



# The Boyfriend School

*Sarah Bird*

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Gretchen Griner is an underpaid, underappreciated photographer for the *Austin* (that's Texas) *Grackle*, part-time lover of Peter Overton Treadwell III (known as "Trout"), and major consumer of Cup O' Soup. That is, until she meets Lizzie Potts—otherwise known as Viveca Lamoureaux, romance writer extraordinaire. Lizzie has a plan for Gretchen's life—and it includes Lizzie's brother Gus. But Gretchen has her own plan, and it does *not* feature a "wispy goon" named Gus. Of course, fate also has a plan for Gretchen, and it doesn't care what Gretchen wants. So Lizzie will give Gretchen Gus, Gus will give Gretchen the man of her dreams, and among this oddball cast of marvelous misfits, someone just may discover the secret to *true* romance.

## The Boyfriend School Details

Date : Published August 26th 2003 by Ballantine Books (first published 1989)

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Author : Sarah Bird

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Genre : Fiction, Womens Fiction, Chick Lit, Romance, Contemporary, Humor, Contemporary Romance, Did Not Finish

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# From Reader Review The Boyfriend School for online ebook

## Lynnette says

YOu need to read this before you go to the conference in Dallas. There is a great description by the protagonist, who starts out as a cynical outsider to the world of romance lit, and gets sucked in during the conference...

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## Laini says

This book made me want to become a writer. Sarah is the precursor of the modern day "chick lit," and did it better back in the day befor she began branching out. This is also a wonderful curio of Austin, Texas back in the day. My favorite book of all time!!

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## Whitaker says

A really great book shows us how everything is great and worth to die for

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## Teresa Medeiros says

If you haven't read Sarah Bird's classic romance **THE BOYFRIEND SCHOOL**, you probably should. It's one of my favorite contemporary romances of all-time. Originally published in 1989, the book is about Gretchen Griner, an underpaid photographer sent to cover a "Romantic Times-like" conference in Austin, complete with cover models and authors dressed in full Southern belle regalia. There she meets bestselling romance author Lizzie Potts (known as Viveca Lamoureaux to her adoring readers) and romantic chaos ensues as the well-meaning Lizzie decides to fix the cynical Gretchen up with her brother Gus by making him over as the ultimate romance hero.

### BONUS MOVIE REVIEW!

One of my readers recently let me know the movie version of **THE BOYFRIEND SCHOOL** (originally titled **DON'T TELL HER IT'S ME**) had been released on DVD. While not quite as good as the book, it really is pretty adorable. And it will make you say four words you never thought you would-- "Steve Guttenberg is HOT!" When Gretchen (renamed Emily for the movie) first meets Gus, he is recovering from cancer treatments and is boring, bald and bloated. But the quirky Lizzie (played by Shelley Long before anyone realized she wasn't going to be a big movie star) quickly makes him over into "Lobo," a mysterious Harley-straddling hero with a stubbled jaw and a really fine mullet. If you enjoy a romantic comedy that's romantic, funny and touching. I think you'll love this one! (And did I mention that Steve Guttenberg was really HOT?)

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## Bonnie says

I don't know why I loved this book, but it was so satisfying. It was just like butterscotch pudding, creamed potatoes, wild rice soup, and a good mattress. It was so fulfilling and comforting. I had the weirdest reaction to this book--maybe it was my mood.

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### **Sarah says**

Okay, so I wish the title wasn't so embarrassing! Here's the deal: growing up the movie Don't Tell Her It's Me was a family favorite. My parents have been trying to acquire DVD copies of all their VHS tapes (and are off-loading the old VHS). They still have a few that are impossible to find, either not on DVD or out-of-print. So I've been trying to hunt down Don't Tell Her It's Me and searches would always have a DVD entitled The Boyfriend School. I looked into it and realized that when it was released in DVD they released it with the same title as the book. Up until this point I didn't realize that it was a book at all. The DVD is way too expensive, so I ordered the book for my dad for Christmas. He read it and liked it & then lent it to me.

The movie stays pretty true to the book, but of course the book is more nuanced. What I loved about the book is that it takes place in Austin so I was familiar with the streets and locales mentioned. It made me a little homesick for Texas, actually. Also, I have a greater appreciation for the performances of the actors (Shelley Long, Steve Guttenberg, and Jamie Gertz)--they did a good job capturing Bird's characters. Shelley Long really does seem like the ostrich-y Lizzie Potts.

So, definitely not for everyone, but it was fun to read about places I know and to remember this movie that we loved watching growing up.

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### **Ana T. says**

Another book that I had heard much about but that left me completely cold. It's part chick lit and part romance - a very over the top romance. I am yet to decide if what bugged was that it is so unbelievable - really who stays at a crappy job like the one Gretchen has and with a crappy boyfriend like hers? - or if my problem was that half the characters were misleading the other half - really who comes up with a plan like Lizzie's??

The fact that both the romance novelists seemed so plainly caricatures also didn't make me grow fonder of the story. I understand that humour is a very personal thing and I guess I am just not made for this type of humour.

I did read it till the end because despite it all I really liked Gus - even if he went along with that awful plan - and couldn't see what Gretchen thought was so bad about him. In the end I was undecided if she should kick his butt because of what he did or if he should just find someone else because of how shallow she proved to be.

Still, so many people seem to love it that you might enjoy it more than I did.

Grade: 3/5

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## **Gingub Gravette says**

the reason this book belongs in my confessional is due to the movie (which i have not even seen) and the phenomenon that is guttenburg! steve guttenburg in a mullet no less (be forewarned if you google the movie poster). he just had to go there and ruin it for me after-the-fact. i was having a blast reading this story - those who openly or secretly love their romance novels - would love the hilarious behind the scenes adventures of a romance novel writers convention. fun breezy and if you can just block out visions of the gutte - a good summer read.

UPDATE: starting to think i have multiple personalities due to amount of books i am reading simultaneously

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## **Lisa says**

A friend loaned me this book and my initial thought was Sarah Bird, romance novel? I really like Sarah Bird as an author and my friend isn't the romance novel type so I plunged right in. I really enjoyed it and had to laugh at myself in recognition when she describes the gripes of many of the authors and the swipes feminists take at the genre. Entertaining and made me rethink my stance (and get off my literary high-horse.)

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## **Rebecca Dean says**

PROBABLY the best book I have ever read. I loved it from page one until the surprise, until the end. A movie was made from this book called "Don't Tell Her It's Me" with Steve Guttenberg, but they totally ruined the "surprise" in the movie, but I forgave them, because it would have been a little hard to film it.

Anyway, highly recommend it. Sarah Bird is a TRUE TALENT

I first read this book in 1991 when it came out in hardback and I have read it a few times since.

My latest reading was this summer and it was just as fun this time!

LOVED IT!

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## **Mary says**

This is the first Sarah Bird novel I read, and I've been a huge fan of her work ever since. At the time I read this novel, I was a graduate student at UT Austin living below the poverty level, so I could relate to Gretchen's life in her Hyde Park garage apartment. Unlike many of the other readers whose reviews are below, I did not see the film before reading the book and in fact didn't see it until many years later.

In terms of writing style, The Boyfriend School is miles beyond the typical chick lit book. Bird's figures of speech are so hilarious that I found myself reading more slowly just to appreciate them more. Examples:

"it was hot enough inside the car to manufacture pig iron."

"years of aerobics classes had left her with a body so pert and springy that she looked like she'd bounce if tossed from a five-story window. Well, maybe four. I was willing to run some tests."

"My spirits sagged like cheap panty hose."

"With the addition of a speculum and stirrups the [romance novel's] cover might have passed for a pelvic exam in period dress."

This book is so funny that it's hard for me to see how anyone could not like it. The film is OK but is nowhere near as funny as the book.

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### **Charity says**

I grew up watching the old 90's movie 'The Boyfriend School' with Steve Guttenberg (now titled Don't Tell Her It's Me). To this day it is still one of my favorite chick flicks, so of course when I found out there was a book I had to read it. Safe to say, I had high expectations for this book and I am so very glad to say it met those expectations. This book is clever and funny. It felt like a real romance, though I don't think the situations were as realistic. Gretchen, our heroine, is so very relatable for the independent woman; her wit was undeniably the best part of the book (that and what whatever Juanita had to say). The book itself is very well written, especially when the different accents come into play. I don't want to spoil too much, so I'll just say read it. You won't regret it.

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### **Katie R. Herring says**

This took me a couple of days to get into... not because it was bad, I just kept getting distracted. I finally got into it yesterday, and well, couldn't put it down. My mom was the one who told me to read it; she said it was hilarious, and it was. There was a HUGE plot twist, I was practically dying. I'm definitely going to read this again. Oh, and it made me think of my aunt, Samantha Kane. Muahaha. Her "romances" are a bit different, but either way...

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### **Kip says**

Yes, the plot is blindingly stupid. But Sarah Bird is a comedic GENIUS. Every paragraph in this book is hilarious. Who cares that only the dumbest woman alive would be tricked by the central ruse? I have never cared so little about plot holes and deus ex machina. I laughed hard and often, and still flick through it from time to time almost 20 years after first picking it up.

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### **Shanna Swendson says**

This is one of my all-time favorite books, but it's difficult to be objective about it because I don't know how much of my fondness for this book is because of the book itself or because this book almost seems to have been written just for me. I was living in Austin during the period in which the book is set, and I worked for a weekly newspaper one summer. I lived on the edge of the neighborhood where the heroine lives, and so I

knew all the places she went. Her post office was my post office, her library branch was my library branch. Plus, I've been to those romance conferences and I know those people. I'm not at all like the heroine and probably would have made different choices than she made, but her life is enough like some things I've been through that I could identify with her. With all that, I can't help but love this book, but I do still think it's a great book beyond that. It has a twist to it that means it becomes a totally different book the next time you read it because reading it with the knowledge of what's really happening changes the story. I love books that do that. It has some fairly profound things to say about love and attraction, fantasy and reality. And it's laugh-out-loud funny.

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