



Pieces of my Heart

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Ava is juggling a life that seems to have too many pieces. She is trying to do the best by her family, but feels like she's running on empty. But when a crisis threatens everything she holds dear, she realizes she has to dig deeper than ever before and figure out a way to hold on to the pieces of her heart.

Pieces of my Heart Details

Date : Published August 5th 2010 by Penguin Ireland (first published July 15th 2010)

ISBN : 9781844881512

Author : Sinéad Moriarty

Format : Paperback 448 pages

Genre : Womens Fiction, Chick Lit, Fiction, Romance

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From Reader Review Pieces of my Heart for online ebook

Hazel McHaffie says

Ava is a woman torn between her allegiance to husband, daughters, father, work partner ... but when she discovers her eldest daughter is starving herself her problems escalate exponentially. A sensitive story of the effect of anorexia on relationships and responsibilities, spoiled for me by the unnecessarily prolific use of bad language and the improbable elements (eg. Charlie's sex-mad proclivities, Sarah's colossal ego, Maura's aggressive stalking).

The Reading Panda says

I have read three book by Moriarty, and I have loved them all. She never takes the easy way out with her characters or writing. Moriarty chooses a challenging topic and, through pain-staking research, writes about it with sensitivity and grace. In this book she writes about eating disorders.

Ava, the protagonist, has two daughters, Ali and Sarah, with her husband, Paul. Her father, Charlie, lives with them. Ava's best friend, Sally, is very close with the whole family. Of course, nothing stays peachy for very long. Moriarty handles the family dynamic and trauma excellently. Ali spirals out of control, and no one knows what is wrong. The whole family is in over their heads when they find out Ali is suffering from an eating disorder. The frustration of the characters and how they all behave, especially Ava and Paul, is very realistic. This is where I feel Moriarty shines. The road to recovery is long and arduous, and the whole family suffers with Ali. Isn't that how families operate?

I give this book 4 stars because of Charlie and Sally. Charlie is Ava's overly sex-driven father. From the beginning, he is the comic relief and a breath of fresh air. His happy-go-lucky demeanor makes him instantly lovable. What bothers me is his obsession with having sex. He hits on young girls and even propositions the family's cleaning lady to sleep with him. How is that all right? I do not find it funny; I find it uncomfortable. If Moriarty toned Charlie down, I would have enjoyed his presence more. Sally is Ava's unlucky-in-love best friend. Eventually, Sally meets a man. They are both very much in love, but there is a conflict because he wants children and she does not. I will not ruin the storyline by mentioning how they overcome the dilemma, but I feel that it is silly and unrealistic. I do not know why Moriarty included this since she could have easily made Sally's love interest not want children.

All in all, I throughly enjoyed the book. It is an eye-opening work about how families are changed by eating disorders.

Georgie says

I found this to be a very enjoyable read, I really liked it. I knew from the blurb of this book what illness Ali would have, but that's just from personal experience I guess. Even though the story deals with some very serious topics (self harm, eating disorders, suicide) and I have dealt with all three, I never felt patronised or made a fool of. The story represents the feelings and effects on those around you incredibly well, and you really do feel for the characters. Alongside the darker topics, there are humorous moments, with the spray-tan addicted Sarah and the pole dancing girlfriend making me laugh only a few pages after I had been in tears. Overall, I really enjoyed this book, and would definitely recommend it.

Em Sharp says

Very basic storyline and not the best written book of hers I've read, but still couldn't put it down!

Leah says

The modern woman is a Jill of all trades . . . Ava is a wife, lover, mother, daughter, friend, fixer, boss . . . so many different people, in fact, she no longer knows what it means to be herself. Not that anyone will let her – not her work-obsessed husband, nor her tearaway younger daughter, nor her out-of-control Dad, nor even her sassy-but-lonely best friend. There's always someone wanting something from her. She's trying to do her best for all of them but lately feels like she can't make everyone happy. And that's before she discovers that her elder daughter Alison is in deep, deep trouble. Can Ava keep a hold of the most precious pieces of her heart? And what will happen if she loses one?

I quite liked the plot of Pieces of my Heart and the main focus of the plot is the fact Ava spends all of her time looking after everybody else. Her eccentric father moves into her house after his second wife dies, before inviting a Polish stripper into the house, too. Her best friend Sally is worried she'll never find a man and uses Ava to relay all her dating disaster stories to, Ava's own love life with her husband Paul is flagging and her two daughters are complete opposites of each other: Sarah is a bit of a wild child whereas Ali is quite and studious. And when Alison becomes anorexic, that takes up a lot of the plot focus, too.

As for the characters, I found them a real mixed bag. I liked Ava, in as much as you can like someone who lets her family and friends run all over her without a thought to her own life. I could see why she was the way she was, but I wanted her to take hold and be able to blow off steam herself for once. Paul, her husband, seemed negligent at best, leaving Ava to keep the family going whilst he spent time at his pub. Despite Sally, Ava's best friend, being a bit desperate, she was one of my favourite characters. I also loved Sarah, Ava and Paul's youngest daughter. Yes the way she was written was very teen-cliche, but she was hilarious. Along with her boyfriend Bobby they were quite the double act. I didn't particularly take to Ali, and I'll explain why a bit more later. Finally there's Charlie, Ava's father. He was very eccentric, but I thought he was sweet.

Pieces of my Heart is very well written. It's told from Ava's point of view, meaning that although we don't get a first-hand account of Ali's illness, we see how it affects the wider family. There's absolutely no doubt that Moriarty must have put a lot of research and time into getting Ali's illness correct and it came across as very well done as I read it, but I did at times find it a bit contrite. Because despite Ali starving herself and making herself anorexic, she did seem to blame it on everybody else. I've got absolutely no experience on eating disorders, and maybe blaming everyone around you is the norm but I just found it irritating. Much like Sarah, I just wanted to yell at Ali to stop being so selfish and just eat.

Overall, I did enjoy Pieces of my Heart. It had a nice cast of characters, it kept me reading because despite everything I felt about Ali's illness I did want her to get better, or at least see if she was able to overcome it in any way. I also found Sarah added some much needed light relief during the book because sometimes the heart-to-hearts got a little too long-winded and Sarah and Bobby were the perfect anti-dote to that. Sinead Moriarty definitely gets to the heart of the story, there's no doubt about that and I applaud the fact she doesn't shy away from using difficult, sometimes taboo, topics in her novels. Sinead is a huge talent in Chick Lit and long may she continue to publish novels.

Diyar Harraz says

It took me a gracious 3 weeks to complete the whole novel which after reading the first few chapters, I'm partly engaging and moving by its opening story-line It started off with Ava, a mother of two who was also a wife, daughter, friend, fixer, boss and a lover gazing into the reflection of herself in a mirror. She was in a situation which most women in the whole wide world would be in; dazed and stuck in her multiple roles in life. Just by reading the first few passages on Ava who was self-aware about how old she looks, I felt like I'm being pulled into her sad life story immediately. Then the novel goes on by introducing the other important characters such as Ava's daughters, dad and friend with a light, humorous and bubbly way. The author had done a majorly good job on describing each characters in such a way which are easy to understand and non-ironic. She had chosen a simple yet meaningful vocabulary.

As I aware, there are 3 stages of emotions which would run across to the reader when reading this novel. These are; amusement with a little dust of sorrow due to Paul's laxity over Ava, miserable and probably thought-provoking when Alison was confirmed to have anorexic and finally joyfulness as the novel ended with a cliché happy ending. In my opinion, I adored the first and the middle bit of the novel but I'm not so satisfied with how it ends. I would have thought that the author would put in some sort of minor tragedy in the story-line so that the near endings would appear as engaging as the opening.

So for that I applied 3 stars out of 5. Despite from the cliché endings, I also disagree on most vibes which the author had created in the novel. The sparkling clear idea of sarcasm the author had put across when she mentioned one or two things about Afghanistan and Taliban made my stomach turned. I strongly felt that there's no need to mention anything about a sensitive and debatable topics such as Taliban while there are a lot other things which she could write about. For example when Sarah was disputing with her dad, Paul the minute he found out the fact that she'd went into a nightclub, she said "Hello! We are not living in Afghanistan! You can't lock me up for having a good time. What are you? The freaking Taliban?" I'm curious on why would the author choose to write this instead of some other ironic discrepancy style between a daughter and a father?

Other than that, this novel had opened my eyes to many surreal things about anorexia and the way she arranged the step by step process Alison has got to go through in order to beat anorexia, was fascinating!

Aishah Azhan says

One of the best books I've ever read! I was really engaged & I couldn't let go of the book until I finished it. The story felt so real, & truly eye-opening of how people's lives are affected by a mental illness. It didn't end with sunshines & rainbows, but rather with a realistic ending. A hopeful one, that is.

Carol Deakin says

Loved her writing style. There was laughter and tears. Want to read more by this author.

San says

The book was interesting in the start. This book felt kind of those mediocre books.

Except Ava and Paul all the characters are just extremely childish. The book has a lot of empty dialogues, oh you don't know how to make a meaningful reply just say "OK" instead of making a proper reply.

Sarah seemed one of the promising characters but by the end of the book you won't even love her, it's as if her character has been overdone.

She was so infuriating by the end. Manipulative and cheating on her poor boyfriend. Quite self-absorbed.

There seem to be no proper grounds for the characters. One time they are sweet and all and next they are shouting over each other, saying bad names to each other. Especially both sisters, Alison, they are told as sweet and kind but they keep fighting.

Sally became annoying by the end, crying and acting like an immature woman. Don't think about Charlie; he was just not acting like his age and his only goal was to have sex. Like he is an old man and should be well aware of which girl to date and who won't pull his leg again.

I wouldn't really recommend it to be read by anyone.

Although it was a good topic to shed light on. Anorexia is a sensitive subject; somehow amidst the chaos of stupidity of the characters, this one thing was done well.

Zarina says

Pieces of my Heart is an amazing novel realistically depicting the problems a seemingly average family goes through. A lot of the issues raised (most notably the sibling dynamic and its impact on both sisters, and the father putting his work before his family) felt very close to home for me and reading about them on the pages was an absolute eye-opener. Despite the sometimes difficult and heavy topics, there were also much-needed light-hearted moments to balance the story and make sure the book didn't become one big dramatic sobfest. Overall, the novel was very touching and real, not sugar-coating anything the characters go through, making the book one I would highly recommend.

Tanis says

I wanted to like this book more...but it seemed to drag. I thought it took at least 80 pages before it finally grabbed my interest. It easily could've been at least 100 pages shorter. There was so much dialogue that just seemed repetitive and I couldn't keep reading the characters having the same conversations over and over again. Honestly, I skimmed through the last 60 or so pages.

Pooja Jeevagan says

I am confused between a 3 and a 4...and I would rather go with 3...this book would make you wonder what the main theme was...and yes, though it comes to it, it's one sad theme, thanks to the awesomely good Sarah, it ensures you never end up with wet eyes...

That's the whole plus and the minus of the book...it had to make u either happy or sad...what I couldn't understand is how anything said by Sarah doesn't shake Ali but even they eyes of her dad shake it...but then, honestly Sarah is the steals the show...though the book is about Ali (I certainly hope not Ava), it's Sarah you connect to...and then she isn't too wrong to...why do the ones who are all happy n don't give in to tears or show hurt r d ones totally ignored...

All in all, a nice read by Moriarty...which might make me pick few more by her :)

Sarah Broadhurst says

I have read many of Sinead Moriarty's books and I can honestly say this is my favourite of her books so far. This book is a great read.

The story is about Ava, her husband and two daughters, along with her father who is twice widowed and living with them temporarily, while his new apartment is finished. The story starts as a basic story of family life but soon turns to a more storyline when her eldest daughter, Ali, is dumped by her boyfriend, leading her to develop a serious illness, anorexia.

I was surprised that this was not mentioned on the book as it is a great read for showing how this cruel illness affects not only the sufferer but also the whole family and their struggle to treat her in the family home before admitting her to a eating disorder clinic, where Ali stays for several weeks and it is a time of great sadness for her after friendships are formed.

Although the story is of a serious illness, there are times of humour surrounding Ava's father and his Polish girlfriend and also Ava's other daughter, Sarah and her continual spray tanning and adaptation of Romeo and Juliet in modern times.

I found this book a great read and wanted to continue to read until i had finished. the chapters are quite short and these lend themselves to an easy read. The topics within the book are of a serious nature but as I said above, there were also times to laugh with the characters aswell as cry with them too.

If you are a fan of Sinead Moriarty's books I would recommend this to you all.

Thank you to Penguin Books for sending me a copy to review

Fiona Groves says

An eye opening view into the world of anorexia and a reminder that no family is perfect.

Angela says

A lot of family drama but it was a great read all the same. The family was odd and yet familiar and easy to understand and Ali's illness was caught early and she had a lot of support on her side. Charlie was one of the best characters in the book but Sally was my favorite finally a woman who for once did not want children, I can literally count on one hand how many times I've come across such characters in a book.

Priya says

"‘Ava,’ Charlie said, ‘there’s a Red Indian after coming into your kitchen.’"

This was my first time reading this author, and it took me some time to feel totally comfortable, and then once I got comfortable I found myself asking if it was giving me anything that made me LOVE it...and I had no affirmative answer. But, like the protagonist and most of the characters in this story, you have to hang on, stay the path and be patient until you get the fulfillment you're seeking...and it came to me! The second half became quite enjoyable, and found myself laughing out loud many times (to wit:quote above;Charlie/Sarah/Bobby), then found myself dreading reaching the end.

Rebecca says

CONTAINS SPOILERS

I thought this book was good. I thought the youngest daughter, while an over the top imitation of a teenager, was hilarious. I liked Charlie and Sally as well. I really disliked Ava and Paul. I know Moriarty would have been trying to portray parents trying to cope with their daughters anorexia but it wasn't done in a likeable way. I did think the anorexia story was really well dealt with, with the small touches such as the fridge being overstocked making it seem more real. However because I disliked Ava so much I couldn't enjoy this book as much.

Grace says

As a fan of Sinéad Moriarty, I couldn't wait to get my hands on her new book Pieces Of My Heart - and with good reason!

The story is told by Ava, a working mother. With juggling motherhood, friendship, work, saving her marriage while trying to control her troublesome father, Ava is oblivious to her eldest daughter's growing obsession.

Moriarty tackles the serious subject of anorexia head on. Although, it's not a depressing read as it's balanced out with hilarious sub-plots such as Ava's sixty-eight year old father dating a pole dancer and Ava's best friend Sally looking for love and not to mention hilarious characters such as Ava's youngest over confident daughter Sarah and their bulky housekeeper Magda.

It's a heart-warming read as it shows how important family can be in times of crisis. Overall, the book was clearly well researched, realistic and highly recommended from me!

Anne Harvey says

Ava struggles to keep up with all the demands on her time, from her workaholic husband, Paul, her eccentric father Charlie, opinionated younger daughter Sarah and her friend and business partner Sally. As if that wasn't enough to cope with, she finds that elder daughter Alison, the more level-headed of her two daughters is suffering from an eating disorder. While the nightmare of anorexia does dominate most of the story (and

my sympathies go out to sufferers and their families), this book does have its laugh-aloud moments, from the over-the-top children's parties she and Sally are paid to organise for rich families to her father's misguided affair with a Polish pole-dancer. I did find the younger daughter's speech habits a bit too over the top, especially when she kept saying 'Hello?' in such a way as to be disparaging. Overall though, an enjoyable novel.

Robyn says

This Review is actually a 3.5, except of course, there is no 0.5 option on Goodreads.

I received this as a "Blind date with a book" and this really is something I would have grimaced at the cover (and blurb description of) had I seen it in a bookshop: It's really not my sort of genre.

HOWEVER I was pleasantly surprised. the book was well written, and raised some very important issues that were clearly well researched and thought out.

It is very much worth a read from everyone. whether or not you like contemporary novels about the life of a middle aged woman (something I normally can't stand!)

The characters were relatable, but never boring, and it was easy to immerse yourself in the story.

I nearly gave this a 4/5 but it was downgraded slightly by the ending (which I liked, but it seemed a little bit rushed) and the fact that I personally would not gravitate towards this for a re-read. Although I suspect contemporary fans probably would: It was realistic, funny, warm and in some places, very emotional. I thoroughly enjoyed this (at least more than I thought I would) and I hope I learn not to 100% judge a book by its cover and/or blurb.
