



Love Is

Tia Kelly

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It took a once-in-a-lifetime bond to teach her what love is, and a once-in-a-lifetime betrayal to show her what love is not... Love Is. A different kind of love story.

Diane Collins had big plans for her life, and hoops star Warren Scott was not among them. He doesn't want to be the face of the NBA, and she doesn't care that he is. His reluctance to be part of the limelight disarms her and the two embark on an unlikely friendship that becomes an even unlikelier romance.

Soon, his life is her life - filled with VIP treatment, parties and luxuries beyond Diane's wildest imagination. But Warren is harboring a secret, and once it's revealed Diane's decision to stay or go could change the very fabric of who she thought she was.

Love Is Details

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From Reader Review Love Is for online ebook

Kim says

I just finished reading Tia Kelly's Love is and I am convinced that--hands down--this is the best novel she has ever written. This is pure women's fiction--not a romance, even though love is one of many themes in the novel--but the main focus is on Diane's journey...and what a journey she has.

Diane is a smart woman who finds herself in a situation that she always thought she was too smart to end up in. A choice she makes in the heat of the moment leads to her career going off course, dealing with the mercurial temperament of a man who will never give her the love she deserves and nearly costs her the friendship of the one man who loves her for who she is. Along the way, we find out family secrets and what happens when bridges are burned between family members.

I don't want to give too much away, but...just read it. This is a novel that ALL women--no matter their ethnicity, religion, or skin color--can relate to. We've all wanted love so badly that we ignore common sense or put our own hopes and dreams on hold while we try to "fix" someone who cannot (and doesn't want to be) fixed. Love Is pulls you in and makes you feel like you are walking that road with Diane. So many times I wanted to grab her by the shoulders and tell her to snap out of it--but I also empathised with her and understood where she was coming from.

Add Love Is to your TBR List, 1-click it ASAP! You won't regret it!

Deedee Henson says

This was my first read by this author but it won't be my last. I loved this complex story

Angela Bohles says

I've read several books by this author and I will have to say that this is my favorite so far. The story started a little slow in the beginning, but when things got moving I couldn't put it down.

Kim Outlaw says

Lovely and Bittersweet

This book is the first in a while to bring about such wistful tears in me. I'm familiar with Tia Kelly's work, but nothing I've read so far prepared me for Love Is.

The battle within and between these characters to exert their will in order to change each other's internal hardwiring was frustrating to witness yet poignantly honest.

As they traveled through the prior decades engaged in such relatable iconic occurrences, I found myself enjoying the characters' intriguing journey.

This one is a game changer! Totally unexpected, stirring, heartbreaking, satisfying.

Ang says

Love Is .. Riveting!

It's a very well written story. I feel Tia does a great job with defining the personality and feelings of the characters in her book. The time frame in which the story was written was well developed. Will the contents and storyline touch your heart? Indeed it will. This book takes the authors writing skills to the next level in my opinion. Awesome job Tia Kelly!

Deena says

Let me start by saying that the only other book that I've read by Tia Kelly is Baby Love, so all I knew about Diane is that she's Paige's mama. And that she had been a side chick, since Paige and Trent had the same daddy, and he was married to Trent's mama. I really thought that that was all I needed to know about Diane. So imagine my surprise when I found out that Ms. Kelly was going to write a book about her. Ummm, why? Now, I love romance novels, and I prefer romance novels with a HEA. Having read Baby Love, I knew that Diane and Warren weren't going to have a HEA, so I put off reading this book, mainly because I didn't really want to read about a side chick, even though I knew Ms. Kelly was going to make me love her.

Well, this book challenged all of my assumptions about Diane, and who she was, and how she ended up having a baby by a married NBA player. I assumed I knew the scenario for how things went down, but Tia Kelly said, 'not so fast'. Diane was not at all what I expected. She had it all together (well, kinda) before she met Warren, and the story of her relationship with Warren, from start to finish, was very surprising to me. She has no idea who he is when they meet, and they develop a friendship of sorts, and things are strictly platonic for quite a while. Then they become physical, and she slowly becomes the cautionary tale that my mama warned me about, when she said 'always have something of your own, so you can take care of yourself and anybody else who comes along', and also, 'never, ever let a man become your whole world'. It was hard to watch it happen to her. I kept hollering at my Kindle, 'girl, stop, just stop!!!'. I alternated between wanting to give her a good shake, and wanting to give her a big hug.

I knew Warren was going to be a piece of work, but I had not idea he would be as completely awful as he was. He was despicable. Very few redeeming qualities. I wanted to put my whole foot up his a**. Ugh!!!

And Diane's parents! Lawdhammercy, they were the WORST!!! Usually, one parent is good, but these two were equally horrible. My mouth was left hanging wide open after every scene they were in.

I'm so glad that Diane had Maxine and Clarence. They were just what she needed, whenever she needed it. And that poor girl needed someone in her corner! David's mom and sister also seemed to be good people who cared about her, and I wish she would have taken advantage of that.

And David. From the first time we meet him, I was trying to read between the lines, to see what was wrong

with him...cause Diane should have been all over that man! From jump! Such a loving, kind, caring man. And so much wasted time. Just when I thought Diane was going to have the happiness and love that had been eluding her, it was snatched away. I think I was as hurt as she was. Poor girl.

Although there wasn't the HEA that I wanted, the book left me feeling good about Diane and her future. I'm definitely going to go back and re-read Baby Love to see if any clues are provided there. I'm also going to read Paige's story, because I'm curious to see how she's been affected by all of this.

Great job, Tia Kelly! This book took me through all the emotions. You knocked this one out of the park!

Tina Young says

Love Is What Love Does...

I always wonder how Paige's mother and Warren met and whether he ever had any true involvement in her upbringing. I truly hate spoilers, but I have to reveal my disappointment in the actions of Diane's parents. This is truly an Intriguing and Telling story that us a definite must read, especially for anyone familiar with Tia Kelly's "Wilkerson's" series. I was an emotional mess at times as I cried and laughed throughout this book, but I so grateful to Tia for sharing Diane's story with her readers.

Mary says

What is love?

Another great read. A very realistic story. Warren was, in my opinion, a real nut case and a**hole. Love this author.

Deloris says

APB Perspective Review:

This book took me totally by surprise, I have read Tia Kelly books before but this book blew me away. Diane's story is one many women can relate to whether they admit or not. Sometimes you choose love and it doesn't choose you, at least not they way you deserve. Tia did an excellent job of telling Diane's story. The author takes the reader through the emotions of love, the happiness it brings, the pain it causes, and loss of it, and she definitely makes you feel them. As I read the last pages of this book I felt I got an HEA, not the typical happy ending, but I felt happy because Diane learned, and I felt she came out on top, and I looked forward to her future. This author has found her writing groove and I am so happy for her, and I can truly say I can't wait to see what she writes next.

A says

Love is, a different kind of romance

Love Is, is a different kind of romance read. Different in that, it's sorta sad with a skewed HEA. It was unexpected for me...I didn't expect to hate the faux alpha male, hottie, selfish jerk in Warren. I didn't expect to physically feel the hurt of Diane and Paige. I certainly didn't expect to really cry, I've read hundreds of books and have been sad but I have never ever shed tears. I didn't expect to fall in love with Diane's chutzpah because for a large percentage of this book I wanted to smack the daylights out of her.

Tia Kelly winds the reader with this tale. The book begins with this kismet type of meeting between the central characters, Warren + Diane. Kelly makes you want to become Diane and she certainly makes you want to sex Warren. Diane is wined + dined by Warren but she never lets go of her independent woman aspirations; well, until she does.

Meanwhile, in the background to this 'romance' is a male best friend and judgmental parents. And then Kelly just shakes up the entire love story, as a reader you're saying "aha, I knew it". Well we may have guessed a thing or two, but this book is no romance cliché. There is real pain, hurt, despair and honestly, I was uncomfortable. That's the sign of something special!!

There are a lot of 80's flashbacks. And I LOVED so many of them...especially JJ Fad and the replay of the UNC/Houston Final four.

I highly recommend this book but don't read it with wine or it may leave you crying just like me.

Teresa Mcmillian says

Love Is...

I put off reading this book for so long because of all the reviews said it was a great book, but it was so sad. As I sit here with tears streaming down my eyes, I know the reviews are true. Tia takes you on an emotional journey of Diane and the person she was and the dreams she had before she crossed paths with Warren Scott. It gives you a better understanding of Paige other than her being the other woman. My heart went out to the most innocent person in this equation: Paige. This is a great book, but it's also an emotional journey, so be prepared!

Jacinta Howard says

Heartbreaking, emotional, real, haunting, achingly honest. This book is moving, intelligent and worth all of the emotion it evokes.

"Love Is" creeps up on you and grabs hold of your heart before you realize it's happening. I literally ached when I finished reading it-- Diane felt that real to me. I felt her pain, her struggles, her longings. I related to her in ways that made me think about my own relationships and self-perception.

I'm so glad Tia Kelly defied expectations and wrote what was on her heart because the emotion poured into this novel jumps off the pages. This is easily the best book I've read by her and among my favorites of the past year.

"Love Is" is a soul-stirring book that I definitely won't soon forget.

Michelle [Helen Geek] says

01/22/2016 --

Love is ... well, this is pretty much the question in this one. As I started reading this book -- you start to form a picture of how the book will go. I didn't get what I expected I'd get. Diane Collins is a conundrum for me. At first we think this girl has it together. She has a good male friend. She has a career planned and she is hard working towards making it happen. She seems to know her own mind. She is a beautiful woman and seems to have a good head on her shoulders.

So, why then did she fall into the relationship that seemed to take it all away, or tried to? Hell if I know. There were so many contrasts in this book. I have to believe the author design it this way. And, if so, I'm not sure I really liked it.

Have you ever know that woman who seems to be content to get whatever they have from a man? The woman who doesn't seem to have much ambition beyond being available, whenever, however for a specific guy? Ever wonder how someone could sell themselves so short and cheaply? Well, this book may actually give you insight into how a person loses themselves in a life they never planned.

This really was the book of Diane. I didn't always like her, but she intrigued me. I had a very hard time feeling sorry for her. I can't say this was a favorite read. And, Warren was a total asshat.

+++++

Overall Rating = 3 Stars

Book Cover / Book Blurb / Book Title = 3 / 5 / 4 = 4 Stars

Writer's Voice = 3.5 Stars

Character / Secondary Character Development = 3 / 3 = 3 Stars

"Did I like" Hero / Heroine = N/A / 3 = 3 Stars

Story / Background Story Development = 3 / 3 = 3 Stars

"Did I like the Damned Thing" = 3 Stars

Ending = 3 Stars

Worth the Chili = 3 Stars -- [\$3.99 on Amazon]

Smexy [HEAT] Rating = Mild

310 pages

First sentence: Diane Collins leaned against the hood of her BMW and looked up at the sky.

Last sentence: Kissing it, Diane smiled and drove to the life David had reminded her she deserved.

Anika says

Listen, when I say this book will put you through it, I am not kidding. Have that glass of wine on deck. This was a well-crafted, sophisticated, and highly emotive read--I was not expecting that. The story itself is honest and raw...and sweet and beautiful at the same time.

We meet sure-footed Diane, not long out of undergrad, and well on her way to furthering her studies and pursuing her dreams to go outer-space. Literally. She is smart, she's ambitious, and she's almost there.

And a mysterious Warren. Unbeknownst to her, he is a basketball phenomenon and pretty famous. He's struggling with a lot of things in his very complicated life, and this is when he meets Diane.

The way their lives come together is electric and somewhat of a whirlwind. The way the story unfolds is the thing that will keep you up until the wee hours caught the eff up. Sometimes mad as hell. Sometimes blissful. Sometimes confused. Always curious.

Diane makes you want to scream at her sometimes, but...the story is so vivid you end up feeling like you're living everything with her and completely empathizing with her arc. And as such, Warren takes you from angry to hopeful and back, several times. And I was nail-biting, wondering how in the world the relationships in this book would or could be resolved. The journey had me feeling wrung out in the end, but the ride was unbelievably captivating.

and a PS: This novel takes place in the 80's which made it tragic because I wanted to yell out, "Why can't you just call her on her cell?!" or "That would have been on TMZ immediately" or my favorite: "Ugh. Google would have solved all of this!" But anyways, I'd like to thank the author for titling every chapter after a song from the 80's. It provides some much needed levity and it had me singing songs throughout my read. :)

I think this is officially the longest review I've ever written. Whew. Goodnight.

Nia Forrester says

'Love Is' opens with the very ambitious, goal-oriented and purpose-driven Diane Collins in an airport, waiting for a flight after having just endured an interview for a job that is well beneath her abilities and her lofty expectations for herself. She's got huge plans, but knows that the job, however lacking, could be a stepping stone to where she wants to go, so she's willing to consider it. As fate would have it, also on that flight, and in need of a buffer between him and his over-exuberant fans, is Warren "the Warrior" Scott, an NBA player with the Boston Celtics. Warren and Diane strike up a conversation and shortly thereafter a friendship that will dramatically change the trajectory of her life.

Unbeknownst to Diane, she is meeting Warren at a pivotal moment in his life and career, and though he may

be the biggest thing to happen to her in a long while, her significance (and certainly her value) in his life ... well, that remains in question throughout most of the novel.

‘Love Is’ is notable for lots of reasons for me. First, it’s definitely genre-bending. Though there are certainly love affairs and ‘love dilemmas’ in the story, the big questions are raised by how much Diane may or may not love herself and how that self-love, or lack thereof, may lead her into making bad decisions. The love between parents and their children is also a theme that gets a lot of attention from the author and by the time the book is done, the choices parents make for the benefit of their kids, and sometimes to their kids’ detriment is also thoroughly and thoughtfully explored.

But let me get concrete. Here’s what made this book a ‘must-read’ for me:

The Maddening, but “Relatable” Imperfection of the Heroine—I wanted to choke her out a time or two, I can tell you that. I rarely agreed with her choices and a few of them made me want to scream. But here’s one thing I didn’t do: I didn’t doubt that those were choices a woman might make, choices women have made, or choices that even with her flawed reasoning made a certain kind of sense. It is almost important to me from the beginning of a novel to the end, that I am convinced. And I found Diane thoroughly convincing. She was the friend you know, who you watch make mistakes, but whose mistakes you are powerless to prevent her from making. At one point, I could almost weep for Diane, seeing how far she had departed from the woman she was in that airport.

The Ambiguity of the Anti-Hero—so there’s a hint for you (and a mild spoiler) by calling him an Anti-Hero. Warren Scott (whose choices reverberate in the lives of characters in several other Tia Kelly novels) is a complicated man. He does incredibly romantic and thoughtful things, and then mind-blowingly despicable things. He is heart-meltingly tender, and then unbelievably callous. But like, Diane, he is real. The realistic nature of the character is only part of the appeal for me, though. I also loved that he was an enigma, not only to the reader, but you also got the sense that he was an enigma to himself—unable to explain his feelings, or process them, unable to discern his own wants and needs; unable to stop himself going down a path that could only lead to pain for himself and others.

The Familiarity of the Themes—the story is in some ways an old and familiar one. And in the traditional telling of this story, Diane could be seen as the villainess, or at a minimum, as being, well, not very smart. But the way the author had the story unfold, you realize the slow steps people sometimes take to almost certain ruin. Only from the distance of a reader are we able to see with clarity how ruinous their choices are, but at the same time, we understand why they the protagonists and participants in the story may not see it.

The Attention to Time and Place—if you were born in the 80’s, or a pre-teen or teenager then, you will recognize all of the cultural references—the clothes people wore, the shows on television, the happenings in the world’s of sports, entertainment, and politics— and you will delight in them. These details were unobtrusively sprinkled throughout, reminding us that the action doesn’t take place in an unspecified ‘modern America’ but in a very definite era. And that era, before social media made the details of everyone’s personal life a Google search away, is essential for understanding a key plot point. Also, each chapter, rather than being numbered, is named after a song from that era with a title relevant to the unfolding of the action. This kind of thing sets a book apart, and makes it clear that it was the product of thought, rather than an impulsive regurgitation of ideas expressed in a million other books before.

The Bold Conclusion—Around 80 percent into ‘Love Is’, you’re pretty sure you know what’s going to happen. Well, you’re wrong. And that’s all I’m saying.

Disclaimer: the author is a friend and someone I often have conversations with about writing, characters and popular culture and how that impacts what writers write, and what people read. She co-hosted an event with me in Washington DC called ‘Wine with Writers’ which gave us, as well as writers Xyla Turner and Lily Java, a rare opportunity to have face-to-face time with readers and talk about the theme of African American women in fiction, and hear their impressions of our work and characters. It was a super-fun, interesting and eye-opening afternoon and gave us a new perspective on the ways that the things we can write affect real people with real lives. That’s an awesome amount of power and responsibility to have. It still amazes me that anyone would even want to meet writers, just because of our fanciful scribbles about imagined people and their imagined lives. But I don’t think my friend and fellow-writer Tia Kelly would mind my saying that she takes that power and responsibility really seriously.

The seriousness with which she treats that responsibility is clear in ‘**Love Is**’. Having read everything she’s released, I have to say that this is, hands-down, her very best work.
