for them. Perhaps most importantly of all, nobody else has ever loved like this before and nobody can possibly understand just what it is like.

The story is told from the perspective of an unnamed young man. Right from the start we know that he is in jail but we don't know why, only that his love for Rachel lies at the heart of whatever trouble he is in. He tells us their story from the moment they meet at summer camp right up until he finds himself in jail.

I did find the beginning of the book seemed a bit long winded at times. It is a long story full of teenage angst, in which we must have accompanied this young couple on every single date they had and listened to every single phone call between them, and there were times I drifted off a little. As the story progresses we get little hints as to why he has landed in jail although, because we only hear the story from his, biased, side the events did seem to me to be over exaggerated. I had to remind myself that we were dealing with first love here, in a situation where our hero is so much in love with Rachel, that any transgression against her, no matter how small, is bound to be earth shattering in his opinion. Without giving the plot line away – I just didn't feel it. I think not hearing Rachel's side of the story definitely took something away from the story as I didn't get why he was so much in love with her and, to put it bluntly, wrapped around her little finger. She is a pretty girl, yes, but comes across right from the start as not particularly likeable. I just didn't get what was

so special about her, apart from her looks, that would inspire such puppy like devotion.

I found the last quarter of the book moved a lot faster than the first section. Once “events” were under way the story became a lot pacier and it was only then that I really started to enjoy the read, despite it coming over as a tad far fetched with characters, in particular Eleanor (Rachel’s mother) not feeling real, not being believable. It is not a bad story at all, but too long by about 100 pages. Thanks to the publisher for the advance review copy.

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