



Before and Ever Since

Sharla Lovelace

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EMILY LOCKWOOD, YOUR PAST IS SHOWING...

Emily Lockwood has been sitting on a secret for so long, and buried so deep that she really doesn't even think of it anymore. Why should she? She has a successful career, an ex-husband who rarely tests her patience, a mother who usually does, and a stubbornly independent grown daughter. Everything is fine, just another crazy kind of normal.

Until Ben Landry comes back to town. From childhood friends to young lovers, Ben and Emily had an unbreakable bond. Or so she thought—until he disappeared for over twenty years without explanation. Seeing Ben again triggers more than mere memories and a tug at her heart. It rips the cover off an old secret that could hurt the people she loves most.

While Emily works to keep her secret safe and her heart safer, her sanity gets a reality check. She's been seeing things—her past played out like home movies unreeling before her eyes, visions that are making Emily see herself, her family, everyone she knew, and every choice she made, in a revealing new light and a startling new angle. For Emily, seeing her life in rewind makes her realize she has hard choices to make for her future. Choices that may redefine everyone else's future as well.

Before and Ever Since Details

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From Reader Review Before and Ever Since for online ebook

Margaret says

book provided by NightOwl

Emily was born and raised in her home town. She has carried a secret from everyone for 21 years. No one knew, not even her ex-husband. When her past starts to catch up with her she tries with all her might to keep her secret. The thing is she is given a small gift in her parents' house. She has to decide if keeping her secret is the best thing for everyone. Or to tell it before everyone finds out on their own.

Ben came back to town after almost 21 years of being gone. He was hired to fix up a house so that it could be put on the market to sell. He did not know that his past would come back to bite him in the butt. He did not know that he would have to face some very upsetting things. He had to decide if being lied to was less than losing the one he loved for a second time. He had to decide if love was worth fighting for.

The whole book was about family and dealing with the past to move forward. Being able to move forward from hurt and lies is what the book was about. Ben and Emily were both hurt because of a major misunderstanding on both of their parts. They both needed to decide if they could move forward again or have broken hearts forever.

I was completely surprised by the little twist that the author threw in. At first I did not know if I liked it, but the more I read, the more I understood why it was there. I actually looked forward to those parts. It gave more insight on what happened. It also helped Emily realize what she had and will need to fight to keep. I was blown away on what and how the author wrote. I was amazed by her descriptions and how she threw things in the book that made you fall in love with the characters. She wrote a book that made you feel for the characters and made you think. She made you think about how your life was and what is worth fighting for.

I am defiantly going to look for more books by this author. I would love to read what else she as written.

Christi Snow says

My Review:

Sharla Lovelace has only a very few books out. Last year I read **THE REASON IS YOU** and absolutely adored it (in fact, it made my top 10 list for the year). I've had this book in my TBR pile since I read that first one, but had such high hopes and expectations for it, honestly, I was a bit afraid to read it. Well I am so happy to report that this book was just as good as the other. So good!!! OMG!

The book begins with the shocker for Emily that her mother has decided to sell her home and go on the road with her crazy Aunt and the big blue RV. This is the house her mother has lived in since she got married, so both girls were raised in it. It has so many memories for Emily and the house seems to be giving those memories back to her. As she helps clean it out, she begins to have a series of visions of events that happened in the house which she is able to watch play out like a movie. It's giving her a new fresh perspective on her parents, her childhood, and her relationships that played out in the house...and each vision always reveals something that she didn't know before.

Emily is 39-40. She has a grown 21 year old daughter and an ex-husband in the picture. Her ex husband was her boyfriend all through high school and they got married when she got pregnant. They have a decent relationship although he was a jerk and cheated on her constantly. The ties to their daughter have kept them at a friends level all these years. During high school, she also had her best friend, Ben, who came from a troubled home. But they knew everything about each other and would end each evening sitting out on the rooftop outside her bedroom. Twenty one years ago that ended when he slept with her a single time and then disappeared from her life never to be seen again....until her mom starts getting the house ready to sell. He's the handyman she hires to fix up the place and everything begins to unravel from there.

This is a story interwoven with great characters....all tied to Emily. There is a lot going on in each of their lives as they deal with the upheaval of life. As the reader gets to know them, threads begin to unravel and secrets are revealed. Sharla Lovelace is a master story-teller. The way the book is written is magic. The flashbacks and the little pieces of new story you get along the way. I couldn't read it fast enough...and then was sad when it was over, so had to go back and re-read my favorite parts. It's an emotional read and definitely admit to crying while reading it, but I laughed just as much. It was just one of those books...all-around, it made me feel better for having read it. There is definitely angst in it, but the ending is gorgeous. I LOVED THIS BOOK!

HIGHLY RECOMMEND!

I'll tell you right now, Sharla Lovelace is officially on my auto-buy authors list.

Miscjoy says

I know I'm going to love a book when I first fall in love with the author's voice and writing style. Such is the case here. I almost took a pass on it when the ARC was offered because it was categorized as "Romantic Women's Fiction" and I'm not a big chick-lit fan. Nothing wrong with that genre per se, it just doesn't speak to me. But then I read the excerpt. And Wow. O_O That first page – hell, that first sentence – I knew I had to read this story.

LOVED IT!!!! No, seriously. LOVED.

I had started this book on a Friday night just before dinner and only got through the first chapter before being called away. It was later that evening before I could pick it up again and I ended up reading through the night. It was 5:30am and there I was, still sitting in the family room, iPad propped on my knees and I didn't want to stop reading (yeah, I know, I'm not a fast reader). Sometimes the body dictates otherwise, so I took my gritty, red, tired eyes to bed. But only for a few hours and then, it was right back at it (oh, happy Saturday!)...

Read the full review as posted on November 12, 2012 at The Book Pushers:
<http://thebookpushers.com/2012/11/12/...>

Jennifer-Eve Workman says

I won this through Goodreads First Reads Giveaway.

Fantastic book! The romantic plot has a great twist that breaks from the typical "a love lost" type of story

line. The only thing I'd like to see different is a bit more explanation as to why certain "mysterious" type visions keep happening to Emily. Or at least some kind of vague explanation or hint... Otherwise, I really enjoyed this book. Totally worth time to read and recommend!

Megan Fall says

I love books about young lovers who find each other later in life. This one was really good. I absolutely adored the characters and the story was perfect! Another great read from this author.

Julie Barrett says

Before and ever Since by Sharla Lovelace

Great book and what I really liked was that there are two stories here. First the present day story where Em and Holly's mother is selling her house and traveling the world with her sister Bernie in her RV.

It's a surprise to the girls as they clean out their rooms and attic of their things. Em is now divorced from Kevin and her 21 year old daughter Cass is on her own. They all meet at the family house to help and Ben, a neighbor helps with the heavy things and repainting, etc.

Em and Ben were an item at one time and that's where the second story comes into play. There are excerpts throughout the book of their time when they were teens, Em becomes pregnant and Ben leaves so she ends up with Kevin.

Only Holly knows the truth but other hear them talking and things get out of hand and Cass ends up with a medical emergency that draws out the truth.

There is also a mystery of their dad's hidden treasure box-he was saving for their trips around the world but they never got to take them.

Bit of steamy sex but more important solving all the mysteries that arise. Excerpt from The Reason is You is included at the back.

I received this book from The Kensington Books in exchange for my honest review

shms says

3.5*. I struggled to get into the book and after several starts, it seemed to hit the stride or it fit the mood and off we went.

Compelling reading, even though I'm not a fan of the first person POV nor the fact that I didn't like any of the characters much though by the end my heart hurt for her daughter and her ex-husband. I couldn't understand how a person could hang on to such a huge secret and be able to sleep at night. And I'm definitely not admiring of characters who take the easy road and yet through all of that I was rooting for the h to get her happy ending.

Vanessa says

I so adored this book! I wasn't sure if I would given it first person, but Sharla made that work great!! At

time I did wish to know the other character's thoughts and yet I was afraid of stepping into that minefield given what is revealed over the course of the story. That was harsh, but I could understand the reasoning that got them all there. I also liked that Emily was shown things from different views so that she could see she didn't always have the whole story. I liked that she also said some things that I would have liked for her to say. Well except for one time I wished that someone had pointed out to Ben what he had decided long ago about things, even if just as an aside or something. I'm also left wondering if the ex had felt Emily was more engaged if he would have done what he did throughout their married life. Overall this was a great story. It isn't like a lot of romances and there is some fun chic lit tossed in too. The interactions b/w the female characters was a hoot! It was more real life, w/ messiness and mistakes and just plain humanness thrown in. That little mean part of me wouldn't have minded a little bit more revenge on some characters (rather than just what momma was doing) that should have been dealt w/ ;) more.

Dorine says

5 Blue Ribbon Review + Recommended Read courtesy of Romance Junkies. Full review also available at my blog, TBR Mountain Range. For a light-hearted contemporary story that surprises you with its deep, emotional, black moments, you don't want to miss this one! From the first sentence, first paragraph and first page, I was enamored by this heroine's voice. And the hero? Scrumptious!

Sometimes I wonder if I can do a book justice by trying to describe how good it really is, and this novel is one of those indescribable-without-experiencing-it types of love stories. The book kicks off with a great first sentence, onto a fun paragraph, peaking with an engaging first page of the first chapter that drew me right in. I was immediately hooked on the heroine's comedic look at her lousy life that just gets worse as the day continues. If you've ever had one of those days, weeks or years, you'll completely relate to these characters and their methods of dealing with harbored lifetime heartache that will hopefully be forgiven. After all, doesn't everything always happen for a reason?

Emily Lockwood is a divorced single mom of a nearly twenty-one-year-old daughter. Her cheating husband became her ex-husband some time ago, but he still butts into her life for various reasons, usually concerning their daughter. Not today.

Today he decides to tell Emily that he wants to buy her mother's house. Except Emily knows her mom's house isn't for sale. After all, as a realtor herself, wouldn't she know that? Not today.

In Emily's life, surprises should be expected since her ex-husband surprised her enough with his multitude of indiscretions. Emily has moved beyond all that history, or at least, she thought she had, until the love of her life, before the ex-husband, returns to their hometown and rekindles more than their lust for each other.

Can Emily deal with her mother selling their family home and the emotion it renews from her childhood, plus a secret she's so desperate to keep that it seems to seep from every wall of the house? Ben Landry is back, taunting her memories just as much as the house she's trying to pack up, not to mention her sister who knows her secret, and her crazy aunt who is bound to discover it. Let's not forget Emily's free-spirited daughter and her boyfriend, who come to help Emily's mom, as well as the meddlesome ex-husband and his annoying realtor girlfriend. All of them descending upon one house and the memories it holds. What could possibly go wrong? Emily is about to find out in ways she never dreamed possible. Until today.

Light-hearted with situations so real that you can't help but laugh, while shaking your head in agreement ? BEFORE AND EVER SINCE resonates with entertaining characters that you can relate to because someone you know is just like them. It's so easy to get into the rhythm of a light-hearted story like this, so when the

black moment comes, you feel like you've been thwacked over the head with a vacuum, which proceeds to suck the life right out of you in one huge unexpected sob. It didn't take long to realize that this book wasn't finished with putting this reader through the wringer yet, and I gladly rode the emotional roller coaster right to the end. Fantastic!

BEFORE AND EVER SINCE is an outstanding contemporary story with a mystical element that fuels the conflict. Never quite sure what their family home has in store for Emily, you can't help but hope that somehow she'll find the happiness she deserves. I highly recommend BEFORE AND EVER SINCE as a creative exploration through human emotions and the power of forgiveness. Author Sharla Lovelace has a style all her own ? a talent you don't want to miss!

Cocktails and Books says

Emily Lockwood's been hiding a secret for the past twenty one years. A secret she never worried about coming out, until her mother put her house up for sale, her ex-best friend arrived back in town and Emily suddenly starts taking trips down memory lane courtesy of her childhood home.

Sharla Lovelace is a gifted storyteller. She creates characters that are very down-to-earth, flawed and understand that there isn't a fairy tale happily ever after waiting for them at the end. They're ok with things being good or just OK.

Emily must deal with her mother's decision to sell her childhood home and the sudden flashbacks she starts having when she enters certain rooms in the house. The flashbacks tell the story of not only what her mother did for the sake of their family, but shows Emily what she didn't see in some of her teenage and young adult interactions with Ben Landry, along with the final moments of her father's life. The flashbacks help Emily (and us) understand some of the secrets that have been kept within her family and give her some clarity as to why certain events happened in her life.

In Before and Ever Since, we get a story that is messy and doesn't tie up with a beautify bow at the end. As Emily deals with the reappearance of her best friend Ben Landry, she finds herself dealing with feelings she thought had been long buried. She bounces back and forth between being nice to Ben to being down right ugly to him. Behind it all is her confusion over her feelings as well as her apprehension that the secret she's long held buried will blow up now that Ben is back. As a reader, you are right there with Emily, feeling her confusion and pain at every interaction she has with Ben. It's raw, it's gritty and it's not tied up with a pretty bow, which makes it feel so very real.

I loved the story and I love the characters. The story and the characters will grab you from the first page, demanding that we go on this journey with them. It was a journey I'm glad I took. I look forward to reading more from Sharla Lovelace in the future.

J says

3.5 stars. Second chance romance with some heartbreak at how much keeping a secret can hurt others. It was okay.

Terry (Ter05 TwiMoms/ MundieMoms) says

I loved Sharla Lovelace's first book *The Reason Is You*, and she did it again. She manages to pull you into the story with her main character who is telling it in the first person partly because Emily is just so darn down to earth and real. This book is not YA, Emily is 40 and has a grown daughter. She is divorced and a fairly successful realtor who works out of her home. Her ex is rather a jerk and she caught him cheating on her some years ago.

The story begins when Emily finds out that her mother's house is up for sale and not only that, is listed with the woman her husband cheated with. The discussions between Emily, her sister Holly, and her mother are priceless, and of course we know Em's feelings throughout. This is the home where they grew up, the home where their now deceased father lived with their mom, and they expected mom to live there forever. Surprise surprise when mom actually would like a different life for herself. They experience so much shock that all those old memories are tied up in a home they all shared.

But there is much more to this story, because Em has a secret that only she and her sister share. Enter the man her mom has hired to fix up the house for the sale, Ben. Emily is in total shock when she sees him because 20 years previously he simply walked out of her life and she had never seen him again. They were childhood friends - best friends even though she was dating her ex back through high school. Then right when she needed Ben he was gone. I just do not want to do spoilers here because so much of this the reader needs to find out as they read. So I will say this much about Emily and Ben. Their relationship is very shaky and both are harboring some kind of resentment, but underneath it is sizzling. Em can not get past her anger at his leaving for a reason she does not understand, but that does not stop her from wanting him. As I said, this is not YA but a book about adults. There is a sensual scene with the two of them dancing that is really hot. It is not smutty but there is sex - I described it to a friend as a YA book about adult emotions and actions. Not sure that makes sense but it did to me. Ben is a worthy book crush and Emily's story is often sad and frustrating, but she has a journey to make to find what she really wants. Her secret which I am not going to go into here is a big one and many people can be hurt if it is revealed.

Okay, but there is also a supernatural twist too. When Emily is in her mother's house she feels like she may pass out, and suddenly she is in the past. The first time she observes her parents as newly weds. She can see and hear them but they can not see her and she can not move from the spot she was standing in. When she comes out of the trance only ten seconds or so have passed and yet it seemed like over half an hour. This happens a number of times as she learns things about her family as well as about herself and Ben. All in all it is the writing that makes this a great read and that makes you want so much for Emily and Ben to figure all this out and be together. And I loved that this is a stand alone book just as this author's previous book was. I'll read whatever she writes next!

Jess (Gone with the Words) says

Read this review on my blog! --> [Before and Ever Since by Sharla Lovelace](#)

In *Before and Ever Since*, Sharla Lovelace gives us such a compelling story. Not only was this a story about love—found, lost, and found again—but also about what makes a family a family. It's also about secrets, the good and bad they can bring.

I completely loved this story. Aside from being compelling, it was also magical. I don't think I've ever been so wrapped up in the lives of characters so quickly as I was with these, but that's probably because Ms. Lovelace throws us for a whirlwind right from the start. I loved that! No build up, just..."get ready, folks!

Shtuff’s about to hit the fan!” I didn’t expect to have such depth to the love story between Emily and Ben. I mean, they had a thing when they were teens, I didn’t realize how much bigger than a “thing” it actually was. It was one of those epic friendships from childhood that turns into love, only to have it break your heart in the end. But who did the breaking, reeeeeeally? I thought I knew...

But now Emily and Ben have gotten a second chance at...something, and no matter how hard they try to fight it, their sparks are undeniable and, oh, so obvious to everyone. I loved their chemistry. And I loved how it was all laced with this tension that was so very palpable. I also really enjoyed the complicated family dynamics. I loved Emily’s mom for wanting to go out and have an adventure. I really enjoyed Emily’s relationship with her daughter, and even the relationship with her sister.

I think the biggest surprise was finding out just how real and emotional this story turned out to be. Even with its fantasy/supernatural elements, where Emily somehow was seeing the past, even then it felt so real. The emotions from these characters were so vivid for me, I cried a few times toward the end. What can I say? When characters and their stories are written this well, I can’t help but feel so invested. And so for all these reasons, I’m really looking forward to reading more from this Texas author.

Janga says

Before and Ever Since is a hybrid of women’s fiction and romance. In part, it is the story of Emily’s coming to terms with who she is and discovering that even the people she knows best and loves most are more complex and layered than she ever realized. During the course of the story, Emily’s relationship with her mother, her sister, and her daughter changes. But at the heart of the story is her relationship with Ben, past and present.

Lovelace creates a cast of characters who, with few exceptions, are interesting, likeable, and free from the clichéd characteristics that might easily have defined and limited them. Even the cheating ex is a fully realized character with strengths and vulnerabilities. Because the point of view is first person, it is easy to sympathize with Emily and to understand her conflicted emotions concerning Ben and her visceral physical response to him. One of my favorite moments between the two occurs when they dance:

In that instant, there was no unexplained anger, no arrogance, no distance. No words spoken, even. I thought we’d try to ease the awkwardness with dumb conversation, but suddenly there was nothing to say. At that moment, we were who we used to be. As he pressed my hand against his chest and moved his other hand up to the base of my neck, we moved together as one and there was no bad history or tension or sadness.

I really wanted Emily and Ben to have their HEA, but I wanted it to happen without other characters whom I also cared about being hurt in the process. Lovelace provides a happy ending, but it’s no fairy tale ending with magical resolutions. Her characters inhabit a real world where choices have consequences and people sometimes hurt those they love. If you like your romance with rich contexts, a realistic edge, and protagonists who are old enough to have some mileage on them, I think you will enjoy this novel as much as I did.

See full review at The Romance Dish:
<http://www.theromancedish.com/2012/11...>

Michelle [Helen Geek] says

08/14/2014 --

Overall Rating = 2.5 Stars

Book Cover / Book Blurb / Book Title = 3 / 3 / 3 = 3.5 Stars

Writer's Voice = 2 Stars

Character Development = 3.5 Stars

Story Appreciation = 3 Stars

Ending = 3 Stars

Worth the Chili = 2 Stars -- [\$5.99 on Amazon]

Smexy [HEAT] Rating = Mild

336 pages

Okay, I'm onto the formula. I can't say this was my favorite read. It was just on the low end of okay. This author fails to elicit much emotion or overall concern from this reader. I think I've read enough of Sharla Lovelace for now.

Hope you like this one better than I did.

Happy Reading!
