



With Friends Like These

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Have you ever been a less than perfect friend? To whom does your first loyalty belong your best friend or your husband? With her trademark wit and empathy, Sally Koslow explores the entangled lives of women in this candid, fast-paced novel.

Quincy, Talia, Chloe, and Jules met in the early nineties after answering a roommate ad for a Manhattan apartment. Despite having little in common, the women became fast friends. A decade later, their lives have diverged, though their ties remain strong.

Quincy, a Midwestern introvert, is trying to overcome a set of tragedies by hunting for the perfect home; Talia, a high-energy Brooklyn wife and mom with an outspoken conscience, is growing resentful of her friends' greater financial stability and her husband's lack of ambition; timid Chloe, also a mother, is trying to deflect pressure from her husband, a hedge fund manager, to play the role of trophy wife; while Jules, a fiercely independent actress/entrepreneur with a wicked set of life rules, is confronting her forties alone.

When Jules gives her new boyfriend the inside scoop on the real estate gem Quincy is lusting after, and Talia chases a lucrative job earmarked for Chloe, the women are forced to wrestle with the challenges of love and motherhood. Will their friendships and marriages survive? And at what price? Punchy yet tender, a high-five to sisterhood, this book will hit an emotional bull's-eye for anyone who has had or been less than a perfect friend.

With Friends Like These Details

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Susan says

Fast and easy read. It's not horrible, but it is rather unrealistic. It's just another book that seems to want to push some sort of idea that women should have these friendships that will last through everything. The truth is most friendships have a shelf life, and if your friendships do not last forever and ever, you are perfectly normal.

One strange note is at the end when one of the women goes off on this bizarre diatribe against Trump Towers. That was just weird and shoehorned in there. I mean what was that supposed to be saying? Women should expect and put up with all sorts of bad behavior from their friends and that is O.K., but bad architecture should never be tolerated?

Laurel-Rain says

Four friends living in Manhattan begin their friendship after college, when they're roommates in a big house they discover.

For ten years, they're the best of friends. And then....

"With Friends Like These: A Novel" traverses the journey of these four women after their lives have formed their unique patterns and after circumstances (and their foolish actions) begin to change the character of their connections.

Quincy is mourning two miscarriages and in search of the perfect Manhattan apartment; Jules, a woman with an outsize personality, is facing forty alone; Talia, married and the mother of a four-year-old, is her family's reluctant breadwinner; and Chloe, also a mother, faces pressure from her hedge-fund manager husband to be more ambitious.

These situations set the tone for what happens next. We begin to see how the obsessions and quests of each of the friends start to damage the connections between them. One betrays another over a desirable apartment; with another, it's about a job; and the search for the perfect private preschool claims the attentions of the parents in the group.

Each character tells her own story in alternating chapters, a technique I enjoy because it allows the reader to "see inside" that character's head and understand her motivations. After some of their actions and choices have torn away at their bonds, they try to connect again in a final reunion. I like this quote: "That morning the women recognized that being together was like rediscovering a pair of lost slippers. Their friendship still provided comfort that improved with time. They knew one another like a new friend never could, with a shorthand that understood when to react and when to overlook, when to boost and when to protect...."

A book I'd highly recommend to anyone who enjoys stories about women's friendships and how the test of time can fray the connections, but how the bonds they've developed can repair the damage—with a little effort and care.

Five stars.

Amy says

Four friends meet in their twenties in NYC and remain fast friends for twenty years until life's individual desires test the friendships. I cannot resist these types of books - this one is told from the alternating perspectives of each friend throughout the book.

Tracy says

Life is a bully, trying to make philosophers of us, seeing how much we can take. (228)

Tanya says

I won this book on Librarything. It is released on 8/10. The book centers around four women who start out rooming together and continues their friendship through the years. The characters are great and I would recommend getting to know them.

Sandra Nay says

Four young women meet when they answer an ad for roommates and they become very good friends. The story takes place several years later when they have been married or chosen to remain single. They are met with challenges and twists and turns that strain the relationships. How they handle these complications and where they go from here is just of the story. I usually read fast to finish the stories I read but this time I slowed down so I could really enjoy the book.

Ronya says

Not really sure how this made it on several "Best Books of 2010" lists...it was okay, if not a bit contrived. I couldn't keep the characters straight--not because I'm stupid but maybe because I just didn't really want to. There are so many better books of 2010 to read and characters to get yourself attached to than this one. The alternating chapters just didn't really work in allowing the reader to get to know and become invested in the lives of the characters--and while I'm sure Koslow thought that having cliffhanger (and I use that word loosely) endings to the chapters would keep readers interested, it didn't work...you had to wait at least 50 pages before you were back in the story of that person and, alas, likely have forgotten (because you didn't care in the first place) what was going on. I plowed through, just to see how nicely she'd clean everything up at the end. And she did, but I was happier that it was over than that they all lived happily ever after.

Ea Solinas says

Ah, chick lit. Whether it's for twenty-somethings or "mature" women, you can expect lots of women, lots of personal tragedy, and lots of typical "woman" problems. And Sally Koslow's "With Friends Like These: A Novel" follows the basic patterns of a chick-lit novel -- but at least it's written in a superior style, with slightly more fleshed-out characters.

The main characters are four young women who met when seeking an apartment -- and while it's an odd way to start a friendship, they end up becoming buddies. But years pass for them, even though they continue living within the same city, and their lives become more and more divergent -- three are married, one is happily single, one is unhappily childless, etc.

And as they all approach forty, the women grapple with some major problems, as unhappy breadwinner Talia goes to extreme lengths to get her son into a primo school, screwing over one of her friends. And when unhappily childless Quincy voices her desire for a certain apartment, one of her buddies will betray her.

I do admit that I like a novel that is more about the bonds of friendship being strained than "Yay! Women's friendship! It's so much awesomer than other kinds of friendship!" But at the same time, it spends much too much time focusing just on the negatives of female friendship, without mentioning how female friends can also be incredibly supportive.

And in turn, the main characters aren't terribly likable -- Talia is obsessed but doesn't seem inclined to fix her situation herself, though she experiences a lot of crippling guilt. Jules is simply selfish. I preferred the more developed Chloe and Quincy, who develop more as a result of what their buddies did.

I will admit that Sally Koslow is a talented writer, who has a talent for writing strong, descriptive writing. However, the problems these women faced were all very cliched -- miscarriages, good private schools, mild marital strife, singlehood in the late thirties, and so on. I kept waiting for something truly big to happen to these women, something that would shake up the narrative... and was left dangling.

I did so want to like "With Friends Like These," but Sally Koslow felt like she could have written something much more intense. Sadly, I'll have to wait for the next book.

Jill Meyer says

Before Bridget Jones burst onto the literary scene and the term "chic-lit" was coined to describe a genre of hapless females trying in their own inept ways to get a man, women were writing novels featuring intelligent, usually clever, women and their dreams and aspirations. From the recent past, Gail Parent, Olivia Goldsmith, Anne Bernays, Elinor Lipman, and Susan Isaacs all produced such novels. (And those are just the few I could list off the top of my head.) I'll add Sally Koslow to that list, after finishing "With Friends Like These", and having read and enjoyed her first novel, "The Late, Lamented Molly Marx".

"Friends" is the story of four women, all in their late 30's and early 40's, who've been close friends since they shared an apartment in Manhattan in their unmarried days. Three of the women have married, and of those three, two have had babies. The other married woman has had a series of miscarriages. The fourth woman is unmarried and doesn't want children. Koslow's novel takes a year in their lives where they each manage to subvert the plans of another "friend". Betraying confidences, taking job offers, and sabotaging real estate aspirations take their toll on the once-close friendships these women enjoyed. Koslow is a good writer; the

nuances of life show up in these characters. The story is good and entertaining, and I never disliked a character, though I sometimes disliked what she did.

So, to call Koslow's two books "chic-lit" is wrong. Regular "chic-lit", which I sometimes enjoy, never reaches the story and personality depth Koslow does in her writing. Sally Koslow is an author to keep looking for.

Lisa says

This book was such a disappointment! I loved this author's last book (The Late, Lamented Molly Marx), so when I saw this at the library, I grabbed it. There couldn't be a greater contrast! I'm even tempted to give it one star, but for some reason I actually finished the book. Maybe 1.5-2 stars?

Kelly 💜?? says

I read this book for a meetup of the Weekend SD Book Divas! and had a great discussion. I think the majority of us agreed that this wasn't the best book. The story follows 4 women friends in NYC as they were friends 10 years ago and then start to drift apart and have issues with each other. The story was told with each chapter being from one of the four women's perspectives. Personally, I like this format because it's interesting to have a first person account but from various viewpoints. The main problem with this book as that we didn't get enough character development on any of the four characters and they all felt flat. It was hard to keep track of the 4 women and I kept thinking that the author should have used different fonts for each character. I really love the way that one of my favorite authors, Jodi Picoult, does this with her books. It really allows the reader to have a richer insight into the characters and more easily change perspectives with each narrator. At the meetup, we discussed how all four of the characters were not fully developed and did stupid things. We had a great time discussing our own experiences with female friendships and how the relationships grew or eventually dissolved. I definitely had a far better time at the meetup with my girls than reading this dull book!

Derinda says

This was a wonderful book !!! I enjoyed it from page one to the very last page it held my interest at all times .

Its a wonderful story about friendship, how friendships stick through thick and thin even though there might be problems here and there.

It showed the true meaning of friendship, through hard times, and good times and even some backstabbing .

The book was very well written , I liked how Sally did a chapter on each of the girls lives and what was going on with them in detail it made the book more meaning and personal to me that I really got to know the girls through their good times and troubling times.

Sally did a excellent job in writing, keeping the storyline on target and keeping the reader wanting to keep reading the book

A++++

Heather says

Four women who are old friends, each chapter from a different one's point of view, interesting plot- what more can you ask for? You could probably ask for a lot, but I'd say this book has most of it. An enjoyable read.

Kate says

I recieved this book as a first read.

The book is well written, but I just can't get into it. I find all of the women abbrasive and unlikeable so I'm putting this book down for a while - maybe I'll revisit later.

Erin says

Overall I enjoyed this book, I especially love books with multiple narrators. I've previously read *The Late, Lamented Molly Marx* and *Little Pink Slips* and am a fan of Sally Kaslow, however I felt there were lots of little things about this book that I didn't love. Like I said, I love multiple narrators, but didn't like that it would get to a pivotal point and the chapter would end. Then when it picked back up a few chapters later, the situation had lost steam. And it left gaping holes in stories and time; however it did keep me interested and reading. I also felt like there were several typos, or they were just phrases that didn't make sense. As I said overall I enjoyed the stories of the friends. If you can overlook the minor issues, it's a great relaxing read.
