

At the Water's Edge

Harper Bliss

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After a traumatic event that has left her in deep need of healing, Ella Goodman returns to her hometown in Oregon. While staying at her family's cabin at the West Waters lake resort, she finds an unexpected friend in level-headed owner Kay Brody. But Ella's sole objective is to restore the broken ties with her family, and she has no time for distractions like falling in love. The healing process is confrontational and difficult though, and she is soon forced to realize that people like Kay only come along once in a lifetime.

At the Water's Edge Details

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From Reader Review At the Water's Edge for online ebook

T.B. Markinson says

This is an honest and touching story about a woman dealing with depression. As the story progresses, the author shows more and more of the good and bad of Ella and her family. She does this masterfully and it's like putting a jigsaw puzzle together. Piece by piece the picture becomes clear. This method allows the reader to stay engaged in the story and to slowly process all of the emotional trauma going through Ella's mind. It's an emotional and insightful read.

Angie says

I knew from the description that At the Water's Edge was going to be a darker, more serious story, but I found myself not clicking with Ella at all and becoming frustrated while reading. Ella has returned home after nearly 20 years in order to heal herself and her relationship with her family. She's been struggling with depression, and is trying to put her life back together after trying to end it. There she's also reunited with Kay, but she isn't ready for a relationship. But you can't exactly control falling in love.

At the Water's Edge started off really slow. It takes several chapters to learn what has brought Ella back to her family's lake house. I'm generally not a fan of these drawn out reveals unless it's a mystery/suspense type plot, which this is definitely not. It just made the beginning very vague and I couldn't get a feel for Ella or where she's at emotionally and mentally. Once her story is finally out, and I was getting into it, it was over. I guess it was too late.

One thing that I loved about At the Water's Edge was Kay. She is biracial and bisexual, and she owns it! She very explicitly states these things and I wanted to cheer! She isn't confused or flaky. She doesn't choose one half of her whole to fit the situation. She just is. All too often characters who are attracted to men and women, or who claim to be attracted to minds not genders, also reject labels. Like somehow they're above it, so it's like bi/poly/pan don't even exist, but they do!

At the Water's Edge just wasn't the story for me. It took too long to get to the meat of it, so by time that it did, I was no longer interested. The romance portion was okay. There's a lot of push and pull, but the sex is pretty hot.

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Kent says

This is a very beautiful story. As usual for a Harper Bliss story, the characters are all very easy to relate to. I feel as if I know each of the main characters personally. It is also easy to picture the locations based on Harper's descriptions. I would recommend this story to anyone who is a hopeless romantic like me.

Susanne says

Ella Goodman returns home to West Waters after taking leave from her professorship job in Boston. It has been many years since she came back home and to see her family again. As the story unfolds, we share the journey Ella goes through and her recovery progress. While she is battling with her demons, she meets Kay Brody. Both women have complications but can they overcome them? An emotional read and giving you an insight into a subject matter that has been sensitively handled.

Megzz says

Where to start?

This book touched me deeply, for personal reasons. Harper Bliss was able to write such a compelling story of despair and love.

I suffer from mild depression and have never read a better description of what it feels like. The darkness, the hopelessness, the helplessness of not knowing HOW to be happy. How to enjoy more than fleeting moments of contentment. Ella's story broke my heart in millions of pieces, it was so beautifully written. Bliss writes with emotions, and in every word she uses there is feeling. It's so rare.. so wonderful, to feel so much while reading a story written by someone you know nothing about but who seems to know you. I want to shout to Harper Bliss "YES. You understand. You're wonderful. How? How do you know?".

As you can guess this is not a feel-good story. But it's a very realistic one, because life is never as easy as some books make it out to be. It's a constant struggle to find happiness. And I like that Harper Bliss's solution to that is love. Because I also think that true love can save broken people, can make them feel alive and stay alive.

Ella has suffered from depression almost her whole life, and comes back to where she grew up with the hope of finding the roots of it all and getting better. There, she meets Kay again, a girl she knew growing up. Kay is down to earth, adventurous, charming, understanding, vulnerable and strong at the same time. She is not unhappy in her life, but she yearns to find what her father always hoped she'd find: happiness in the form of love. But the real love, the forever kind of love, the inevitable kind of love. Not the one that ever goes away. The love that keeps you alive.

And she finds it. YES. Ella and Kay fall in love so helplessly and so undoubtedly. Because Kay is the only person who can save Ella and the only person Ella wants to bear her soul to. And it's absolutely amazing to read about how Ella finds light in the darkness again, how she can finally be herself with someone who understands and accepts everything about her.

I have another question to Harper Bliss: How can you use such few words but evoke so many feelings? You are able to tell stories in a way very few writers can.

Really, this is what I would call a short book, but by the end of it I felt like I had lived a whole life.

Because the story is written from Ella's POV, the reader is able to feel everything Ella does. I started the story with a heavy heart, a sort of pain in my chest (I silently and discreetly cried a lot), and with every chapter the heavy pain lifted, while Ella fell in love and opened up, I fell in love with the irresistible Kay and felt giddy and happy.

And the sex... is hot, with the tenderness of love and the passion of desire. The best kind. The orgasms that bring tears to your eyes because they are not just physical, and when Ella comes, she falls in love with Kay a little bit more. Until she feels completely safe, and understands that this is where she wants to be always.

Despite the heavy aspect of it, *At The Water's Edge* is indisputably a story of hope. And now, one of my favorite romance novels.

Arien says

4.4 stars. I wasn't going to write a review for this one but here's a short one. It's good but there are very little "good feels" because it's essentially about finding hope when you're in complete despair.

That grim tone never eases and continues to the end and it hits too close to home. I'm grateful for what it is, it made me self reflect on many of the same issues it covers but that's also where it failed to be an escape and instead became reality. That is why it's not a 5 star book for me (and also the first person view).

M says

This is my family!

The way Harper described the barely concealed disdain and contempt between parents, the never forgotten or forgiven past infidelity and the frigid silences, oh! the silence that screams with anger and pain.

Wonderfully heartfelt and emotional book that really resonated with me.

The romance is nicely handled and the steamy bits were appropriately steamy.

Great read and not at all what you would expect from this author's previous works. Looking forward to more of the same.

Excellent.

Ameliah Faith says

I'm Stunned and Pleased to Say the Least!

This is NOT the typical Harper Bliss drama. Don't get me wrong, all the heat we have come to know and adore is there and then some but this saga is so emotion driven! It is intense, strong, hard and weak, tender and tearful. It is more than wonderful....

Told in the first person we are able to see through Ella's eyes, experience the decisions that have brought her

to West Water and the ones she makes after. We get to sense her falling in love, to forgive, to accept and finally to heal. It is a beautiful journey towards living.

This is a just so much more than a romance novel. It is a multi-dimensional, thought provoking, powerful and just excellent showcase of Ms. Bliss' talent and I for one am so grateful for the chance to experience it.

Thank you Ms. Bliss.

Mindy says

Actual rating : 3.5 stars

Looking for an adult romance between two women? This book might be for you.

I enjoyed that this story involves two women that are in their forties. I don't know if I have ever read a romance where the leads are both over forty. And I have read many romances. This is a romance and it does have some sexy times, but it also deals with some very serious issues. The MC, Ella, returns home to repair herself and her relationship with her family. While staying at her parents cabin on the lake she reconnects with Kay. Their budding relationship and the vivid writing about the scenery were my favorite parts. I did tire of Ella's issues with her family towards the end.

The reason I chose to read this ebook was because of the beautiful cover and I'm glad I did.

Rach (Les Rêveur) says

Ella returns home to Oregon and lives in her parents cabin at a lake resort. She becomes friends with the resort owner Kay and sparks begin to fly between them. But Ella's her to fix her life and she can't do that while falling for the girl she's always been looking for... But is there ever right time?

I adored 'At The Waters Edge'. Harper has a way of making you feel like you know the characters personally by how invested you get in their story. I got rather invested in the happiness of both Lead heroines, hoping that they would make it through the rough circumstances to get their HEA.

I love how brave Harper Bliss is about tackling Mental Health or Emotional issues. She has done this in few of her novels and it has worked really well and the reader feels like the story is representing real life events in a realistic way.

Great and emotional read. 5 Stars.

Alexis says

This really was a surprising read. I hadn't expected the story to be quite as dark as it was. It touched on themes such as depression and suicide which doesn't make it a light quick read. It however is still a very captivating book because of the author's ability to describe in an honest and sometimes painful way what

someone goes through when suffering from a depression.

The dialogue and interaction between the main characters was fascinating due to the great chemistry they have. Harper Bliss once again does not disappoint!

Maria says

This is a raw and difficult read, but oh so important. It's difficult because it's real this book deals with grief, family issues and depression

I had to drop it a couple of times because I just couldn't deal with how much I have felt the exact same way, everything just clicks so much that for people like me who have lived, and still do, through those dark places it gets too emotional, too close to the truth.

A round of applause for Harper Bliss because writing about this, about the darkness..

Diane says

Surprisingly good! interesting, fun, emotional and a thought provoking storyline which had a few relatable and also likable characters included...well written

Nikki says

This is a tricky one to rate because I enjoyed so much of the emotional growth and relationship building in the story, but I feel there were some pretty big problems with some of the execution. The story is told from first-person POV, which I think ended up being a great choice, as I got to see some the depth of Ella's responses and personality that I wouldn't have had access to otherwise.

However, I think it acted as a hindrance at the start primarily due to the 'big reveal' that occurs later on. Ella keeps eluding to an incident that just happened, but then puts it aside to be described later. Which, if done in third person where we are picking up hints along with the secondary characters, it would have been more effective. It just didn't really make as much sense to me, since we are in the protagonist's brain, to keep this dangling carrot when she would already know what the carrot was. Now I kind of want a carrot.

Additionally, the sex scenes felt completely out of place. You're riding along, watching someone going through a truly emotionally devastating time, and then BAM you're in an erotica novel with really graphic descriptions. Which would be completely fine in another context, but didn't feel right for these characters and their journey. It almost felt like I was reading two different books because of it, and I ended up skipping through some of them because it just ripped me too much out of the story due to it's imbalance.

Aside from that, I am glad I read it, and think the author can really go places with her ability to write complex characters that have a lot of work to do and are self aware enough to recognize that. This is my first Harper Bliss book, and I'll probably read another one at some point to see where she decides to go next.

charlotte says

Rep: lesbian mcs, non-white side characters

It's a shame this book turned out like it did, because it actually contained some of the better writing I've read in adult and new adult wlw lit. And that's saying something - there were some *incredibly* cringey lines here.

My biggest issue with this was that the author goes down the "sex curing her depression" route. I truly wish I was paraphrasing that more than I am. At one point, while they're having sex, the main character (Ella) thinks to herself *"If this is not saving me, I don't know what would"*, and also, *"As if by her penetration, she's giving herself to me - she's healing me."* Then there's the idea that's presented every few pages, that she's "broken". Neither of these things are challenged by anyone (not her therapist, not therapist-lite - oh sorry, I mean Kay, her girlfriend), and that's my major sticking point. I don't have a problem at all with the storyline - that she's depressed and goes to talk things through with her family, and just so happens to fall in love along the way - that's great. It's how the narrative frames these things that I didn't like.

I also couldn't help but notice that, for all the mentions of her therapist, Ella doesn't actually seem to pay attention to anything he says until Kay starts saying the same things (hence the label of therapist lite). It just felt a little like she was becoming dependent on Kay more than learning to deal with depression herself. Similarly with the whole idea that Kay is healing her. It's never mentioned outright that this is the case, but it certainly feels a bit like that.

This one did have initial promise - I was thinking up until at least halfway through that I'd rate it as high as 4 stars - but in the end it didn't live up to that. So my search for a good adult/new adult wlw book goes on.
