



The Intimates

Ralph Sassone

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The Intimates is about Maize and Robbie, who meet in high school and hold fast to each other as they stumble through amorous adventures, first jobs, and complicated relationships with family members here and abroad. It is a powerful and compassionate debut novel that explores the romance of young friendship, the freighted bonds between parents and children, and the thrills and mesmerizing illusions of sex. *The Intimates* renders the wonders and disappointments of becoming an adult and the secrets we keep from others and ourselves as we struggle to locate our true character. With a story that is lovely, perceptive, funny, and vividly erotic, "Sassone has created a friendship so deep, so utterly believable, that you feel jealous of Maize and Robbie's closeness--and of Sassone's easy talent" (New York Press).

The Intimates Details

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Author : Ralph Sassone

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From Reader Review The Intimates for online ebook

Brooke says

An Artful Debut: Ralph Sassone's first book reveals an author with a knack for describing the human condition with originality and humor AND, most importantly, for writing a story that is enjoyable to read cover to cover. While the main thrust of the book is the unique relationship between Maize and Robbie, a whole host of interesting minor characters from places ranging from an Italian hotel to a suburban high school to a hyper-aggressive NYC real estate office each have a role to play in telling the story. It all makes for wonderful reading.

Christopher Wensley says

The *Intimates* draws on the fine line between confidence and fear of failure. We seem to tell ourselves on a daily basis that we are the only ones in the world filled with self doubt, that everyone else has it figured out and that we should put on an act of false confidence least we be found out. Of course nothing could be further from the truth, but that has never stopped human behavior at all.

This book, feels released at an especially appropriate time, when Millennials, as we are called, are faced with a grave economy and very few prospects that promise the lifetime of safety our parents enjoyed. Centered around two twenty somethings, Maize and Robbie, and the friendship the envelops them we spend the book going through both of these characters heads and the self doubt that rules and sometimes destroys them.

Sassone, a first time author, shows tremendous confidence in his writing. The details, dialogue and character development are all clearly from a pro.

Where the book suffers is that it suffers from too much stylistic ambition. Divided into thirds we do not see Maize and Robbie interact until the final (and to be fair largest) act. True this lets us know the individuals in this relationship better but it also deprives us of what is promised by the title to be the main center.

There is a saying that I will not attribute here, that if you have one great friend count yourself lucky. But when you reach true intimacy with a friend, you've reached something else, a human connection with absolute trust. And then you're not only lucky, you've achieved something divine. This book is a valuable if small piece of that.

Floyd says

This exquisite book explores the prismatic, deeply felt world of two "best friends" whose experiences--largely happening apart from each other--both expand and contract their knowledge of themselves. A compelling strain of illicitness runs through the story, mirroring the endless compromises these young people feel they have already made and which have corrupted them before they can even begin their adult lives. Shot through with penetrating, luminous prose, this is the sort of novel we talk about when we talk about reading for pleasure.

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Jasmine says

[when robbie wonders

Chivon says

This is a story of Maize and Robbie. It travels through the end of their high school years into their early adulthood. I enjoyed reading about Maize sometimes, and other times I found the book completely boring and uninteresting. I tried to like it and understand what it was supposed to be about, however, I found it unsettling because there is no resolution to the emotional conflict that the characters faced. Whether it be conflict with their parents or sexuality it was presented and then just hung there.

I also didn't care for the way the story was written in that an event would occur and the book would continue and then a few pages later it would go back and explain the event.

I am a sucker for a romance novel and I like to read funny books, but I would like to think of myself as one who steps outside of the box and explores other types of literature at times. And I just didn't get this one.

Jennifer says

I want to give this three and a half stars. I got sucked in really quickly in the beginning and enjoyed the high school and college parts, but once they graduated, it came off as White People Problems: whining about their jobs that they thought were disastrous but really weren't and whining about relationships that could have been decent but they pushed the people away and then wondered why there were lonely. Still, even in the last half there were moments of good stuff -- this was never horrible.

Shannon Ferguson says

I had seen this on the table at a book store and thought it looked good, so I requested it from the library. I'm sort of surprised it wasn't in the YA section, as the writing was good, but not terribly complex, and the story

itself was also fairly straightforward.

I like reading about teenagers confused about love, which was basically the whole idea here, so I found it engaging enough to get the whole way through in a day, but I wasn't exactly reveling in any deep insights or moved by the author's words. I was a little disappointed by the lack of resolution, but it was a completely reasonable outcome for these characters trying to navigate parental and personal relationships through young adulthood.

Bottom line: An easy and enjoyable read but nothing to write home about.

Larry H says

I really enjoyed this book, but it is really difficult to describe. Reading it taught me a valuable lesson—the description of a book on its inside cover isn't always accurate.

The *Intimates* poses an interesting question: can you write a story about a friendship when in two-thirds of the book, the friends aren't ever together? Robbie and Maize became friends in high school. Once they removed the sexual component from their friendship (as Robbie began accepting his homosexuality), their relationship grew, until Robbie moved away, leaving Maize fairly rudderless. They reunited in college, where Robbie described their relationship as serving as each other's "human diaries," the person to whom each can divulge their most personal or painful insights or secrets.

The book is divided into thirds. The first third follows Maize in her senior year of high school, where she is longing to do something different but is too afraid to act; the second third follows Robbie on his trip to Italy to visit his estranged father and his girlfriend, where he makes what he thinks is a shocking discovery but is saved in just the nick of time from divulging it; and the last third follows the two as they, along with his new boyfriend, help Robbie's mother pack to move to a new house. This is a simplistic description of the multi-layered plot, which explores how friendship can at times be both an anchor and a weight.

This is a very well-written and intriguing book. Some of the language Sassone used was absolutely beautiful, and parts of the book definitely tugged at my emotions. I felt that he created two immensely complex, if not particularly likeable, characters. And that, fundamentally, was one of the two reasons I liked this book but didn't love it. I had trouble finding a great deal of sympathy (or empathy, frankly) for either Robbie or Maize most of the time. Sassone also didn't give me enough evidence that Robbie and Maize actually cared for each other the way you're told they do. But that being said, the book has gotten stellar customer reviews on both Amazon and Barnes & Noble, so I'd say it's worth reading.

Larissa says

I saw a review of this book that said it had stunning emotional insight. That reviewer couldn't have been more right. If you want to read a novel that really gets to the core of what it's like to be young and bright and sensitive and have a ridiculous crush on someone, or to make love for the first time, or to struggle with parents you both love and resent, or to just try to figure out who are you and what you really want in life (while you're embarrassed not to know it), check out this book. This writer has a gift for evoking complicated, often ambivalent feelings through original and beautiful metaphors and the two main characters, Maize and Robbie, are extremely interesting and likeable best friends. (Maize especially.) It's also full of dry and sly humor.

Justin says

I really liked this book. I thought it was brave and bold. The writing is elegant and the erotic scenes are explicit without being pornographic. This author creates two interesting young characters and follows their separate and intertwining stories over several years. What made this book feel more REAL to me than most novels is the way it shows how personal progress often actually happens: with one or two steps forward, one or two steps backward, and times when the forward and backward steps are practically the same thing. This author shows that change is a quirky, ambivalent, unpredictable process that can be so gradual or delicate you might not notice it's happened (because a lot of it is internal) or understand what it means. A lot happens to the characters here, only not in the most obvious ways. This book has drama and humor, but the uncompromising honesty of it is what I admired the most.

Lindsay Car says

A superb, funny, sexy, and original new novel about two friends whose devotion to each other is more satisfying and dependable than their other intimate involvements. The writing in this book is just plain gorgeous on every page. It has wickedly insightful observations about love and sex and romance and ambition. It also has writing so tender and moving you'll want to cry from sympathy. This author places his characters in interesting and suspenseful situations with plot developments that are twisty and unpredictable yet completely believable. This is an unusual, deep and lovely novel about the power of close friendship-- and the limitations of close friendship. I am glad a friend got me an ARC. I don't think I will forget this book anytime soon.

Michael says

In *The Intimates* we meet two young people who become the closest of friends despite being polar opposites in almost every imaginable way. Their story is told by going into slices of their lives, a day or a week here and there, allowing us to interpret what's really in their hearts by the details of these moments, and by how they see each other. Each of the three stories (one hers, one his, one theirs) is enjoyable enough by itself, but in the end it's not quite enough. We don't know enough, so we can't care enough. The characters are more intimate with each other than we can ever be with them.

Corey says

This beautiful novel is the kind of book that will appeal to fans of Alice Munro, Michael Cunningham, Marilynne Robinson and Charles Baxter: classically structured, elegantly composed, and illuminating fiction that burrows deep into the lives of its characters and guides readers toward a fresh and heightened understanding of ordinary human emotions. Although the protagonists, Maize and Robbie, couldn't be from a more different background than mine, I sometimes felt, while reading about their odd (sometimes oddly funny) experiences, like I was reading a private journal about my own intimate relationships. Sassone locates the universal in their particular stories and his book has a quiet yet undeniable power.

Joanne says

Reading this book, I couldn't help but compare it to a Cannes film that everybody tells you is so amazing, but after you watch it, you just don't get it. I just didn't get this book.

It was described as a book about a platonic friendship. It's told in three parts. One part about the girl, Maize, one part about the boy, Robbie, and the final part about them together at Robbie's mother's house. Ugh, I think those separate parts were to help you get to know the characters better, but it didn't! It just didn't GO anywhere. Perhaps a bit at the end did I *barely* start to feel and understand the friendship between these two, but it was too little, too late.

I really only finished this book hoping that it would all come together, but closing it I felt just as lost and disjointed as I did throughout. Very disappointing. Story was just okay, but I will say that the author writes beautifully. That was the only saving grace of this novel.
