



## The Opposite of Love

*Julie Buxbaum*

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## **The Opposite of Love** Julie Buxbaum

With perfect pitch for the humor and heartbreak of everyday life, Julie Buxbaum has fashioned a heroine who will be instantly recognizable to anyone who has loved and lost and loved again.

When successful twenty-nine-year-old Manhattan attorney Emily Haxby ends her happy relationship just as her boyfriend is on the verge of proposing, she can't explain to even her closest friends why she did it. Somewhere beneath her sense of fun, her bravado, and her independent exterior, Emily knows that her breakup with Andrew has less to do with him and more to do with...her. "You're your own worst enemy," her best friend Jess tells her. "It's like you get pleasure out of breaking your own heart."

As the holiday season looms and Emily contemplates whether she made a huge mistake, the rest of her world begins to unravel: she is assigned to a multimillion-dollar lawsuit where she must defend the very values she detests by a boss who can't keep his hands to himself; her Grandpa Jack, a charming, feisty octogenarian and the person she cares most about in the world, is losing it, while her emotionally distant father has left her to cope with this alone; and underneath it all, fading memories of her deceased mother continue to remind her that love doesn't last forever.

How this brave, original young heroine finally decides to take control of her life and face the fears that have long haunted her is the great achievement of Julie Buxbaum's marvelous first novel. Written with the authority, grace, and wisdom of an author far beyond her years, **The Opposite of Love** heralds the debut of a remarkable talent in contemporary fiction.

## **The Opposite of Love Details**

Date : Published January 29th 2008 by The Dial Press (first published January 1st 2008)

ISBN : 9780385341226

Author : Julie Buxbaum

Format : Hardcover 320 pages

Genre : Womens Fiction, Chick Lit, Fiction, Romance, Contemporary, Adult Fiction

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## From Reader Review The Opposite of Love for online ebook

### Julie says

I thought this was an amazing debut novel. Lots of interesting, complex characters and relationships. At the beginning of the book, Emily makes a rash decision that she later realizes was terribly wrong, but she can't quickly make it right again - with the help of some good friends, relatives and therapy she learns to grow and make positive changes in all parts of her life. A great example of more serious chick lit that's touching and humorous at the same time.

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### Larka Fenrir says

#### **!!! Libro contenente uno spropositato numero di clichè !!!**

...e se ve lo dice una la cui esperienza in romanzi *rosa* rasenta lo zero... leggetelo a vostro rischio e pericolo.

Cercate un libro in cui la protagonista butta all'aria la sua felicità pur di non sposarsi, perchè vorrebbe dire *impegnarsi per sempre*?

Volete vederla cercare di ristabilirsi dopo una rottura e buttarsi a capofitto in un lavoro che, improvvisamente, va contro i suoi principi morali? Volete vederla fare l'eroina dei tempi moderni, e lasciarlo di punto in bianco?

Credete che il suo essere circondata da una collega odiosa che mina la sua carriera, da un capo molestatore, da una migliore amica che è il suo esatto contrario (una ragazza originale e a cui piace fare baldoria) e da un amico intimo su cui comincia a farsi qualche domanda riescano a renderla uno stereotipo in cui riconoscervi? Ecco il libro che fa per voi, e che mi ha tolto temporaneamente la gioia di vivere della lettura!

In omaggio troverete anche la perdita della madre, un rapporto disfunzionale con il padre e una relazione speciale col nonno, destinata (secondo la speranza dell'autrice) a commuovervi.

Non ho dato una stellina solo perchè verso la fine diventa più scorrevole (ma non per questo originale)... o era solo la forza della disperazione che mi ha permesso di finirlo?

Tutto in questo libro grida "Banale!"

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### Karen says

I really enjoyed this book. It reminded me a little of Lolly Winston or Sarah Dunn, but with its own distinct voice. I like books that are funny (without being too biting) and wise, and this one fit the bill.

There is has been a lot pre-pub buzz surrounding this novel and it definitely lives up to expectations.

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### Sarah says

Not my genre of choice, but it is a fine choice for a beach read/travel book...meaty chick lit. Very funny characters, and surprisingly realistically written. If I met the author, I can safely assume I won't see someone wearing pink and carrying around bridal magazines.

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### **Jen | Jen Talks Audiobooks says**

This book stressed me out. The main character just kept making bad decisions even though she knew she was . . . dnf'd at about 40%.

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### **Livia Rabelo says**

This was a really wierd reading for me, it had one great moment surrounded by some unsettling ones..... Overall it had potential but it didn't really work out for me.

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### **Allison says**

I was lucky enough to get my hands on an ARC of this book - due to hit stores in January 2008 - and I wasn't disappointed. An honest, believable portrayal of a 29-year old woman who is paralyzed by life and who has to find the nerves and strength within herself to literally move forward. Very touching, smart and well-written. I expect this will be a huge book come 2008.

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### **Nicole says**

DNF at page 106. I just couldn't get into this one.

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### **Rachael says**

I kept waiting for something to happen-- and yet, nothing. The prologue was bland and didn't tie into the rest of the story, and I think the main character wasn't likeable and quite boring. When things got bad, she drank too much (often) and also relied on the wisdom of the very old a little too often to be believable.

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### **Jill says**

I'm not sure I've ever had this same experience where I'm reading a book and thinking, "how does this author know exactly what my life is like?" But the truth is, it doesn't matter that many of the details aren't exactly the same-- what matters is that Ms. Buxbaum captures so many universal feelings in a realistic, true and contemporary way. At first I thought, I have to make sure all my girlfriends from law school, the firm, and after read this; but truth be told, this is a great, engaging, heartfelt and universal book. I think even my esoteric, learned, bibliomaniac husband will like it (and not just because the author graciously signed a copy for our daughters). Really, a triumph, especially for a debut. Best wishes to this author (noted while refraining from extreme jealousy at the courageous personal leap she made and how well it has worked out.) Please write another.

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## **Scribblegirl says**

I was leery of reading another voyage of self-discovery book after the self-involved garbage of Patti Callahan Henry's *Between the Tides*, but Buxbaum gets right every single thing Henry does not, with none of the missteps and narcissism. Her heroine, Em, is someone you could know and like in real life. She has flaws and quirks and the capacity to care for others, even when she is being bitchy. Which isn't that often. Here is a woman I felt actually modeled on real life, who breathes through prose which is evocative when it needs to be without heavy-handedly beating the reader over the head with the writer's grasp of vocabulary and purple turns of phrase. This is Buxbaum's first novel, and she did a helluva job right out of the gate. Comparing her novel to Henry's really just shoves the short and dirty end of the stick at the latter. Maybe Henry should quit writing and take up law, as doing the reverse certainly worked out well for Buxbaum. I really enjoyed her book and characters.

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## **Carol says**

This is a debut novel that got a lot of attention in review journals, etc so I have had in on my TBR list for a long time. I wasn't disappointed. Emily is a 29-year old lawyer frustrated with her job as a litigation attorney. Her relationship with her father is strained, her beloved grandfather is ill and she has just broken up with the perfect boyfriend. Emily's comments often made me smile and I even had a few tears during reading this book. Definitely a step above the chick lit/single women's fiction out there.

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## **Michael Rusk says**

### **Put Down the Keyboard and Touch Somebody**

Absolutely captivating description of the angst and redemption of a young professional person.

The book became a cherished companion and the character a friend to comfort and console. I wanted to read slowly, a chapter or two at a time, and then carry the words around with me until I could read again.

Each character is skillfully crafted, dialogue and situations are very realistic, and I found myself feeling the same tension and nervousness as Emily. I looked through her eyes and experienced her feelings.

I highly recommend this book and I am looking forward to reading more from **Julie Buxbaum**.

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## **Leah says**

When Emily Haxby suddenly dumps her boyfriend of two years Andrew, just as he's about to propose, she can't explain why to anybody, not even to Andrew or her close friends, not really. Once Emily realises her mistake, though, it's too late and her life soon begins falling apart. She's fed up of working for a lecherous boss, particularly when he assigns her to a case she doesn't feel right defending. Then the biggest blow of all comes, her Grandpa Jack, the man she adores most in the world, appears to have something wrong with him. As Emily tries to pull her life back together, and realises she may have some deep-seated issues to deal with, will she finally realise that perhaps what she wanted has been there all along?

I first heard of *The Opposite of Love* by Julie Buxbaum a while back, and I know it came highly recommended – by Marian Keyes, no less. I finally got around to buying myself a copy in January of this year, but when I started to read the book it didn't hold my attention much and I always just left it on the shelf for a later date. However her new one was coming out and I decided it was probably high time I gave the book a real go because it sounded fantastic and a book that would be right up my alley.

*The Opposite of Love* does begin fairly slowly. I mean the Prologue does pull you in, and the first line of Chapter One does even more so: "Last night I dreamt that I chopped Andrew up into a hundred little pieces, like a Benihana chef, and ate them, one by one. He tasted like chicken." I mean, come on, that's a fairly intriguing start, no? But after that the book seems to slow down, mostly due to the fact that it's so hard to get to grips with Emily because she seems so detached, despite the fact the book is written entirely from her point of view. It's clear from the off that Emily has problems; who dumps their boyfriend of two years just because he's going to propose? Exactly. Despite my cold feelings towards Emily, I did persevere as I liked the story but it was the developing plot featuring Emily and her Grandpa Jack that really kept me reading.

I don't know how it happened or what page it happened, but I suddenly found myself feeling different toward the book. Emily didn't change, not drastically anyway, but I began to understand her more, and suddenly I saw the book in a whole new light. It wasn't too far in, either, and all of a sudden I was hooked and I could barely stop reading. There are many plot strands to the book, Emily's work life is a big focus but it's mainly about Emily's inability to have a proper, adult relationship. It seems the only man Emily is able to have a relationship of any sort with is her Grandpa Jack; she doesn't even have a real relationship with her own father. It was interesting to get to the bottom of why Emily was so bad with the men in her life, excepting Grandpa Jack, and to see if Emily could ever overcome the reasons why.

Despite the cold-fish vibe I got from Emily at the beginning of the book I did manage to like her eventually. She is definitely a 'Marmite' kind of character and either you'll end up loving her or hating her. Thankfully I fall in the former category and Buxbaum manages to write Emily in such a way that I was able to love Emily eventually. Guess who my absolute favourite character was though? Yes, that's right, folks, Grandpa Jack stole the book. He seemed to be the only presence in Emily's life that was able to thaw her out a bit and the interaction between the two of them was so beautifully written and I kind of wished Jack was my Grandpa, too. The synopsis alludes to something being wrong with Jack and I was hoping and praying it wouldn't be anything too serious. Not that I'm going to tell you either way. Because Emily breaks up with Andrew, we don't see too much of him, but what I could tell about him was that he was, undoubtedly, the best thing to happen to Emily and it was a shame he wasn't around more. Those three make up the backbone of the book but we also have Emily's father who didn't appear to be very good at being a father, as well as Emily's friends and Jack's lovely neighbour Ruth. It was a good set of characters, no doubt about that.

I will admit that the book made me cry. I knew right from the off something sad was going to happen and although I was prepared for it, it still made me cry. It was such a sad ending to the book and yet, there was still hope of some kind there. The book ended really well, sometimes a book just peters out with no explanations or anything but not *The Opposite of Love*. It had a very strong ending and I didn't feel disappointed about it at all (which is such a rare feat). But what really sets apart *The Opposite of Love* is the fact it isn't your run of the mill chick lit. Yes, Emily needs to 'find herself', something that only the American's could do, but it doesn't come across as false or stupid but it truly seemed that that was what

Emily needed to do. There's no ditzy best friend, or stupid love triangle, it's a straight forward story of a woman trying to figure out her place in life and sort through some serious issues. I hugely recommend the book and furthermore I recommend you persevere if you find yourself struggling to like Emily, because she turns out good in the end!

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### **Julie says**

After reading Tell Me Three Things last week, I decided I wanted to read another book by this author. I really enjoyed. It was about a woman who needs to step back from things she and others deemed important in order to move forward. I feel that the title is a bit misleading, it is not really a romance. More or less it's about the journey of one woman's self discovery by addressing issues she had not confronted. Looking forward to more by this author.

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### **Kelsey says**

Just finished reading this first novel and really wasn't that crazy about it. It's the story of a 29 year-old lawyer, Emily, struggling to find herself (fix her relationship, her job, her family).

Best part of the book: First line of chapter 1: "Last night, I dreamt that I chopped Andrew up into a hundred little pieces, like a Benihana chef, and ate them, one by one." Also, I liked the cold relationship she has with her father.

Worst parts of the book: The extensive use of cliches throughout the novel -- Emily's struggle throughout the book to say "I love you;" Emily suddenly breaking up the relationship with her fiance for no apparent reason; the older, quirky Grandpa character; the one dimensional "evil" law firm she works for that represents chemical dumpers; the cute-as-all friends including a gorgeous southern guy at her law firm--these characters and plot lines feel so well-worn. Mostly movies come to mind (In Her Shoes, Because I Said So, Erin Brokovich). Books - maybe And now you can go. I read In the Drink by Kate Christensen a long time ago and really liked that book. It had an edge to it. A new take on white women struggling in Manhattan...

I thought maybe I'd get an insiders look at a big corporate law firm with this book but not a lot of attention is given to this. So I guess I just felt that the writing style, plot, characters, tone, voice -- were all so average and imitations of chick lit books we've seen before.

This book reportedly received a huge advance somewhere in the neighborhood of half a million dollars so I guess that means two things: the publisher will be pushing the hell out of this book and they believe that there is a market for this book. For people who want light fare chick lit I suppose they'll like this book.

Also, I read somewhere that the author spent four months writing this book. Um, is that something you want to go around advertising? I'm not saying everyone should spend 10 years writing their first novel, but really, how can you write anything thoughtful and insightful and good in four months?

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### **N.T. says**

This book really got me, brought me in -- where a title like that can rarely get my attention.

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The characters, and main character Emily, were endearing, funny, their own voice, brought to life, and surrounded and engulfed Emily in a way that rang true.

There were many heart tearing moments, surprising me constantly, and a deep exploration at other moments that left me blushing or feeling as if it hit very close to home.

There has been a theme of leaving or losing on purpose (or forcefully) an unhealthy job and the turning point of recognition in 30something professional women that have suddenly crossed my path. :) They've all meant a great deal to me.

This book was a force, a ride across the Atlantic perhaps, with all the joy, wonder, stomach dropping, laughter, yearning that one could imagine. But a great ride.

I cannot wait to read more from this author and await her next book.

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### **Annabelle says**

While the framework is stale--a 29-year-old New York lawyer who just dumped her boyfriend and hates her job has a quarter-life crisis--I thought the writing had surprising depth. The main character is haunted by her mother's death, struggles with her grandfather's illness and is believably conflicted about her relationship with her former boyfriend. There are some one-dimensional side characters and, like most chick-lit, the upbeat ending is somewhat forced. But there were quite a few genuinely moving scenes and skillfully crafted descriptions that I thought elevated this beyond pure escapism.

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### **Marielis says**

Esperaba que *The Opposite of Love* fuera una de esas historias ligeras que emocionan. Lamentablemente no logré conectar con *Emily* y su "confusión".

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### **Angeld01 says**

I randomly picked this up at the library and it was so good. Some of the themes were definitely covered territory.

A successful lawyer uncertain of her relationship, her career and her sense of family. But I really enjoyed Buxbaum's writing. She was gentle and compassionate in her story of Emily.

Of course too, I really enjoyed Emily's relationship with Grandpa Jack. It was really special and caused other supportive relationships in her life, such as the one with Ruth.

I look forward to the career of Buxbaums

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