



# Love Is a Four-Letter Word: True Stories of Breakups, Bad Relationships, and Broken Hearts

*Michael Taeckens (Editor) , Neal Pollack (Introduction)*

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From Junot Díaz, Lynda Barry, Gary Shteyngart, and Kate Christensen to popular up-and-comers like Dan Kennedy, Wendy McClure, and Brock Clarke, *Love Is a Four-Letter Word* is a dead-on contemporary collection of true stories of seduction, heartbreak, and regret. Fearlessly revealing their shattered hearts and crushed egos; their indiscretions and indignities; their delusions, desperation, and disappointments, these talented writers capture the dark side of love in prose ranging from comic to poetic, poignant to cringe-inducing. Also featuring three cartoon/ graphic essays as a sixteen-page color insert, this anthology is perfect for anyone who's ever loved and lost.

## Love Is a Four-Letter Word: True Stories of Breakups, Bad Relationships, and Broken Hearts Details

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Author : Michael Taeckens (Editor) , Neal Pollack (Introduction)

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# From Reader Review Love Is a Four-Letter Word: True Stories of Breakups, Bad Relationships, and Broken Hearts for online ebook

Alex says

Funny and sad, but gets a bit repetitive (obviously)

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Emma Kaufmann says

I was really looking forward to this book. Unfortunately I found the stories so useless and unpleasant that I could not read more than five of them. Now, there might be some gems in this book, but randomly picking out five stories gave me a sense of uniform badness.

The stories I read were about people making stupid decisions in their lives to take up with losers or worse, and in the end they part ways. Yawn. Not interesting or entertainingly told either. Um, how did this get published?

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Ciara says

while jared & i were in boston for the holidays, we stopped by the harvard bookstore to do some window shopping. my feet were really tired, so i pulled this book off the shelf & sat down on the padded bench by the graphic novels to read & rest. i wound up getting really absorbed. it was pretty smart for the editor to lead off with junot diaz's story about his girlfriend finding out he cheated on her right before they left to travel together in the dominican republic, helping out some volunteer dentists & later attacking a decorative turtle shell mounted on the wall of their motel. that was probably the best story in the book. i also really enjoyed lynda barry's comic (which i choose to believe is about ira glass, the smarmy bastard), but it's also in her book, 100 demons, so it wasn't really a huge selling point. 100 demons is probably better, because it's ALL lynda barry, with no boring stories about ex-fiancees dying of cirrhosis. i didn't come for tales of wow, i came for tales of LOL at other people's expense! there's nothing funny about people dying without allowing their loved ones closure.

but i was psyched about the emily flake comic. that woman is a comedy genius! i love how much expression she gets on her characters with such economical lines. that was probably why i bought the book, & i scarfed it all up on the plane ride back to kansas city. usually anthologies like this are fun for a little while & then they lose their luster because they're padded out with a bunch of filler only tangentially related to the topic at hand (in this case, shitty relationships & bad break-ups--possibly my #1 most favorite topic of conversation, even though it's been years since i've had anything to contribute). you can tell who got the call for submissions & went digging in their files for something already written that they could use as a publishing credit. even though i am sure that happened with this anthology too, i really enjoyed it. folks who don't enjoy relationships-based gallows humor & aren't as amused by other people's emotional pain as i am probably won't love it as much, but it was right up my alley. oh, except for the very weird 9/11-based story. what the hell was that? the writing was good, but...seriously? you dated some dude for three months & had panic attacks about 9/11, even though you live in chicago, & the dude sounded like a total douche & that was your worst break-up? what are you, 23? it gets worse, trust me.

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## Indra says

This is my kind of book--I absolutely loved it. So honest it's uncomfortable, so funny it's painful, so real you can't help but cringe and laugh, sometimes at the same time. I love the overall premise of going back and writing about failed relationships from your much earlier life with a couple of decades of perspective tacked on. Some pieces are better than others, which is true of any anthology, but I appreciated how each one felt unique and somehow universal at the same time. I think my favorite may have been "Marking Territory" by George Singleton...we've all been there, haven't we?

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## Monica says

Real, truthful and Funny stories about breakups... :)

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## Andrea says

The first entry is from my man Junot Diaz. What better way to start the exploration!

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## Laurie says

Every bad decision I ever made, every love-gone-wrong I've ever experienced, every heart I've broken (including my own) is represented here. That might not sound fun, but this was a really fun book to read. Great memoiristic pieces. Nice to know I'm not the only one...

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## Jodi says

I've grown leery of the essay anthology after the horrible experience I had reading Things I Would Have Learned in English 101 if I Hadn't Skipped Class to Have Sex, I mean, Things I Learned from the Women Who Dumped Me. The book was so awful and cliched that I feared I had be scarred for life.

Then I kept reading about Love is a Four-Letter Word, subtitled True Stories of Breakups, Bad Relationships, and Broken Hearts, edited by Michael Taeckens. It worried me and then I saw that the introduction was by Neal Pollack, and made me even more worried. But ultimately I was won over by the author list — Junot Diaz, Kate Christensen, Dan Kennedy, and Said Saytafiezadeh.

Thank god I put my fears aside and dove in. This was fun.

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## Jojo says

I expected this to be an uneven collection, and it is - some of the essays are good, and some just go nowhere, but they're all so heartfelt that I feel guilty singling out the ones that were less than enthralling.

I'm always interested in anthologies like this, though - many authors, one overarching idea.

Something I learned about myself after reading this: I have never had any relationships as thrilling or as horrible as any of these writers have.

One totally nitpicky thing that I honestly never notice enough to comment on, with most books, so if I noticed, it must have been really bad: the cover is just so damn busy. Yikes. Your eye isn't drawn to any one thing and it's off-putting.

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## Jan says

I keep a handwritten list of books that I want to read. I'm not entirely sure how this book ended up on that list, but when it did, I listed it (as I usually do) only by the beginning of the title; anything after the colon was left off.

So when I was looking through my list recently for a book that would likely be a quick read, I picked this one because it's relatively short and I thought it was stories about love. I had long since forgotten that it was about love gone bad. Still, when I picked it up from the library, I decided to go ahead and read it anyway.

Simply put: this book is depressing. The way people treat each other in relationships totally sucks. That some of these authors thought it would be a good idea to put proof of their bad behavior down on paper is beyond my comprehension. Some of them came off like real jerks; others came off like total nut cases; and nearly all of the rest showed how entirely too-self-aware most modern writers are (in my opinion). Ugh.

The good news is that it is in fact a quick read. I finished it in a matter of hours over the course of two days. And I must have enjoyed at least one story because I'm giving it 2 stars. Also, it made me feel good about myself that I've managed to comport myself in all of my relationships with a modicum of dignity and respect.

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## Jennifer says

I picked this one up for the Kate Christensen story and was totally sucked in. Funny how everyone has bad, good, humiliating memories about the people in our past - and how easily all that comes back when reading someone else's version, especially with a glass of wine in hand. Very good.

\*Still, on that mountain I learned something invaluable: there are two types of people. The first kind pretend to know things they don't, the second kind choose to ignore things they do. I'm the second kind.\* - Amanda Stern

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### **Jennifer says**

This was such a wonderful read. Everyone can relate to it in someway. Who has never been in a situation where love is not involved? You are either in love, out of love, looking for love, or trying to escape love. All these stories discuss the different aspects and periods one goes through. You can see yourself in the stories. You can see your friends in the stories. You can see yourself with your friends discussing the stories. There are hilarious moments and times when you want to cry. There are also the few where you realize the author of the story could have been you. Great Book. Easy and Quick read. So worth checking out.

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### **Andie Nash says**

I LOVED THIS BOOK! One of the best collections I've ever read. This caught my eye at the library and I chose it because Dan Kennedy--one of my all-time favorite writers and all-around awesome guy (I had the pleasure of interviewing him for my literary magazine in 2010)--was a contributor. I read his story first, naturally, then went on to the rest of the pieces from other authors and was very pleasantly surprised; there was not a one that I didn't absolutely love. I recommend this book to anyone and everyone. It's brilliant.

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### **Ellen says**

Some of these essays were painful to read since I could identify so strongly with one or more of the people in them. Some of these essays made me cringe at my own previous behavior.

What I learned is why these relationship essays and the genre are important: "Our current human situation has produced an abundance of breakup literature. I could give credit to the fact that we live in a fragmented society where it's hard to come by actual connections with people with whom we might consider building a life, or to a world where alienation and misunderstanding are the norms." (p. xvii)

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### **Patty says**

If you're thinking of not reading this because you think it might be depressing, think again. Yes, it is about breakups, bad relationships, and broken hearts, but there is an immense amount of uplifting sentiment and lessons learned in these pages. And a healthy dose of hilarity, too.

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