
Douglas Coupland

Eleanor Rigby

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Description

Liz Dunn is 42 years old, and lonely. Then one day in 1997, with the comet Hale Bopp burning bright in the blue-black sky, Liz receives an urgent phone call asking her to visit a young man in hospital. All at once, the loneliness that has come to define her is ripped away by this funny, smart, handsome young stranger, Jeremy. Her son.

Insightful reviews

Trin: I loved this one. As could probably be inferred by the title, this is a book about loneliness—a reoccurring theme for Coupland. The narrator, Liz Dunn, is the type of anonymous, forgotten woman described in the Beatles' song, wonderfully fleshed out—I found her incredibly believable and moving. (Coupland in general writes women very well—in other words, like any other character, male or female.) Aside from a bit of weirdness involving some radioactive material and a German prison, this is actually an incredibly realistic, plausible narrative, which, as much as I enjoy wackiness, was much more appropriate to the subject matter (thus making the pair of weird events I mentioned above seem somewhat inappropriate and out of place, but it's a relatively small misstep, so whatever). There's a very deep undercurrent of tragedy in this book, but still hope, still wonder—Coupland does bittersweet amazingly well.

Chris:

“The Liz Dunns of this world tend to get married, and then twenty-three months after their wedding and the birth of their first child they establish sensible lower maintenance hairdos that last them forever. Liz Dunns take classes in croissant baking, and would rather chew on soccer balls than deny their children muesli... I am a traitor to my name.”

Liz Dunn is one of the world's lonely people. She's in her late thirties and has a boring cubicle job at a communications company, doing work that is only slightly more bearable than the time she spends alone in her depressingly sterile box of a condo. Her whole life, she's tried to get to the root of her sadness, to figure out what she's been doing wrong, with little success. But then, one night in 1997, everything changes: while standing in the parking lot of a video store, arms full of sappy movies she's rented to help her convalesce from oral surgery, she witnesses the passing of the Hale-Bopp comet. For Liz, this streak of light across the sky is a portent of radical change — and for her, radical change means finally accepting her lot: “I realized that my life, while technically adequate, had become all it was ever going to be ... No more trying to control everything — it was now time to go with the flow.” In that moment, and for the first time, Liz feels truly free.

A day after Liz makes the decision to seek peace in her life rather than control, along comes another comet, in the form of a stranger admitted to the local hospital with her name and number inscribed on his MedicAlert bracelet. For the new Liz, the phone call from the hospital

feels like “the fulfillment of a prophecy”; the young man, it turns out, is her son, whom she gave up for adoption when she was sixteen. Jeremy shows the scars of his years as a foster child and his most recent drug reaction, but is otherwise beautiful and charming. And when he moves in with Liz to recuperate, it’s as if both of them had been waiting for this moment all their lives.

A lost soul and occasional visionary, Jeremy upends Liz’s quiet existence — shocking her coworkers and family, redecorating her condo, getting her to reevaluate her past and take an active role in her future. But he’s also very ill with multiple sclerosis. Her son’s life-and-death battle induces a spiritual awakening in Liz — then triggers a chain of events that take her to the other side of the world and back, endangering her life just as an unexpected second chance at happiness finally seems within reach.

With **Eleanor Rigby** Douglas Coupland has given us a powerful and entertaining portrait of a woman who could be any one of us — someone who thinks it is too late to make anything of her life, who feels defeated by the monotony of her days, yet who also holds within her the potential for monumental change and for great love. When Liz asks, “What happens when things stop being cosmic and become something you can hold in your hand in a very real sense?” she’s not just talking about stray meteors anymore. The excitement of not really knowing the answer is what life’s all about. In the end, Liz discovers that life is no longer a matter of keeping an even keel until you die, or settling for peace and quiet, but of embracing faith and hope and change.

alisse: It is my second novel by Coupland, the first one being *All Families Are Psychotic*. And I gotta say, even though the events in “*All Families*” may seem far more stretched, they still felt much more real.

In this one I really liked Liz, the protagonist, I really liked the premise of the book, with a woman being alone and lonely and having witty and sincere inner monologues about it.

I don’t know what kind of plot I expected but somewhere around finding the long lost son I realized I wouldn’t get what I want.

Unfortunately I am not too patient with crazy people and their visions and strange ideas. Jesus, all those pages with telling and retelling farmers’ stories - I had to skip them just to stop myself from throwing the book away. At one point when Liz said something like “it’s great that he’s sane now but what a pity he’ll never have his visions again”, I wanted to slap her hard on the face.

Aside all that, it still was a page-turner, and it still had some great, deep and funny moments (sometimes made me laugh out loud), and I don’t think my time was wasted on this, no. But anyway, I expected much more of it, so only 3 stars here.

RandomAnthony: Lonely humans are looking to be dead, but we’re nonetheless no longer fairly able to go—we don’t are looking to pass over the action; we wish to see who wins subsequent

year's Academy Awards. Doug Coupland's *Eleanor Rigby* is tailored for committed readers keen on literature-focused social networking websites and who maybe, you know, occasionally imagine they need to have extra head to head interplay with different people yet friends, in flesh and blood, can simply be so exhausting. Liz, narrator and nondescript cubicle dweller, seems dormant at the external yet engages within the whirling, special concept tactics of a lonely one that can watch her atmosphere with impunity simply because most folk have forgotten she's there. She returns to her tomblake residence at evening and, well, thinks a few more. Still, even the main cautious lonely humans go fortune, and Liz's course comprises German prisons, useless our bodies close to the railroad tracks, and area detritus falling at her feet. And therein lies *Eleanor Rigby's* nagging problem. Coupland overuses completely groan-inducing plot developments, not only tugging at one's heartstrings yet grabbing on tightly and wrenching the goddamn hell out of acknowledged strings until eventually you need to kick the writer within the balls to make him enable go. If he's now not tugging he's swerving left to correct with the dues ex machina like a sugar-addled kindergartner describing a visit to Mars. And why? I'm no longer solely sure. The booklet doesn't desire all that tugging and swerving. Liz's inner dialogues are excellent, and Coupland's portrayal of a lonely person's reflections and perceptions might hold the e-book on its own. The plot distracted me from the characters. The final thirty pages virtually raised the score to 3 stars, but...nah. I'd be lying. Had the booklet been longer i'd have given up. I've heard *The Gum Thief* is great, so I'm going to take a look at that one. Coupland's acquired promise. *Eleanor Rigby*, however, shoots off like a Roman candle simply rainy adequate to disappoint.

Dan: I felt this booklet to be particularly cohesive and robust for Coupland (I've examine 6 others), even if the publication did not circulation me particularly up to I expected. No actual susceptible issues and perhaps a piece anti-climatic, yet very stress-free to read, as his social commentary used to be very sharp throughout. Overall, i assumed it used to be extra cohesive, yet much less bold than female friend in a Coma.

Adela Bezemer-Cleverley: Minor spoilers within the kind of quotes!What did I think? i feel that Douglas Coupland is a superb writer, of course. this can be basically the second one e-book of his that i have read, and whereas i did not love it relatively up to *All Households Are Psychotic* (there have been much less characters and not more dynamic plot issues yet it is also shorter so) i'd nonetheless hugely suggest it. and i am it sounds as if now not within the temper for writing an extended overview today, so i am simply going to teach you my bookmarks--there are like fifteen of them...One of my largest difficulties is time sickness. while i think lonely, i suppose that the temper won't ever pass--that i'm going to consider lonely and undesirable for the remainder of my life, because of this i have wrecked either the current and the future. And if i glance again on my past, I damage that too, through focusing on every thing I did wrong. The brutal factor approximately time illness is that naming it's no cure. -pg. 12But that is what households are for. We crave them and want them no longer simply because now we have such a lot of shared reviews to discuss yet simply because they be aware of accurately which topics to avoid. -pg. 61If in basic terms loneliness will be so simply fixed. purely being round different people does not support me--loneliness in a crowd is the main pathetic variant. at the different hand, no less than in a crowd you have got a chance, in spite of the fact that slim, of assembly that cosmic individual whose presence will nonetheless your fevered lonely brain. by myself on your condo, your likelihood is zip. -pg. 67"I seem like hell." "So?" "Point good taken. you

recognize what?""What?""Let's buy groceries for a fold-out mattress this morning." "That's an outstanding idea." -pg. 106 I think like that one Scrabble tile that has no letter on it. I am a Styrofoam puff utilized in packaging. I am a serviette at McDonald's. I am invisible tape. -pg. 171 It made me believe like my lifestyles used to be in miniature. It was once like gazing the seconds tick by means of until, as Jeremy and crimson Floyd either mentioned to me, I used to be shorter of breath and sooner or later toward death. Or as Jeremy said, "Well, at the least in case you sing it backwards, it really is someday in the direction of being born." -pg. 180 The head waiter did not examine me, yet considering that I used to be escorted by way of a man, we did not even holiday our velocity and went on to a table. By way of myself, I'd have learned the day's paper thrice sooner than being smuggled to the rearmost table. -pg. 204 I may well think about not anything extra repelling than me, in tears, creating a scene in public, not easy attention, whether that was once by no means the aim of my tears. -pg. 210 It's tough to talk with attractive people. Regardless of how challenging you are attempting to fake otherwise, you continue to wish them to love you. We're a wretched, shallow species. -pg. 223-224 We wait goodbye for moments like this in life, and once they ultimately occur, we blunder via them an analogous means we do every thing else. -pg. 224 There have been clouds of pigeons, flocks of eastern tourists, and masonry so ornate and gentle that it appeared to be dreaming. -pg. 227 All of those fees make this publication appear particularly depressing, I know... patience, friends, there's a satisfied ending. Klaus sat there the tabletop, shiny, reflecting all these beautiful little white lights. And here is the place I made a leap. I said, "Klaus--" He said, "Yes," yet did not look up at me. I put my hand at the desk in entrance of him. I said, "Klaus, you are lonely too, usually are not you?" back he said, "Yes." He took my hand in either one of his, kissed it. He appeared in my eyes, and that is after we fell in love. He knew, and that I knew. It replaced nothing, and but it replaced everything. So this can be what everybody's been conversing about. -pg. 246 I examine these stars and that I pluck them from the sky, and flick them at you're keen on diamonds, like seeds. -pg. 249

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