

The background features a complex network of white nodes connected by thin white lines, set against a gradient background that transitions from a deep purple at the top to a bright pink at the bottom. The nodes are scattered across the frame, with some forming distinct geometric shapes like triangles and polygons. The overall aesthetic is modern and digital.

All We Ever Wanted

Written by Emily Giffin

Published by sanmarco-sf

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All We Ever Wanted

All We Ever Wanted

By Emily Giffin

All We Ever Wanted

Nina Browning is living the good life after marrying into Nashville's elite. More recently, her husband made a fortune selling his tech business, and their adored son has been accepted to Princeton.

All We Ever Wanted

All We Ever Wanted Was Everything

Yet sometimes the middle-class small-town girl in Nina wonders if she's strayed from the person she once was.

All We Ever Knew Lyrics

Tom Volpe is a single dad working multiple jobs while struggling to raise his headstrong daughter, Lyla. His road has been lonely, long, and hard, but he finally starts to relax after Lyla earns a scholarship to Windsor Academy, Nashville's most prestigious private school.

All We Ever Wanted Book

Amid so much wealth and privilege, Lyla doesn't always fit in--and her overprotective father doesn't help--but in most ways, she's a typical teenaged girl, happy and thriving.

All We Ever Knew

Then, one photograph, snapped in a drunken moment at a party, changes everything. As the image spreads like wildfire, the Windsor community is instantly polarized, buzzing with controversy and assigning blame.

All We Ever Do Is Say Goodbye

At the heart of the lies and scandal, Tom, Nina, and Lyla are forced together--all questioning their closest relationships, asking themselves who they really are, and searching for the courage to live a life of true meaning.

3.5 stars

With her ninth novel, Emily Giffin takes an ambitious step away from her traditional love story narratives and attempts to tackle relevant topics surrounding social media, privilege, racism, and self-worth. Things that feel all too timely with the dominance of social media and the #metoo movement. I'm just not so sure it all worked.

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Despite the staggering number of issues Giffin sets out to address with this plot, there's a lack of emotionality, leaving the reader to flail in the shallow end of the pool. Entertaining for sure, yet all too forgettable, in the grand scheme of things.

I think by now we've all read some version of this story or at least seen a Dateline special (have I mentioned, I'm a junkie?). A sexually explicit photo of a drunken scholarship girl, taken by the uber-popular rich guy, and captioned with a racist "joke", goes viral. The question becomes, what really happened that night and who's responsible?

It takes the rumor mill "gossip perpetuated by one of her biggest rivals" to snap Nina Browning into reality. Maybe buying her son a brand new G-Wagon, allowing him to drink without repercussion and footing the bill for everything his heart has ever desired has made him feel entitled. Untouchable. Privileged. Ya think? Compounding her regret is her husband's own pompous attitude.

In stereotypical fashion, Nina's husband is convinced throwing money at their problem will simply make things disappear. They have plenty of it being one of Nashville's elite, so what's the harm? Why hold their son accountable when it might jeopardize his acceptance to Princeton or tarnish their standing in the community? Gag.

The major obstacle to just moving on is Lyla's dad. The typical overprotective father, with a host of

All We Ever Wanted

issues and insecurities surrounding money, is adamant. Taking a stance (although, he wavers at the most unexpected times) and protecting his daughter's self-worth means not allowing the incident to just fade into the ether.

Lyla earns the spotlight here, being the naive teenage girl, too in love with her crush to do anything other than brush away his major error in judgement. With time and wisdom, she'll learn.

There are a host of other issues packed within these pages—relationship baggage, infidelity, dishonesty, date rape, divorce . . . it's a bit much. While the ending is a little unexpected, it still feels deflating somehow. I can't help but to think, if Giffin would have focused in on a few key issues, instead of trying to color with every crayon in the box, the big picture might have been more impactful.

While I would consider this an enjoyable experience—for the most part—it's not one I'm earmarking as a favorite of Emily Giffin's.

****Thank you to Ballantine Books and NetGalley for a copy in exchange for an honest review.**** ...more

All We Ever Wanted Was Everything Mgmt

"You should always side with your kid. Always."

"Without regard to his actions?" I asked. "No matter what?"

Here's two things I know for certain: 1) I would never condone abusive discriminatory behaviour, and 2) I would do everything within my power to protect my sons. So what happens if those two things directly contradict one another?

This book surprised me by how much it affected me. I actually felt deeply discomfited and sad while reading it. I've never read Emily Giffin and, to be honest, I probably wouldn't have if this hadn't popped up in the Goodreads Choice nominations and happened to be available at my local library. It was a spur-of-the-moment decision that became something I couldn't put down.

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Multiple perspectives are brought in as this story unfolds. One is Nina Browning, whose son Finch tears apart their cushy life when he posts a picture of a latina classmate passed out drunk and barely-dressed at a party, and then captions it with a racist joke. Nina's distress is palpable, and memories of her own traumatic past surface as she is forced to consider how her son became someone who would do this and if there's time to save him (and others) from himself.

I found it extremely compelling. On a plot level, I needed to know how things would work out. Nina becomes convinced Finch's father has fuelled this toxic behaviour and she starts to question her husband and their marriage, too. The story often seems headed in certain directions but surprises us by not giving into the usual cliches.

But it's more than just a compelling family drama. Maybe I felt this one so deeply because the scenario was horrifying-- what do you do when the person you love and care for more than anything seems to be hurting others? It's obviously not an easy question to answer, and Nina's reaction to it felt honest and sad.

All We Ever Wanted asks questions about privilege and entitlement, responsibility and blame. Despite the impression I got from the marketing, this is not a romance. At all. It hits so much harder than that twinkly blue cover would have you think.

All We Ever Wanted

CW: (view spoiler)[Rape (on-page, brief but graphic); attempted suicide; racism; misogyny/slut-shaming. (hide spoiler)]

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My reviews can also be seen at: <https://deesradreadsandreviews.wordpr...>

“All We Ever Wanted” was my first read from Emily Giffin and I loved it!

Life is good for the Browning family. Nina Browning’s husband Kirk sold his software company at the right time and they went from comfortable to very wealthy in a very short period of time. Nina doesn’t like to flaunt how wealthy they are, but her husband is a different story. Nina is trying to keep their eighteen-year-old son, Finch from becoming enti My reviews can also be seen at: <https://deesradreadsandreviews.wordpr...>

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They just found out that Finch has been accepted to Princeton and the family is thrilled.

The book opens on a typical Saturday night, well typical for the Browning family. They are attending their fifth gala of the year. This gala is about suicide awareness and prevention and they are being honoured for their contributions.

Lately Nina has been feeling like something is off in her marriage. She wonders if it’s money coming between them or something else. As she listens to her husband giving a speech about the horrors of losing someone to suicide, Nina thinks about Finch and all of the opportunities he has ahead of him. Time has gone by so fast. He used to tell her everything and now she’s lucky if she gets a few words out of him. She really can’t believe that he will be off to college in the fall.

What Nina doesn’t know is that right at that moment their son is across town making the worst decision of his life.

Tom Volpe is a single father who works multiple jobs in order to support his daughter, Lyla. Tom is extremely proud of his daughter. She is very smart which is how she ended up at Windsor Academy.

All We Ever Wanted

The school is intense academically as well as socially. But so far Lyla seems to have adjusted well. As she heads out Saturday evening, she promises her father that she won't be out late " he tries not to worry. However, later that evening Tom senses that something is wrong with Lyla.

Sure enough, a few minutes later his phone rings;

The story is told from the perspectives of Nina, Tom, and Lyla which really helped the story flow nicely. I liked hearing from both parents as well as Lyla.

As parents, our first instinct is to protect our children from everything. But are there times where we can't (and maybe shouldn't) step in and fix everything? What is the difference between privilege and entitlement? It's hard when your child makes a mistake to know when to help them and when to step back. It can be so difficult to let our children suffer the consequences of their actions.

Emily Giffin sure knows how to tell an engrossing and entertaining story with relatable and perfectly imperfect characters. I thought this was a well-written and thought-provoking novel that deals with important and relevant issues. I liked how everything came together and especially loved the epilogue.

• All We Ever Wanted • was a very powerful and touching read that I'll be thinking about for quite some time. I'm really looking forward to reading more from this very talented author.

I'd like to thank Ballantine Books for giving me the opportunity to read this book in exchange for my honest review. ...more

All We Ever Knew Chords

This is a truly powerful, wonderful novel. It's been many years since I've read an Emily Giffin novel, but I enjoyed those books and was excited to read this one. My previous experience with her work did not prepare me for the complex, layered, serious manner of this excellent book.

For most of the first chapter, I thought this was going to be a book about a couple that went from well-off to obscenely wealthy having marital woes. Boo hoo. But when I learned what it was really about, it took a da This is a truly powerful, wonderful novel. It's been many years since I've read an Emily Giffin novel, but I enjoyed those books and was excited to read this one. My previous experience with her work did not prepare me for the complex, layered, serious manner of this excellent book.

For most of the first chapter, I thought this was going to be a book about a couple that went from well-off to obscenely wealthy having marital woes. Boo hoo. But when I learned what it was really about, it took a dark turn.

It was important that the story was told from multiple points of view of the mother of the boy accused of taking the comprising photograph of a passed-out girl at a party, the father of the girl, and Lyla herself because you can't quite figure out who is telling the truth about that night. Also, it's about the way teenagers don't want to disappoint their parents, and parents want to do their best for their kids.

There were pleasing twists in the story, and I cried my guts out at the end. Highly recommend.

Thanks so much to NetGalley and Ballantine Books for the opportunity to review this book, which RELEASES JUNE 26, 2018.

For more of my reviews, please visit <http://www.theresaalan.net/blog> ...more

This is not literature for birds (chick lit) or women's fiction.

This is everyone's fiction. Because this kind of story should be directed towards every adult, regardless of gender, color, class, etc.

This is not a love story. It is both heart-breaking and heart-mending. You will be frustrated half of the time, cry at unexpected moments, and smile rarely.

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All We Ever Wanted

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This is not a happy tale, but it is an important and empowering one. Although there have been stories about abuse (of power, physical and emotional) published in the past, the way this life-altering scandal is dealt with is different.

It's told from three distinct points of view, all in the first person singular. A mother, a father, and a daughter. Only the father and daughter are related, the mother being the parent of the boy who caused the scandal, but they connect to one another in various ways.

It's filled with manipulatory behaviour "so much that it will mess with your head and what you believe is true" and characters behaving atrociously. There is lying, cheating, neglecting, and such bad role models.

Definitely not an easy book to read. Unfortunately, I predict many will pick this up expecting it to yes deal with serious issues, but also be dramatic in an entertaining way "because of this author's previously published books. I assure you that will not happen. It's a compelling story, because you'll want "no, need" to know the fate of the characters, but rarely was I able to crack a smile. Did I even?

I hope this will truly empower people to speak out about abuse and help others grow into decent citizens of the world.

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All We Ever Wanted Summary

4 timely stars to All We Ever Wanted! ⭐️ ⭐️ ⭐️ ⭐️

When Emily Giffin releases a new book, it's a big deal, and I think All We Ever Wanted is her best book yet!

That said, All We Ever Wanted gets off to a rocky start. The first chapter is narrated by Nina who escaped her middle class roots to live amongst Nashville's wealthiest. I was worried over-the-top grandeur would take center stage in this book, but it did not. Nina's son, Finch (no offense to any Finches of the world, but that name made me giggle a

few times!),

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The next chapter is narrated by Tom, a single dad working multiple jobs to raise his willful daughter, Lyla, who earns a scholarship to Windsor Academy, where she rubs elbows with the most privileged kids in town, including Finch, of course. We also hear from Lyla as a narrator.

Everything is going well until a photo goes viral. Amid all this scandal, Tom, Nina, and Lyla are left holding the bag. How will they move past what happened? What is the right thing to do?

All We Ever Wanted is timely because we hear most every day a story where a teen, or even adult, has made a mistake on social media, one that could have a lasting impact on that person and their family, and even their community. I enjoyed hearing from the different points of view, and where the truth actually lies is anyone's guess.

Additionally, Giffin addressed race and class biases, and there were unexpected twists to the story. All in all, All We Ever Wanted was a powerful and emotional journey. I highly recommend if you are looking for a summer read with plenty of substance and much to think about.

Thank you to Random House/Ballantine for an advance copy. All We Ever Wanted will be published on June 26, 2018.

My reviews can also be found on my blog: www.jennifertarheelreader.com ...more

"Sometimes you just can't see the things that are the closest to you."

All We Ever Wanted was a very thought-provoking read that addresses timely and pertinent subject matter for today's society and technological age. At first glance, Nina Browning seems to have it all. She is rich, focusing on doing charity work and her son has been accepted to Princeton. She has the kind of "ideal" life that others envy. Yet, she finds herself embroiled in a scandal that she never thought would happen to her. "Sometimes you just can't see the things that are the closest to you."

All We Ever Wanted was a very thought-provoking read that addresses timely and pertinent subject matter for today's society and technological age. At first glance, Nina Browning seems to have it all. She is rich, focusing on doing charity work and her son has been accepted to Princeton. She has the kind of "ideal" life that others envy. Yet, she finds herself embroiled in a scandal that she never thought would happen to her. Her son, Finch, snaps a revealing photo of Lyla, his drunken underage classmate who is a scholarship student at the prestigious Windsor Academy. He captions the photo with a racist comment and shares it amongst his friends. The photo spreads throughout their upper class, privileged student body causing controversy amongst the students and parents.

The book's chapters are told in alternating voices/point of views. This made for an engrossing story as different tidbits were revealed by each character but also made you doubt everything - as we were left pondering whose version was actually true. I love how Giffin focused on the emotions of each character from their perspective as they dealt with the aftermath of the photo. We saw Lyla's struggle to be accepted in this upperclass world. We saw Nina question how money and privilege affected her choices and parenting style. Through her husband, we saw how ruthless and cold money can make a person. What happens when you are forced to see your partner and ultimately your child in a different light and you don't like what you see?

Life is full of choices. We face countless of them on a daily basis. Some are simply more far reaching and profound than others. As parents, we try to instill our children with the morals and ethics they need to make the right decisions. Ultimately, the choices and decisions they make are up to them and they have to deal with the consequences of their actions. As a parent I found this book thought provoking, especially the social media aspect which is so relevant today. I couldn't help but think about what I would do and feel if I were Nina or Lyla's dad, Tom. This one was engaging from beginning to end and made you think about the dynamics of marriage, money & power, morals & ethics and parenthood. ...more

All We Ever Wanted Was Everything Lyrics

All We Ever Wanted is all we've come to expect from bestselling author Emily Giffin: an engaging, effortless, readable story that is deceptively likeable and painfully shallow. Giffin asks nothing from readers but a few moments of their time, and in exchange delivers high-gloss low-payoff novels that showcase entitlement and moral ambivalence disguised as depth. By now, her pattern is set, but this time, the stakes are higher.

--It could happen anywhere--

All We Ever Wanted is a domestic drama about the upheaval that occurs when the 18-year-old son of a wealthy and prominent Nashville couple posts a questionable photo of an underage girl, launching reverberations that upend the family's smug existence and that of friends and relations as well. The premise is compelling. The execution leaves Giffin's position unclear.

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--Like us, only better--

Giffin's bread and butter characters are what you might call beautiful people with first world problems. The first world is my address, so I'm game for domestic drama of the white privileged set. Heck, some of my best friends are wealthy Caucasians with country club memberships.

The problem is that Giffin wants to write her characters two ways, and it leads her nowhere. She seeks to explore the pitfalls of privilege, yet she absolves her heroines of mistakes and casts them as well-intended victims who are really good people, honest, if you just look behind the Chanel handbag and Mercedes SUV.

--Meet the mom--

When we meet her, the main character, Nina, has ridden high for two decades on the wealth and cache of her husband's success. She is a walking fashion plate whose fondest expressions come not for her husband or son, but for the custom-made furnishings and designer clothes that her lifestyle affords her.

And good for her. That's all fine. Three cheers for Nina, no one is judging. She married a wealthy guy, kept herself thin and pretty, it's her life to enjoy fabric swatches and poached salmon lunches if she so pleases. But when Nina awakens from her comfortable reverie, she notices that her spoiled son and rich husband have bloomed into arrogant snobs. She spends the rest of the book castigating,

criticizing, and rejecting them.

What she does not do is mother her son. She never misses a Starbucks, but in the time it takes her to vilify her boy and drift out of his maternal reach, she never once grabs the scruff of his obnoxious neck to launch the tush-kicking that his behavior demands. Indeed, her son is facing dire consequences, either with severe punishment or life as an asshole. Moms step in; Nina steps out.

--Holding out for a hero--

The unsettling part is that, in Giffin world, Nina is the hero. Nina is the character with the moral authority. This woman whose choices have contributed to, if not created, the family crisis, bails on them and casts herself as an innocent victimized bystander. She benefitted from every lazy parenting moment that led here, but neither she nor the book ever say, "Hey, lady, you know this happened on your watch, right?" Instead, her self-involved shirking is supposed to signal some sort of heroic feministic coming of age.

It does no such thing, and this is Giffin's authorial failing. She is a powerful storyteller with a weak moral compass for her characters. Her stories build a compelling, if cliched, setup, but she is neither honest nor complete when it comes time to dole out denouement and judgment. Perhaps Giffin loves her characters too much to make them fully flawed people; perhaps she is writing too much of her own personal conflicts between success and the desire to be perceived as good. Whatever drives her pen, it should demand more of stories and her characters. Hold them accountable, don't make them so innocent. Let them come to it honestly.

--Right neighborhood, wrong book--

Giffin is right on one score: there are stories to tell here. The vulnerability of privileged suburban American life to sudden and shocking fragmentation is fertile ground for writers with the guts to write authentic characters and ambiguous conflicts. Two staggering, must-read novels, *This Beautiful Life* by Helen Schulman, and *The Guest Room* by Chris Bohjalian, delve similarly into the split-second missteps and external forces that can disrupt and forever alter a modern family's domestic tranquility.

In contrast, *All We Ever Wanted* is a minor entry in the genre. For Giffin fans, who appreciate the escapism of her breezy, readable style, this is another easy sell and quick read. For readers looking below the glossy surface, seeking the painful yet redemptive truths that quality fiction can offer, this one will leave you wanting.

I received an advanced review copy of this book from Netgalley in exchange for an honest review.

www.jordanalandsman.com ...more

5 Thought Provoking Stars ⭐️⭐️⭐️⭐️⭐️

This book is a MUST read! Not only was it absolutely brilliant it also touched on so many of today's

All We Ever Wanted

issues... it was a book that really made you think... what would I do in that situation? And as a single mother of two boys and a girl I could see so many sides of this story... and this book really made you realize that with social media a teenager's reputation can be trashed in a matter of minutes.... makes you long for the good old days when you needed to make a 5 Thought Provoking Stars

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One night, one thoughtless moment, and lives are changed forever... what do you do when your daughter has had her picture taken in a compromising position at a party and it is plastered all over social media? What do you do if it was your son that took this picture? Meet Tom single father of Lila the girl in the infamous picture and Nina the mother of Finch the photographer.... both parents instant reaction was to defend their children, as all of ours would be, but what is the right thing to do? Wow, this is tough! If I were Tom I'd want blood my heart would break for my daughter in that situation... but what would I do if I were Nina? What If it were one of my boys that took this picture? This was something that nagged at me throughout this entire book.... I'd like to think I do the right thing, I'd like to think my boys would never do something like this.... but how hard would it be to let your son ruin his life over one indiscretion?Ugh still have no idea what I would do, and fingers crossed I never need to figure it out!

This book was told from the perspectives of Nina, Tom, and Lila and I thought this was super effective.... all three characters were likable, relatable, and reel.... Nina was probably the most relatable character to me, because she was a mother... my heart broke for her what a horrible position to be in! But to Nina's credit she handled the situation with intelligence, grace, and an open mind.... actually all three of these characters handled the situation in a very commendable manner... unfortunately not every character in this book did... it is always amazing that controversy can show people's true colors....

Loved this book from first page to last and the ending was perfection... strongly encourage everyone to pick up this book and make sure you have a box of tissues nearby when you read it!

*** many thanks to Valentine Books for my copy of this wonderful book *** ...more