



The Songs of Us

Emma Cooper

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If Melody hadn't run out of de-icer that day, she would never have slipped and banged her head. She wouldn't be left with a condition that makes her sing when she's nervous. And she definitely wouldn't have belted out the Arctic Monkeys' 'I Bet You Look Good on the Dancefloor' in assembly at her son's school.

If Dev hadn't taken the kids to the zoo that day, then the accident wouldn't have happened. He wouldn't have left Flynn and Rose without a dad. Or shattered the love of his life's heart.

But if they hadn't seen the missing person report that day, they might never have taken the trip to Cornwall. And, in the last place they expected, discovered what it really means to be 'Us'.

The Songs of Us Details

Date : Published September 20th 2018 by Headline Review (first published May 31st 2018)

ISBN : 9781472252531

Author : Emma Cooper

Format : Paperback 432 pages

Genre : Fiction

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Nessa says

Okay so if it wasn't for my book club having highly recommend this book, they literally went on and on and on about it lol, I probably wouldn't have picked it up to read it, given that it wasn't an author I'd come across before.

Anyway, as it happen I did decide to give this book a go and wow am I glad I did. This was an absolutely wonderful heartfelt story but careful as it was also very emotional in places, especially near the very end. I actually had tears in my eyes at one point.

I loved the story and getting to know all of the characters was truly a delight, they were all so very real, I almost forgot that they were just characters in a book.

I started this book on Saturday morning and finished it Sunday lunchtime, I literally couldn't put it down and ended up whizzing through those pages, desperate to find out what would happen next and how it would all end.

As for how the story ended, at first I was like no no no, don't let this happen, I don't want it to end like this, but then I read the epilogue which was beautiful and I came to understand that it was in fact the perfect ending for the book and I can now see why the author ended the story the way she did.

Agi says

Life hasn't been kind for the King family. Melody is trying her best after her husband Dev mysteriously disappeared years ago. Flynn, having suffered facial injuries and being blind in one eye in end result has his own battles to fight at school, as well as his sister Rose. Melody, following an unfortunate accident, has a very unusual and embarrassing habit of launching into song when she's stressed or in anxiety. Rose is desperate to find her father and when she comes across a notification about a missing person, a whole new chapter in the King's family life begins...

Ah, feck guys, what a gorgeous, poignant and at the same time funny book it was! I've never supposed it's going to end in this way, and even though I felt disappointed how it turned out - I didn't want it to end like this - No. Way. Please. No. Just. No - but I accepted the way the author decided to wrap this story up. It didn't spoil the book for me - it's really hard to explain, to be honest, because you may say, what, you didn't like the ending and yet you loved the book, hello? Yes, it's exactly like this, because I totally, absolutely fell for Melody and it was just so unfair, but on the other hand it signed the story off in a beautiful, poignant way.

It is this kind of book that you're going to devour in one sitting, wanting to read one chapter more and more. Yes, there were moments that I thought it drags too much, it focused too much on Melody's condition and it felt as if it was repeating itself, and also the moments when Melody was singing, especially the quoting of the songs almost line after line were too much for my liking, but you know, those were only a few minor problems and altogether it was simply beautiful - an emotional roller - coaster journey, full of tears and laughs. It was funny and heart - wrenching, and it's going to break your heart, mend it and break it again - be

prepared and have your tissues at the ready.

This story is told in the first person's narration, from the four main characters points of view. Those four characters are Melody, her children Flynn and Rose and her missing husband Dev. They all had beautiful, distinctive voices full of personality and the way they were telling their stories was heart - breaking. I immediately fell for them all and to see what they're all going through, their stress, it was so sad. Emma Cooper has written all those feelings and emotions in such a beautiful, realistic way and you really have a feeling that you're sitting in the characters' heads. Melody was absolutely brilliant, full of life and so vibrant and I loved how she was around her children and how she fought for them. Flynn, such a typical teenager but with a huge heart in the right place. And Rose, the troubled Rose who tried to solve her problems in her own way - such a perfectly imperfect family that is going to stay with you for a very long time. The bond between the family is beautiful, so poignant and the way the children went to protect their mother was simply heart - wrenching.

I'm not sure how the author did this, but she has written a book where you just feel a part of the characters' world, you feel as if you know them from inside out, all their problems and luck become yours. It doesn't happen often that I feel that way when reading the book. I also loved that it has a darker side, challenging characters in some really difficult situations. It wasn't too light, but is also wasn't heavy, just the perfect mix of everything you look for in your books.

"The Songs of Us" was a truly surprising novel, full of twists and turns, sad but also incredibly uplifting. The characters were portrayed in very realistic way and they were very true to life, full of flaws and facing thousand little battles and showing what a real family looks like. It had a refreshing, unique storyline written in a sensitive, gentle way. Bitter - sweet and close to life, it's going to make you laugh out loud and cry crocodile tears. A story of love, hope, broken hearts, forgiveness and second chances, about awful coincidences and fate playing with your life, an astonishing tale about unconditional love and loss, grief, relationships and family dynamics. Powerful and honest and I can't recommend it highly enough!

Copy provided by the publisher in return for an honest review.

Anne says

I read The Songs of Us during my holiday in Rhodes at the end of September. I rarely cry. I never cry in public. I cried as I was reading The Songs of Us, I cried in public, sitting by the pool. There were big fat tears, some snot and a few strange looks from fellow holiday makers. This is a beautifully written, heartbreaking yet uplifting story. I fell in love with the characters immediately, and they continue to haunt me.

Melody lives with her two children Flynn and Rose. Melody is a single parent, the kids Dad; Dev, left years ago, after a terrible accident that tore the family apart. Dev didn't just leave. He disappeared one ordinary day, with no warning. Melody is a fun-loving, compassionate mother, she's also a little unusual in that after slipping and banging her head, she now bursts into song at the most inappropriate moments.

Flynn and Rose have their own personal issues to deal with. Flynn's scars from the accident make him the target for stares and bullying, and he often fights back. Rose spends most of her time trying her best to track down her missing father, whilst hiding her own coping mechanisms from those that love her.

This little family unit are as strong as possible. The relationship between Melody and her children is wonderfully portrayed, these two young people have suffered so much yet their dedication to Melody and the way that they deal with her spontaneous singing is just so heart warming.

Emma Cooper writes with such flair and compassion. Her ability to create characters that the reader cannot fail to fall in love with is just superb.

There's so much hope within this fabulous book and as a reader, I was desperately hoping that their dreams would come true. However, this extremely talented author does not spare the reader and we are subjected to some absolutely heart-wrenching scenes ... cue the snot-ridden tears. Yet, even through the devastation, Emma Cooper's sparkling wit shines through and she turns what could be an almost impossible to bear situation into one of hope, filled with love and joy.

Thoughtful, sensitive and a complete tear-jerker. The Songs of Us is a truly beautiful book. I adored the characters, the story and the impeccable writing. Highly recommended from me.

Priyasha says

Well... this was a complete surprise, a real 'wow' of a book that I really wasn't expecting. I expected a quite light, funny book, with someone who couldn't help singing at inappropriate times, and it was that.... but so very much more emotional than I'd expected

Karen Whittard says

Wow this book has it all and more. It is darkly comic, mystery of a family saga type of book. That has you racing through the pages of the book and has you loving the book for the beginning to the very end.

Emma writes so sensitively and beautifully. As she has you feeling for the characters and wanting to reach through the pages to give them a much needed hug.

It had me laughing and crying in equal measures and I certainly will be looking out for more by this author in the future.

Alison says

The Songs of Us is such a fitting title for this book, at first I couldn't figure out what on earth was going on or in fact the ridiculous purpose. I mean who suddenly starts singing in public!? But at the same time as fathoming all this out I understood that I shouldn't really read it in public either due to the myriad of emotions played on. By the end of this book expect to be emotionally drained one way or the other.

The author has managed to introduce the family to us in such a way that we are bound to care about them to some extent even if they do have their foibles This is not an ordinary family, they have been through their fair or should that be unfair series of challenges. Sometimes when life comes to give you a damn good kicking it wears a huge pair of boots!

I found the beginning quite slow to get into but with hindsight it was just laying the foundations so we would become enthralled and care about them all by the end.

Mum Melody, kids Rose and Flynn along with Dev and further along Tom pretty well sum up the book .. this revolves around them. I'm not sure if I had a particular favourite family member but at least they did blend together mainly. Be prepared to shed a few tears especially near the end just based on the storyline alone. I personally found it quite a harrowing read.

Thanks to the author, publisher & netgalley. I read and reviewed voluntarily.

Claire Mc Partlin says

Well... this was a complete surprise, a real 'wow' of a book that I really wasn't expecting. I expected a quite light, funny book, with someone who couldn't help singing at inappropriate times, and it was that.... but so very much more emotional than I'd expected. It was hysterically funny in parts but so sad in others. Make sure you have the time, and box of tissues, to read the last half hour on your own, my eyes didn't stop leaking, but I just couldn't put it down!

Melody is a single mother to her two teenage children, Flynn and Rose, after her husband, Dev, went out one day and didn't come back, this was 11 years ago. This was shortly after a car accident that her husband and children were in where Flynn ended up blinded in one eye and with a large scar across one side of his face. Dev was driving and blamed himself. Their relationship was very stressed straight after that, even though they'd been blissfully happy and complete soulmates before, and one day Dev just disappeared out of their lives.

Melody's life fell apart and she searched for Dev for ages, but never found him, and one day just decided that she couldn't keep searching and dragging her children through her grief and gave up, assuming he was dead. Then one day Melody slipped on ice and hit her head and after that she started singing songs when she got stressed that related to how she was feeling, with all the dance moves added in too, along with singing at night which often kept her children awake. This started off very funny, but soon we realise quite what an effect both Dev disappearing and Melody's singing have on her children, who are quite troubled in parts, but who are absolutely amazing considering all the hassle in their lives.

I really don't want to say too much more as it would ruin the story, but there is a missing person report that Rose finds and they all end up in Cornwall following up that lead, and the story progresses from there. Then probably about two-thirds through the book something happened that I really didn't see coming... I thought something else was about to happen and then there was this massive curveball which took the book on a totally different path.

This was such an amazing book, so funny in lots of place, but also so sad (bittersweet, sobbing sort of sad) but a complete page-turner and something just that bit different as it kind of mixed a bit of every emotion into one book, a complete rollercoaster. Definitely a keeper, one of those books that will stick in my mind, and one to go on my favourite books list. A must read.

Saarah Niña says

A very lovable book.

A powerfully raw and heart wrenching novel. You will be moved and blown away. This book is riddled with songs and melodies but, will fit just fine for even the less musically inclined.

The Songs Of Us will soften your heart and make you smile so much but get quite teary-eyed too. A book about a mother navigating her past, making sense of why her husband left her, whilst also living her present. The Songs Of Us also touches on the topics of mental health, life's struggles and surprises, and the nature of a pure love. Emma Cooper wrote it all so fantastically, the way the songs melded into the story, the seamless shift in character perspective, or into a character's recollections and, the descriptions of feelings in relation to another sensation was so thoughtfully executed. Just... Wow!

Every character will capture a piece of your heart, without a doubt. Especially the ever-singing Melody, but that's granted. But also, her lovely kids who can't help but want to protect their mother from the unknown and protect her happiness. Everyone was so vulnerable but gosh, the kids were so hilarious! Every family's a little bit crazy, you just have to approach life with a dose of humour!

I urge you to add this book to your reading list. You can thank me later. I've already added it to my favourites list! They aren't wrong in comparing this novel's style to Jojo Moyes', but be assured this book is definitely brilliant in its own right.

I received this book through Netgalley.

Julie Morris says

So, I have just got off a seven-and-a-half hour trans-Atlantic flight where I had planned on watching 'Darkest Hour' and grabbing a few hours sleep. Instead, I sat up all night and devoured Emma Cooper's new novel from cover to cover in one sitting and I don't regret a single second of lost sleep.

This book is, quite frankly, astonishing. It manages to be funny and heart-wrenching at the same time, and explores some huge themes of love, loss, personal struggle and family, deeply but without being the least bit heavy-going or preachy.

It starts off with a hilarious scene in a supermarket which launches us straight into the complicated and mad world of the main character of Melody King who, following an unfortunate accident, has the embarrassing habit of launching into song at times of stress and anxiety, which leads to some extremely toe-curling but funny moments. Her two children, Flynn and Rose, both in those awkward teenage years and struggling with complicated issues of their own, tend to find this less amusing. I absolutely love the way Emma has chosen the perfect appropriately inappropriate song for Melody to sing at any given moment.

The book is written in the first person from the points of view of four main characters, Melody, Flynn, Rose and Dev, Melody's missing husband. Each has a distinct voice, totally fitting their character and the personal stresses they are under and Emma has done this so well that we are right inside each of their individual heads, seeing the situation from four totally different points of view with the tint that their specific outlooks

gives to the situation. It is so cleverly and perfectly done that we have a complete emotional insight into the whole perspective of the situation they are in, you can't help getting sucked right into the drama.

And, oh, how much did I love these characters. Emabattled, troubled, sullen but warm-hearted Flynn. My heart broke for him and I was willing him to conquer his demons and become the amazing person you can see under the surface. Brilliant but confused Rose, fragile but not, having to grow up faster than she perhaps can cope with and trying to take control in dangerous ways. I just wanted to fold her in my arms and take care of her. And Melody. I don't really know what to say about Melody except she is so perfectly imperfect, so valiant. She has stolen into my heart and taken firm root.

This book is a rollercoaster that takes you to unexpected places emotionally and has left me bruised, battered but ultimately uplifted. It is such a brilliant portrayal of how flawed and struggling people can be, but how love and family will hold us up and help us overcome if we have each other. I know I will go back and re-read this book soon, and I will feel exactly the same way about it again. It made me laugh and cry and I didn't want it to end, to let go of these characters that took such firm hold of me in such a short space of time. This book is something really special, I might even venture to say, perfect.

Just don't finish it on a jumbo jet full of hundreds of curious people as it comes in to land whilst wearing non-waterproof mascara.

Wendy says

I'm an avid book reader for psychological thrillers but ventured into a different genre after many book club members had read and recommended *The Songs of Us* by Emma Cooper.

I'm not really sure where to start. Rendering me speechless, which is rare for me, I had to take a few days to process this amazingly wonderful and beautifully written debut novel by Emma Cooper.

It's rare but just as equally wonderful when you discover such a beautifully written story of love, laughter and heartbreak in one novel that has you processing so many emotions throughout the book that you are not conscious of your surroundings while reading. I laughed out loud as well as cried in public which to my embarrassment was captured by strangers.

I was fully emerged in the story which was executed perfectly with a balance of laughter and tears... which I rarely shed I may add! The story was so perfectly executed along with characters I wanted to get to know, they're troubles became mine, their tears shed through me and the outcome even though sad was described with the perfect balance of heartache as well as a happy conclusion.

I'm not sure I can verbally describe how good this debut is but I urge anyone reading this review to go and read it for yourself. It's a novel everyone should read.

Emma Cooper is a novelist to watch!

Ruthy lavin says

Poignant, emotive, honest and beautifully written, I just loved this book.
An easy 4+ stars ??

Adele Shea says

Melody King, single mother of Flynn and Rose, is trying her hardest to get through life as best she can.

Life has been unkind for the King family, each member facing obstacles they struggle to get over. Flynn, suffered facial injuries and blindness in one eye in a car accident as a young child. His father was driving the car and could not live with himself, giving him no option to abandon his family.

Melody, had to learn to be a single parent, all the while wondering if Dev (her husband) was still alive. She later suffers a head injury resulting in a condition that makes her sing whole song aloud, in public, with dance moves, when she gets anxious.

Rose was the one who found her mum with her head injury. She is the one who is also desperate to find her father and make everything better.

I am rating Emma Coopers, The Songs Of Us, four stars because although it was heartwarming and funny at times, I found it hard to get into at first. Have your tissues at the ready.

Rona says

Oh Emma, you had me laughing and crying with this wonderful story - how on earth did you weave that magic?! And I loved the way that the song lyrics became part of the narrative, that was a little bit of genius.

The story follows a family that has suffered its fair share of tragedies, including Dev, the father, disappearing eleven years ago after a car crash that maimed his infant son. Mel banged her head and ever since has a condition that means she sings when she's stressed. Which leads to some properly hilarious situations.

This is a love story at its heart, although we have two troubled teenagers in the mix as well. And the ending although monstrously sad, was touched with an epic bit of magic. Thank you Emma, for the best read of the year! That image of Mel and Shane in the bathroom will stay with me for a very long time, in fact, I'm giggling just thinking about it.

S.D. Mayes says

Wow, wow and wow, what a wonderful and unique storyline. It's difficult to know how to define this novel. Is it a dark comedy? A mystery? An emotional family saga? Well, it's all of those things and then some.

I loved the aptly named, Melody, the lonely worn out mum of two teenagers, Flynn, who has been scarred after a car accident, and Rose, who is dealing with her own teenage angst.

Melody is trying to make the best of things after her husband, Dev mysteriously disappeared over a decade ago. And she certainly has a lot on her plate. After an accident where she slipped and banged her head, she now has to deal with a unique uncontrollable condition – she sings aloud, whenever she gets anxious, in all kinds of public places – and it's anything from 'Torn' by Natalie Imbruglia to Michael Jackson's 'Smooth Criminal' ... along with imitating the white gloved one's dance moves.

Sensitively and sympathetically written, Cooper gives us a bitter sweet drama that encompasses life's rich tapestry that made me laugh outloud, and shed tears at the heart rending challenges this family have to face.

PS I cried at the end.

Kaisha (The Writing Garnet) says

All reviews can be found on my blog at <https://thewritinggarnet.wordpress.com>

Can someone please pass me more tissues?

I'm not even joking! Oh my god. I finished reading 'The Songs of Us' late Sunday night, and I STILL am trying to fight the urge to burst into tears when I think about this book!

Okay, okay, I'll admit that there were a lot of moments where I couldn't stop myself from laughing out loud at Melody's actions, with one quote having me bent over double in hysterics; 'swerve to the left, swerve to the right'. Obviously it will make sense for those who have already read the book, but if you haven't read it yet, go.....go!!!!

Before anyone thinks that I am being a nasty moo moo by what I said above about laughing at Melody's actions, just hear me out. I wasn't laughing at the fact that Melody had a condition a bit similar to Tourette's, where she ended up singing in public spaces anytime she became stressed. Not at all, because a health condition isn't funny. However, it was the songs at the right (or wrong) moment which were cleverly written into the storyline, making Melody who she was. Of course I felt for her when she ended up doing the dance moves to a song when she was in a 'serious' situation. I can't even begin to imagine how that must have made her felt, but I thought she handled it brilliantly with great humour, which in turn made me feel as though I was allowed to laugh along with her, even though I felt bad. Does that make sense?

Whilst there was a lot of humour in the storyline, there was also a lot of heartache and devastation. I shan't go into detail as that wouldn't be fair on the author or the readers, but please do trust me when I say that 'The Songs of Us' is a tearjerker. Melody's situation does govern a lot of the book, however, her children, Flynn and Rose, also have their own fair share of turbulence as they try to combat their own teenage emotions. I love how the storyline is told from several of the characters points of view, as I felt as though I was able connect with them on a much deeper level as it was more of a 'one to one'.

'The Songs of Us' left me sobbing my heart out. I'm not going to lie, I was absolutely devastated by the concluding part of the storyline, and no I don't mean that in a negative way. It was as though I could feel my heart shattering into millions of pieces, the tears were just falling from my eyes. Emma Cooper has written an outstanding, powerful, devastatingly beautiful, heart wrenching, emotional, humorous, and utterly, utterly brilliant novel which has given me the biggest book hangover I have ever had in my life. Yes, I am exhausted from the amount of tears I shed, but holy cannoli was it worth it!

Honestly, what a diamond in a rough of a book this is and, despite having read 282 books already this year, 'The Songs of Us' has swooped into the sought after top spot of my most favourite books of 2018, and I don't think it will be leaving anytime soon! I'd even go one better and say that this book is now an all-time favourite read of mine, ever!

This book truly deserves to be turned into a movie for the big screen, and the songs covered in the book need to be brought out as a soundtrack to Melody's life, so that everyone can #beabitMelody when they feel as though their life is knocking them down.

Grab your tissues, turn off your phone and prepare yourself to be swept away by Emma Cooper's incredibly moving, beautifully written novel - this is absolutely perfection (and yes, my eyes are STILL incredibly puffy!)
