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How To Love



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Synopsis

Before: Reena Montero has loved Sawyer LeGrande for as long as she can remember, as natural as breathing, as endless as time. But he’s never seemed to notice that Reena even exists - until one day, impossibly, he does. Reena and Sawyer fall in messy, complicated love. But then Sawyer disappears from their humid Florida town without a word, leaving a devastated - and pregnant - Reena behind. After: Almost three years have passed, and there’s a new love in Reena’s life: her daughter, Hannah. Reena’s gotten used to life without Sawyer, and she’s finally getting the hang of this strange, unexpected life. But just as swiftly and suddenly as he disappeared, Sawyer turns up again. Reena doesn’t want anything to do with him, though she’d be lying if she said Sawyer’s being back wasn’t stirring something in her. After everything that’s happened, can Reena really let herself love Sawyer LeGrande again? In this breathtaking debut, Katie Cotugno weaves together the story of one couple falling in love - twice.

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Customer Reviews

I thought this book was well-written and unfortunately might be very realistic but in the end it was not for me.The biggest problem I had with the book was I didn’t like the characters. I never liked Sawyer and in the before parts you can pass of Reena’s love for him as infatuation because she’s young and she doesn’t know any better. I mean there’s one part where he talks her out of going to school and her meetings they go back to his place, have sex and then she gets to watch him get high with his roommates. Oh boy! That’s romantic. Ugh.The after parts killed it for me though. Reena has her

kid, a good man, and a pretty good life and you keep waiting for her to stand up to Sawyer and let him go for real. That is not what happened. Not only did that not happened the longer it went on for me the more Reena turned into a silly, obnoxious brat who didn't listen and treated the people around her that weren't Sawyer like crap.So the book left me frustrated because I'm sorry but I want someone to tell me how was this love? How was this healthy? I honestly couldn't even figure out why they loved each other in the first place.

I went into this book expecting to love it; sadly, I was disappointed. Although perhaps that is because my expectations were too high, I think it just was not the book for me. For that reason, don't take my rating too seriously. You might not even care about the things that bothered me.What I liked:I applaud the author for writing about a topic so rarely covered in YA fiction. She did a great job at portraying each character and how they were affected by teenage pregnancy. I love that nobody ever blames the baby, Hannah, for the negative side effects of her conception (e.g. mom cannot go away to college). Reena is very present in her life and always puts her first, and everybody treats her well.The main character, Reena, looses the chance of her lifetime due to her pregnancy. Instead of heading off to college and following her dreams, she stays in her hometown with the family that had not forgiven her for throwing away her future. Although she is bitter about it, she never blames her daughter for it, ignores her, or takes it out on her.Reena's best friend is very supportive and responds to what happens throughout the book in a very realistic, yet still understanding way. Cotugno handles the LGTB aspect beautifully, paying it the right amount of attention and choosing the wording carefully, especially since many characters are very catholic.Reena's boyfriend at the beginning of the novel (present-time), Aaron, is also a great character. He treats her well and never expects her to ignore her baby. I just wish he had had a more prominent role in the story.Lastly, I love Soledad, Reena's step-mother. They have a very realistic mother-daughter relationship. It is obvious that she truly cares for her husband and his well-being, as well as loving Reena and her baby.The writing in this book is absorbing. Reena has a very powerful and vivid voice that manages to bring the characters and situations to life despite my complaints below. Cotugno tackles teenage pregnancy, religion, drug use, death, and family disputes in an engaging style and without judging, but never making light of the problems.What I disliked:The narration style just does not do it for me. I hated going back and forth from Reena's perspective before the pregnancy to Reena's perspective after having the baby every chapter. I hated the cliff hangers that you would have to wait a whole chapter to get the answers to. I hated that just when I was getting into one of the stories, it would get cut off in favor of the other one. It

made it harder for me to get into the story, and even annoyed me a bit.I think another reason why this negatively affected my reading experience is because I disliked Sawyer and liked Reena in the "Before", but disliked Reena and liked Sawyer in the "After". Of course, I did not fully dislike or like either of them at any point, but certain qualities annoyed me sometimes. It was hard to get invested in a character when I liked them one chapter and disliked them the next.I also really dislike Reena and Sawyer's love story. First of all, there is no real reason why they even like each other; they just do. Their relationship is more obsession than love. The author simply did not manage to make me root for them, and I found myself constantly hoping Reena would open her eyes and realize she was making the same mistakes all over again.In addition, I hated the role Reena's old bestfriend, Allie, played in the story. I hated the cheating, and the finger pointing, and Reena's response to their fight. I truly think that it was unnecessary in the novel, and that everything it added to the story were things I disliked about the book.How to Love is a great novel, it just mightn't be the novel for you. It could, however, still be worth the read for its style and point of view.

How to Love was frustrating to read. ItÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s a book about second chance love, which I thought sounded amazing. And it might have been, had Sawyer LeGrande not been an epic waste of time. This book should have been called How to Love A Terrible Person and Ruin Your Life As A Result.I hate to be harsh because the book had promise and wasnÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t badly written. I liked the constant jumping from Before to After as we got to understand Reena and Sawyer and how things ended up that way. I kept reading, captivated, wanting to find out what happened between them. How to Love is one of those books that I thoroughly enjoyed reading, but once I figured out the full story, it was a waste of time.The story began with Reena. She was raising her daughter on her own and out of high school. She ran into Sawyer at a gas station and realized that he was back in town for the first time since he left her. The reader had no idea what happened other than Sawyer knocked her up at some point and then left and now heÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s back years later. The book switched from After (the baby) to Before frequently throughout the story, so we eventually got the entire picture. ReenaÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s family wasnÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t very happy with the fact that she got pregnant at 16 and her relationship with SawyerÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s parents was nonexistent. She hadnÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t spoken to Sawyer since he left, shortly after getting her pregnant. In the Before sections, we found out that she had always had a crush on him since she was a little kid.I am not judgmental and I love some flawed characters.
IÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢m always rooting for the worst kinds of villains in fiction. Not just your typically bad boy, but the ones that are actually problematic, selfish, and sometimes evil. That is NOT why I

dislike Sawyer, really. I can grow to love a flawed bad boy character. I promise. But Sawyer had to the be the worst character to have as the love interest and he was so terrible to Reena. Over and over and over again! And she just kept letting it happen! I wanted to slap her the entire time!Reena virtually never spoke up for herself. She was in a relationship with a nice, but generally uninteresting guy. She had a shaky relationship with her parents after having her child. The highlight in her life was Hannah, her daughter, but that was basically it. She took some classes at a college, but it was obvious she had gotten into a much better college and had some set goals before finding out she was pregnant. She dreamed of being a travel writer, but was instead a waitress and part time student. While I understood that things have to change when you have a kid, I was kind of irritated that she let her pregnancy stop her from doing what she wanted. No, she couldnÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t go off to a 4 year college and ignore her baby, but she could have at least travelled and wrote a bit and not let her circumstances stop her from finding some sort of compromise and joy in her life. She could have at least tried to mend things with her parents by SPEAKING UP every once in awhile. YouÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢re a mom, Reena, youÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢re an adult. Get the F up and do something with your life and stop letting everyone around you blame you alone for your circumstances. Rise above them and also stop treating them like your life is now ruined.And then came Sawyer. He had so many problems and he was the kind of guy who made Reena turn into mush and stop being responsible. It was clear that he wanted back into her life and he even attempted to form a relationship with Hannah. It complicated things, especially because she cared about him. But he was terrible. In the Before, he was a drug addict. He took her to parties and scored drugs and just LEFT HER in rooms with strangers KNOWING she was uncomfortable. He flirted with other girls ALL OF THE TIME in front of her. He lied to her in order to not hurt her feelings. He wasnÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t the kind of bad boy who was better around the girl he loved. He wasnÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t the kind of guy who made her into a better, more well rounded person. He didnÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t make her take risks that eventually opened her up in a positive way, like so many bad boys in romantic fiction. There were literally NO redeeming qualities about him. And she just let all of this happen. In the After, he was clean, he was back, and he was willing to be around for her, but there was still this general perception that he really had no responsibilities. Nothing about his past was addressed other than the fact that he wasnÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t doing drugs or drinking anymore. Everyone blamed Reena for getting pregnant and even looking SawyerÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s way in the first place and it was generally perceived that it was her fault for getting involved with him. When he came back, that perception was still there as her family warned her not to mess up this time. Which was BS. Where was his slice of blame and

responsibility?Also, when Sawyer left, there was no reason for it. Honestly, he just left and I think it was to create a plot device. Later, it was the general idea that he was afraid she would go off to college and leave him. She was good, he was bad. He worried about her leaving him, she worried about him leaving her. So he left first. And then she was pregnant. And they rarely talked about anything important, or those fears could have been alleviated. Why would anyone want to be with someone who made them feel like less of a person? She never spoke up about her feelings or her wants, and he never talked about his issues. They didnÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t belong together at all.My feelings about the book are directly related to Sawyer. The fact that heÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s supposed to be the main squeeze just made me lose all respect for Reena and not enjoy the way things panned out as a result. A better story would have been her finally finding someone who treated her right that she also could fall for and for her family to support her. It seems as though other readers liked Sawyer and rated the book highly because they didnÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t have the same problems that I did. My advice is to decide for yourself. How to Love is a quick read and itÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s certainly worth reading. It was written pretty well and dealt with a lot of issues. If you donÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t hate Sawyer, IÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢m sure it would be quite enjoyable.

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