



The Refrain

Ashley Pullo

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Their paths have crossed, setting the refrain in motion.

Ever since flannel and Doc Martens were considered edgy fashion, Canadian cousins Natalie and Chloe have dreamt of a life in New York City. But now that they've finally scored a Manhattan zip code, their teenaged fantasies are overshadowed by an adult reality. With Natalie struggling to accept a long-distance relationship--and her constant battle with loneliness, her survival depends on Zach's safe return. And with Chloe's endless need to find balance and purpose--and her embarrassing secret holding her back, can Adam Ford be the one to understand her completely?

Change is inevitable and fate is insisting. And when panic follows crisis and love is questioned, stories can change in unexpected ways. The narrative becomes the verse, the part to the whole--the story within the story...the refrain.

The Refrain Details

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Author : Ashley Pullo

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Shanean says

What do I love more than a good movie, a theatrical play or a lovely walk through a Manhattan park?? What you may say can be more perfect than any of these joys in life. Well I am here to tell you it is a masterpiece called The Bridge series by author Ashley Pullo.

Author Ashley Pullo's original style will blow you away and take you to a place you couldn't even dream up yourself. Whether it's a sweet kiss and smile from Adam, a comical line from Chris or a passion filled scene that only Nat and Zach can create, I always feel like I am on a journey in this fictional world author Pullo has created that could easily be real life. I want to live in these books and be apart of these beautiful characters author Pullo has masterfully created. - I am the lover, the dreamer, it's me.

The Bridge series is more than just a series of phenomenal books, it's a beautiful rendition of life; past, present and future. You as a reader will never feel more satisfied with a book or series and still want more. So will there be more of the beginning or maybe the end? You never know.....

Author Ashley Pullo you make it all look so brilliant and easy. Bravo on another completion of a true work of art. Now I just have one request..... GIVE ME MORE!!!!

FMABookReviews says

I was given an ARC in exchange for my honest opinion and am happy to give 6 Stars for this AMAZING piece of work by Ashley Pullo. One for my favorite's list for 2014!

A Refrain: ... alteration of Old French refrain, melody, response; a regularly recurring phrase or verse especially at the end of each stanza or division of a poem or song: chorus; also: the musical setting of a refrain

(Webster's Dictionary)

A refrain helps to create a flow. Bringing the reader back to ideas presented in earlier stanzas. The Author revisits the July 4th holiday thereby centering the reader. It was obvious much thought was taken in this as the story spans nearly two decades and many characters. This story was about Chloe, Adam, Natalie, and Zach, and the people who were instrumental in their lives. They face love, heartache, trials and tribulations. They love and they hate. But their stories always find a way back to the 4th of July.

As always, Pullo gives us alternating POV's. Each character getting their light to shine. But it was her use of narration that was most brilliant. This straight forward approach was used to express feelings in such a dramatic-no nonsense way that I was gutted. I felt Ashley reach into my chest and claw out my heart. I sobbed, ugly tears. I felt my chest squeeze and couldn't breathe. Her writing was ingenious.

She gave the reader gems. She made these connections that were so quiet that if you didn't pay attention, or if you didn't pay attention in previous books you might miss them. There were times during my reading when I

stopped and went back to *The Ballad* to reread a section because I thought I remembered something from there. And when I found it I smiled, because *The Refrain* added a new dimension to that story. Or made me better understand what had gone on.

The Fortune Teller was to *The Intermission* as YaYa is to *The Refrain*. Both had perfect wisdom.

"...You know the old lady in Titanic? The one that tosses her necklace into the Ocean?" I nod my head - movie references are my favorite. "She says something like, 'a woman's heart is an ocean.' And what I think she means is, some secrets are meant to be buried deep beneath the surface - untouched."

There are others and I won't spoil your reading experience by sharing them here, but when you come across the gems, I hope you will have moments like I did. I had to stop reading. Because as the moment of clarity became so bright I had to revel in the moment.

This series is written like nothing I've ever read before. Where past and present meet, POV's mix and mingle and intertwine into one. Which should be confusing but somehow isn't.

This was a beautiful love story with a happy ending(s).

'Every great love story has a beginning, whether it's a planned meeting, a random encounter, or an impulsive jump into the unknown. But it's the middle of the story that really counts ... expanding the verse and building the chorus.'

Marianne says

I really liked this a lot, I just didn't love it the way that I loved the previous two books in the series so, for me, this was the weaker of the three books. Not that it isn't great, it's just not 'tell everyone, and please, why isn't everyone reading this?!' amazing.

I will say though, there is a section of this book that does reach those heights - I didn't just cry, I sobbed - full embarrassing lip quivering tears and God, it hurt and it was beautifully written and I both loved and hated the author for that moment because dammit, I hated reality at that moment but that's what's great about these books, they are real and unfortunately, that's painful and ugly sometimes. I think that's what's great in this series - as much as there is an amazing love story at the centre of it, there is no perfection there...the characters are infuriating and borderline unlikeable at times (I wanted to strangle both Chloe and Natalie at times) but so is everyone in the real world. We all have bad days and this series doesn't gloss over that.

I think the reason I didn't get into this book as much as the previous books is that it just maybe jumped around too much...there was maybe too much squeezed into too little and certain scenes I wanted to see more of (in particular Adam's reaction to being thrown out) just ended abruptly. Plus, I couldn't really warm to Christopher, nice guy that he was - he will always be NotZach to me. I did call who he was on his first page of perspective though, so that was a nice touch.

All in all, this was a really great read and part of a series that is up there with my faves. I may not have loved this book as much as the others, but as part of the whole, it definitely fits in and does let you get the characters even more, in particular Chloe and some of her quirks.

I think the most important thing about a closing book is that it resolves things - it doesn't leave you with regret... 'why didn't the author leave well enough alone, why did she ruin my faves?' and this book definitely doesn't do that - it adds to the experience and that world, it doesn't detract. It makes me want to re-read the whole series - jumping from book to book to book to read them timeline together... maybe something for the summer. Any excuse not to have to say goodbye to these characters.

Kirsten says

This book was just amazing. The journey that you take with Adam, Chloe, Natalie and Zach is fabulous. It spans a couple of decades, takes you through multiple points of view, and leaves you thinking about many things. The journey is there for all to read and enjoy. It's not always pleasant, but life isn't always sunshine and roses. There are thorns along the way, pain you must get past, and to do that you work together. This book took me through so many emotions, highs and lows. The way that Ashley wrote this was absolutely brilliant. I loved the characters for being beautifully flawed, unperfect humans. They were all unique in their own ways, and that is what brought them together. Through the good times and the bad, you still know that the love that Adam and Chloe and Natalie and Zach have for each other is real. Sometimes painfully real. But that's what makes this book so beautiful. If I had the time, I'd go back and read it again right now. 5 stars just doesn't seem to be enough for this book, but it will have to do for now.

Hooked On Books says

The Refrain by Ashley Pullo is about two cousins who are best friends, Chloe and Natalie. They have dreamed of living in New York since they were teenagers. Now that the time has finally come and they both live in New York, reality sets in. Natalie has found the love of her life, only to struggle with the fact he is in the military and is now over seas. She anxiously awaits for his return, tragedy strikes and Natalie has to move forward without him. Chloe meets Adam, and he is the calm to her inner storm. Chloe sings in a bar hoping one day to get discovered. She has invited Adam to see her sing and also he can meet her cousin and friends. As Chloe begins to sing, a so called "stranger" sings along with her. Adam sees this as very intimate moment, he is jealous and leaves without warning. Chloe realizes she needs Adam to help her with a secret she has been struggling with since she was a teenager.

"Every great love story has a beginning, whether it's a planned meeting, a random encounter, or an impulsive jump into the unknown. But it's the middle of the story that really counts....expanding the verse and building the chorus. All ballads have a verse and a chorus -but the ending? That's just the beginning."

This book is the third in a series. It is the end, but not really with the way Ashley Pullo writes. It is really the beginning. The way the author has the characters interact is simply amazing. I would recommend this book..

The Book Fairy Reviews says

Amazingly Beautiful!

This book was a breath of fresh air, the writing is unlike anything I have read... And I loved it!

I was completely sucked and became the characters. I especially felt the emotion that was inside of Chloe. Her and Zack's story really touched my heart. The love they have for each other is so strong but sadly realized through a distance that make the love even more beautiful and strong. Natalie and Adam were the rock in this story because you just know, you know that they both feel like they are it for each other. Both loves Amazingly beautiful.

This series is filled with a realization of worth and how tied we really are to fate. And sometimes fate is a fucking bitch! It gives and takes knowing what we need but not preparing your heart for that truth. Because Fate knows who you are to truly be with and what it will take for you to find them. How close we come to crossing paths with the one that we are meant to be with but weren't ready for until it you are. Why the long wait? Why? Well because fate knows better than we do about timing. Because timing is everything! That is when the music in your soul will be everything you wanted and ring true and clear with every heart beat. That is what I took away from this powerful story of 2 cousins finding their way in life and in love. The Refrain is simply AMAZING!

Anny hernandez says

I was provided a copy of the series by the Author for an honest review.

I am gone do this different since I read all three book, one right after the other, I am gone write the review for all three book in the series. I have to start by saying that I love the series, I love how they turned out to be, and love the characters, this series is really different from what I am used to reading, and its ok with me cause I love it, I felt in love with each book from the first page to the last.

BOOK 1 The Ballad

The story beging with Chloe and Adam, they are married they being married for a long time now, they have kids and they are a happy family, it is Chloe birthday and she just keep thinking wow she just turn thirty five, she spend the day with her family, the next day they land it in Paris, it was their first time leaving the kids alone with her parents, they had a great time in Paris, now that they are home Adam is gone be gone for a weeks cause of work, Adam is a lawyer.

What can I say this is a great story, about how two people felt in love, and started a family, while reading it I kept thinking ok this is too good to be true, I was waiting for some kind of tragic to happen, but guess what it never came I just love the book.

BOOK 2 Intermission

This book is about four short stories, it will tell you about the younger years of Chloe, Adam, Natalie, and a new character Zach Parker, and it will tell you from their point of view.

The Interlude = this is about Natalie

The story begins with Natalie she is trying to learn some French, before she heads out to her interview, after her father drops her off at the train station, and she pays for her ticket, she is settling down waiting for the train when someone mentions cute, she looks up wondering who is the one that wants to make conversation, that's when she sees the Hot Sexy Hunk of Zach, right away they have a chemistry and they start to flirt, all that Natalie really wants is to move to the state, and have a life like sex in the city, and after meeting Zach she just got her break.

The Interpretation = this is about Chloe

This one is about the young eighteen year old Chloe, it was her annual pool party, but her and Nat end up leaving the party, for a wild night out, that night they experienced underage drinking in a bar, a swingers party, a one night stand and a psychic, also she is struggling through young adulthood, to find her real self, To discover who she is.

The Intermezzo = this is about Zack

This one is a sweet love story, Zach comes back home from leave, for a few short days, and surprises Natalie, he also visits his mother he doesn't know how much time she has, and that scares him, when she goes back to Afghanistan he is struggling, from being away from Natalie, I love to read the love letter that they send to each other.

The Misinterpretation = this is about Adam

This one is with the young eighteen year old Adam, his with his friends celebrating when, they decide to drive to Canada for a party, they had a wild night and met some girls, and he met the girl who put a smile on his face, that's when he decides that he was going to search for her, and they end up in the same place as Nat and Chloe.

BOOK 3 The Refrain

This is the final book in the series, and once again we get to read it from all points of view, We read about Chloe and Adam also about Natalie and Zach, we get to read more about their background, and we get the answers to our questions, this one is about their lives, the past and the people in it, the story spans nearly two decades, and it always revisits the fourth of July, they face love, heartache, trials and tribulations, They love and they hate, But their stories always find a way back to the fourth of July. This was the perfect book to connect the Bridge series I love it.

I wish I could say more but can't, this is the one series that you need to read, and pay close attention to it, I am so glad that I got the chance to read it, I am in love with it and will read it again, Author Ashley Pullo
THANK YOU FOR THIS AMAZING WONDERFUL CHARACTERS, AND THIS AWESOME
INCREDIBLE SERIES LOVE IT.

Jennifer says

The Bridge Series is the epic story of two Canadian cousins, told in 3 books, The Ballad, Intermission and The Refrain. In simplistic terms, it's about the relationship between the two of them, as they go through the ups and downs in life. It is both laugh out loud funny and devastatingly sad.

These books were like nothing I've ever read before. The writing style is unique and the story doesn't follow the typical Indie romance "formula" that is so common nowadays. Have you ever seen Pulp Fiction? This series reminded me of that movie. I'm not talking about the storyline. I'm referring to the flow between past and present, from one character to another, and somehow everything and everyone is interconnected. That is probably the best way to explain The Bridge series.

I would highly recommend that the books be read in order and would not consider these stand alones. The Refrain is book #3 in the series and continues the story of cousins Natalie and Chloe, who are now living in New York City. Natalie is impatiently waiting for Zach to return from his deployment in Afghanistan, and Chloe and Adam are dealing with the daily stresses in their marriage and work.

Natalie is probably one of my most favorite female book characters. I want Natalie to be my best friend. Heck, I want to be Natalie! She is sarcastic, funny, sexy, and outgoing. She had me smiling at times, and broke my heart at times. It really says something about the author that she is able to create a character that inflicts such a range of emotions in the reader. It's not just Natalie either. Ashley's telling of Chloe and Adams struggles are also very true to life.

I also love the fact that New York City is sort of a secondary character in this series. I am a New Yorker, as is the author, and I have never read a truer depiction of this city. She even writes a HILARIOUS scene about commuting on the subway, that is dead on!

Ashley's references to pop culture are outstanding! They are mixed in throughout the entire series...the original 90210, Saved By the Bell, Licensed to Ill, to name just a few. I am a huge pop culture fanatic so it was right up my alley.

So who should read this book? If you're a New Yorker, if you're a Gen-Xer, if you were and still are affected by 9/11, if you have a loved one in the military, if you love pop culture, if you love music, if you're single, if you're married, if you love to read! I think I've pretty much covered everyone. Ashley Pullo has done a superb job in writing this series. I can't wait to see what she's doing next, and wouldn't mind re-visiting the cast of The Bridge series again.

An ARC was kindly provided by the Author for an honest review.

Review posted at Love Between the Sheets

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Alison Bailey says

I feel so satisfied by The Refrain. I truly feel like I've been on a journey with these characters. The series

challenges the reader. You have to pay attention to the storyline, the references, the quick mentions, the dialogue. I love the narrative that felt like stage directions. The characters and situations were relatable and real. There's a lot of meat to this story. When I had to put it down for some reason, I thought of when I could get back to it. I wanted to know what was next for my friends. The Bridge series is the type of read that makes you want to curl up on the sofa and get lost for the day.

Heidi Tieman says

Reading this series was a truly unique experience. Fresh, entertaining and so many life lessons packed into a steamy little trio of books. When I started reading book 1, The Ballad, I was a little surprised at the storyline and how it played out. The plot was reversed going from present to past...a new one for me but I enjoyed it. The characters were engaging and the story kept you guessing, beating along to it's own drum.

Intermission, Book 2, was where I was well and truly hooked. I fell completely for Natalie and Zach's story. They had such a fun and spicy chemistry but it had an underlying sadness to it as well, giving it just enough drama to keep you glued to the pages.

Now for The Refrain...where everything really comes together. I had to kind of sit and just let this whole series absorb. It pulls so many different emotions from you. The Refrain was phenomenal...I laughed, I cried and I had moments of pure frustration. I loved getting to know Adam better in this book. I didn't really connect with him until The Refrain, but once I did...phew! We get more of Nat and Zach...their crazy banter and heartbreak story. Overall, I give the series a 5 Star Rating! If you are looking for something different, packed with steam, drama & humor, I highly recommend it!

BookKnutz says

The Refrain is a beautiful ending--or beginning depending on how you look at it--to The Bridge Series. You would think that as a reader there would be no more surprises left since the ending of these fabulous characters' lives is in the first chapter of The Ballad (The Bridge Series #1), but The Refrain is like a set of Russian nesting dolls, as soon as a surprise is revealed there's another one waiting. Ashley Pullo has a magical way of taking life's ordinary moments and making them extraordinary. She weaves words together in such a beautiful way that the joys and sorrows of her cast of characters will have you laughing and crying (and blushing) right along with them. Ashley Pullo's Bridge series is a unique storytelling experience that will stay with you long after the last word is read.

Karen Voitik says

This third book in the Bridge series is by far the best. I always felt these books were like a big puzzle. After finishing The Refrain, the puzzle is complete. I had a hard time with all the dates, in all the books- past, present, future. I must be ADD, because I had to go to the contents and look up the dates, like 5 times. Other than that, I have to say I love Natalie. I have only cried while reading twice. This was #3. The emotions of the characters, watching the time pass, seeing the mistakes and the successes, what a journey. I recommend this book and this series. Everything about it is unique, even the book covers. A romance without a shirtless male on the cover? These unique covers work! I don't know why, but the story wouldn't be as special with a

typical cover. I am glad Ashley Pullo took a chance and created her written symphony HER way.

Miria Vanessa says

4.5 stars

I am so happy with this series, the consistency of pure awesomeness is mind-blowing. The story spans around 20 years in the lives of Chloe, Adam, Natalie and Zach. The each face heartaches, challenges and all the emotions that come with falling in love. The writing is impeccable, as I've said before. Its no fuss, no frills and the interactions among the characters are so realistic you feel like you're eavesdropping the entire time. There are a lot of references to movies, music and The Ballad. I felt so satisfied with the ending of this series, or beginning, really. It felt when a really good bunch of friends are sitting around telling you their story. I love each and every character, all of them touched me in a way. All of them made me laugh, smile or cry. One of them even fixed my day.

Truly spectacular writing.

Complimentary copy received in exchange for an honest review.

Jaime says

To follow these characters along their journey has been a blessing. Pullo is extremely witty and packs meaning into her work. It has been my pleasure to follow her career. I look forward to her future characters and stories. :D

FINALLY, Adam. My only complaint is that I want more. He is composed, arrogant, confident, intelligent, and rather funny. I loved his POV. Chloe will always be my favorite, my first. She is a breathe of fresh air. Not without flaws. She is up and down and all around. One of my favorite moments is watching Chloe through Adam's eyes. The Rainbow Connection scene is so powerful, I could read it a hundred times and still get goosebumps. Love these two together.

Zach, Frenchie: Ahhh, sigh. I love them. I love the snippet of him. He is powerful. And He is forever ingrained in my heart as the landscape in the Little Prince. Natalie, goes through the most trying times. Without giving anything away, it was heartbreak but also honest to her character.

Chris, Chris, Chris: I welcome you a board the crazy train with open arms and a wide smile. You captivated me. Cowboy boats, Austin twang, straight from the opening glimpse.

Cheers to: Bowser tattoos, Violent Femmes, trees, loving tacos, to the stars, muumuus, flowering cacti, vinyl, cowboy boots, congealed pies, lastly, the verse & the chorus, that make up the Ballad.

Liis McKinstry says

If I refuse to believe that this book is over, is it really over?

If I tell the author that she needs to go back to the drawing board just so I can get her to write more about these characters, is that cruel?

If I send this book to every single person I know, will we form a support group for all things Zach Attack?

If I manage to 'get' science and create a time-machine, will someone make sure I go back to the exact moment I heard about this author and make sure I have her promise not to annihilate my heart?

It's been a week, and I'm not even remotely over The Refrain. I've cried some really ugly tears because of this real, honest, stunning, heartbreakingly beautiful story. I'm having a really tough time letting go. It's kind of like your one true love. It changes you. It makes you whole. And it will consume you.

Always.
