



Shelter Us: A Novel

Laura Nicole Diamond

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Lawyer-turned-stay-at-home mom Sarah Shaw is struggling to keep it together for her two young sons and law professor husband. Since the death of their infant daughter, her husband has been buried in his career, her friendships have withered, and Sarah remains lost in a private world of grief. Then one day walking in L.A., Sarah's heart catches at the sight of a young homeless woman pushing a baby in a stroller—and saving them becomes her obsessive mission. An unlikely bond grows between Sarah and the young mother, Josie. When tragedy threatens Josie, Sarah discovers that she is capable of deceptions and transgressions she never imagined. Her lies unleash a downward spiral that will threaten her marriage, family and her sanity.

Shelter Us speaks to the quiet joys and anxieties of parenthood and illuminates a place all parents know: that shadowy space between unconditional love and fear of unbearable loss.

Shelter Us: A Novel Details

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From Reader Review *Shelter Us: A Novel for online ebook*

Diane says

I received a free book to read and write a review. This is a hard subject to write about (losing a child) and the Author Laura Nicole Diamond did a beautiful job. I felt like the characters were people I could relate to, people I would be friends with. The author told a hard story without making me feel sad through out the whole book. I really enjoyed this book and the authors writing style. Definitely would recommend to others.

Larry H says

I'd rate this 4.5 stars.

Full disclosure: I received an advance copy of this book from the publisher in exchange for an unbiased review.

The grief of losing a child is said to be one of the most painful and devastating, particularly when the child is an infant. My brother died of SIDS when he was six weeks old about 31 years ago, and I remember how debilitating that loss was for our entire family, particularly my parents, and that grief still resonates for my mother all these years later.

Sarah Shaw isn't sure she wants to recover after the accidental death of her infant daughter. But everyone tells her she needs to pull herself together and start living life again, especially to bring some normalcy back into the lives of her two young sons. Everyone, including her husband, watches her cautiously, expecting her to fall apart again. But it isn't too long before her husband gets caught up in the demands of work, leaving her to take care of their sons, despite that she is afraid something might go unexpectedly wrong at every turn.

One day she sees a young homeless woman pushing her baby in a stroller, and it taps into emotions Sarah thought she had dammed up. She pursues the woman, Josie, trying to help her, but Josie is wary of this woman suddenly wanting to help. Eventually, the two form an unlikely relationship of sorts, with Sarah determined to save Josie and her daughter. But Sarah doesn't understand the extent to which her help is needed, and she doesn't anticipate the toll this relationship will take on her own life, her marriage, and her psyche. All she knows is that saving Josie is key to saving herself.

How far would you go to help a stranger in need? What would you sacrifice for this help? *Shelter Us* attempts to answer those questions, filtered through a woman at the end of her emotional rope. But this type of behavior, obsessing over one problem because you can't control another, is far too common, and this book does an excellent job at exploring how a person can lose sight of what they're doing when lost in their own emotional issues.

This book is sad and hopeful, and Laura Nicole Diamond does a terrific job creating a situation that seems all too real and all too believable. The reader knows what Sarah is doing is out of control, but you understand why she is doing it. This is Diamond's debut novel, and she definitely proves that she is a writer worth watching in the future.

See all of my reviews at <http://itseithersadnessoreuphoria.blogspot.com>....

Maria Shanle says

This lovely first novel is poignant, down-to-earth, and will resonate with any parent of small children. I'd like to spend more time with these characters!

Maureen Twomey says

I loved this book :)

Anne Marie says

Great story ! I felt like I was with the main character as she was going about with her life. I felt her pain and her joys.

This book was a win from the Goodreads First Reads Program.

Loren says

You know how sometimes you hear a book has a subtext you have strong personal feelings about, and you are not sure you're going to want to read it? Well, that was my apprehension about *Shelter Us*. It hits on two biggies for me: homelessness and dealing with the death of a child (this is not really a spoiler, you find out about these themes pretty much right away). But boy, am I glad I did read it! Diamond deals with both of these issues, but in a very organic, natural (non-preachy) way. They are just a part of the main character's life. And they are woven throughout in a seamless way. And I really enjoyed getting to know this main character, Sarah. I was very drawn into her story right away. I felt like I knew her. Even though she is reeling from a terrible loss, her day to day life seems very familiar. Yes, she is facing this trauma. But she also has the everyday responsibilities of a mother of young children. And as the book progressed, I found myself very eager to see what was going to happen. I wanted to know how it was all going to end, to resolve. There are parts of the story that I wouldn't have expected, but I felt that things came full circle for Sarah and her family. Altogether an excellent read!

Lorraine Devon Wilke says

What a beautiful, heartrending, ultimately hopeful story this is! I absolutely loved this book by Laura Nicole Diamond; it is gorgeously written, deeply felt, and set with such detail of character, plot, and emotion that a narrative about motherhood, loss, and the meaning of life becomes a true page-turner.

Told from the point of view of Sarah, a former attorney and married mother of two boys who has lost her

six-week-old daughter to crib death, we follow her tumultuous trajectory through grief, self-examination, and a fascination with, and compulsion to help, a young homeless mother she stumbles upon in downtown Los Angeles. Distanced from her husband by a mix of his work demands and her own emotional turmoil, Sarah finds herself so drawn to the young woman that she takes some dubious risks, and makes some questionable choices, that not only cause her to question her own motives, but put her marriage and the life she's attempted to rebuild in serious jeopardy. How she struggles to resolve each layer and nuance of this tsunami of issues becomes the churning center of *Shelter Us*.

As a native of Los Angeles, I particularly enjoyed the specificity of her "place," picturing each turn of the road and image up ahead! As a mother, I reveled in her absolutely spot-on descriptions of the many elements of "mother love," that powerful emotional world of indescribable, passionate love and never-ending need and frustration. Her illuminations on loss and grief will, no doubt, resonate deeply with anyone who's lost someone they loved, particularly a young child to unexpected death. In fact, every element of this story rang true and deep, with its resolution built on compassion, forgiveness, and love the most salient of its themes.

A deeply satisfying read that I heartily recommend, I will be sure to follow this writer to whatever is next.

Donna Huber says

I really enjoyed this book. Not one typically thinks of for a "beach read", but it would make a nice summer read. Full review soon.

Amy Madnick says

Beautifully written and captivating. The author captures the tortuous journey toward making sense of the worst possible event that can happen to a parent.

Carole says

3.5 stars

It was okay. I have such a soft heart, I'm drawn to descriptions of women helping women. In this case a young, homeless girl with a baby. Sarah wants to help Josie and her little boy, but her husband makes it clear she should not get involved. Sarah begins sneaking around to see Josie, and she begins to spiral into other secrets and lies. It gets a bit long in the middle, and I was anxious for it to speed up. Sarah's husband is quite a guy, and I'm impressed with him and how he handles the circumstances that come his way.

A beach read!

Betsy says

I won this book via Goodreads First Reads. This was a great story. I read this book about loss, real life, marriage, children, all while pondering my own life in just two days. This was a great read and I look forward to reading more by this author.

Kelly D. says

Good read

This was a good read but not exactly what I was expecting. It was an easy read although it wasn't my favorite book

Jenni Ogden says

Way back in the 1970s , a very popular Labour Prime Minister of NZ, Norman Kirk, famously made the comment “New Zealanders don't want much, just someone to love, somewhere to live, somewhere to work and something to hope for.” “Shelter Us” brings home this poignant message, which I am sure is still true for most of us everywhere, whatever our country or our culture. Sarah has lost one of the people, the very smallest, she loves, and her grief and how she tries to balance this with her love of the other, equally precious members of her family is the bedrock of this lovely story. When her heart goes out to a homeless young woman and her baby, she tips into her own crisis; a crisis which brings home another truth —“There but for the grace of good fortune go I.”

Lene Fogelberg says

Shelter Us is an engaging and memorable story of family, grief and healing. Sarah, mother and wife, befriends a young homeless woman with a baby, who affects her life more than anticipated. The story drew me in and made me read the book in one sitting, reflecting on family, life and how we can help each other. As a mother I could recognize myself in the everyday family life with the stress and hard work that goes into taking care of small children, especially difficult for Sarah since she is struggling to find her bearings after tragic loss.

Beautifully told in powerful detail Shelter Us is thought-provoking and provides great material for discussions on family, charity and healing. An inspirational book full of heart and compassion!

Nicole Waggoner says

Shelter Us is a beautifully written, often heart-wrenching, tale of grief and healing. Of special note, the dialogue is masterfully crafted and kept me turning pages.
