



"Daring." —*Vanity Fair*



VICTORIA REDEL

Loverboy

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In Victoria Redel's mesmerizing first novel, the question of what happens when a mother loves her child too much is deeply and darkly explored. Left with a small fortune by her parents and the cryptic advice, "it would do to find a passion," Redel's narrator sets out to become a mother--a task she feels she can be adequately passionate about. She conceives her son Paul through a loveless one-night stand, surrounds him with a wonderful, magical world for two--a world filled with books, music, endless games, and bottomless devotion--and calls him pet names like Birdie, Cookie, Puppy, and Loverboy. She wonders, "Has ever a mother loved a child more?" But as life outside their lace curtains begins to beckon the school-age Paul, his mother's efforts to keep him content in their small world become increasingly frantic and ultimately extreme by all definitions.

In this exquisite debut novel, Victoria Redel takes us deep into the mind of a very singular mother, exposing the dangerously whisper-thin line between selfless and selfish motivation that exists in all types of devotion.

Loverboy Details

Date : Published July 25th 2002 by Mariner Books (first published January 1st 2001)

ISBN : 9780156007245

Author : Victoria Redel

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From Reader Review Loverboy for online ebook

Natalie says

This book is very well written, though quite disturbing. It was a bit hard to follow as it is told in mostly flashbacks with very little to explain when a flashback happens.

Basically it's about a woman who didn't get much love from her parents as a child and as a result she overcompensates and gives her son too much love (to the point where she doesn't want him to go to school because she is jealous of his relationship with his teacher and thinks that he will love his teacher more than her).

That ending! Omg! That mother is nuts, lol.

This was very gritty and has an extremely unreliable narrator, but it was very well done. Not normally the kind of book I would gravitate toward, but I enjoyed it.

I would say 3.5 stars.

Christine says

In her portrayal of the truly touching relationship between a single mother and her only child, Victoria Redel beautifully explores the multiple avenues, types, and sensations of love that shape the life of her protagonist???and the lives of all mothers. The heart breaking moments that structure the novel create an emotional tension that extends throughout the piece and draws you in as a reader even further. This piece has helped me to learn the importance of generating emotionally relatable experiences for (at least) the protagonist when writing, which allow readers to experience, rather than simply witness, the changes the character undergoes throughout the piece.

Marissa Rose says

I did not like it all at first, but I loved it by the end. The structure is very disorienting, but really contributes to getting into the main characters wild and twisted mind. I am now struggling with a paper about it; to what extent does Redel follow "the rules" of fiction.

Shaindel says

I was familiar with Redell's poetry but hadn't read her fiction before. Wow. I really enjoyed the voice of the first person narrator and found the character extremely believable. I found it reassuring that a first novel with a first person narrator could be so good, since many editors warn against using the first person.

LaRae Parry says

Loverboy is written in a fictional poetry kind of way. It is prose and poetry at the same time. The story is riveting. LOVE, LOVE, LOVE the writer, her emotions, her descriptions. It's a book the reader really needs to pay attention to because of the flashbacks, etc.

I started re-reading the book the minute I was done. Haunting.

Krissy says

Loverboy was a five star book for me. It was just beautifully written. This was my first book by Victoria Redel, but I could totally see her background in poetry.

I found this book on a list of books featuring narcissistic parents. Both “ignoring” and “smothering” narcissism were described. The mother smothers her child because her own parents ignored her when she was a child. Two different forms of narcissism that were really just opposite sides of the same coin. This book portrayed the difference between the two as well as how they were connected nicely.

I loved the back and forth between present time and flashbacks to tell the story. Slowly you start to see what's happening in the mother's life currently and how she got to that place. Very well done story telling.

I actually rented the movie version of Loverboy, made by nearly the entire family of Kevin Bacon. It was good, but as usual, nowhere near the book's haunting quality. They kept the flashback story telling angle for telling the mother's childhood, but they did not use it in the same manor the book did, which was really one of my favorite parts of the book.

Meg Murphy says

The first person narrative of Loverboy is overall a brilliant, if dark, story filled with many beautifully rendered sentences. Although initially the present tense scenes can feel repetitive and confusing, Redel holds her hand steady until the last pages when she finally shows us why. A haunting exploration into the madness of love.

Christine says

In her portrayal of the truly touching relationship between a single mother and her only child, Victoria Redel beautifully explores the multiple avenues, types, and sensations of love that shape the life of her protagonist—and the lives of all mothers. The heart breaking moments that structure the novel create an emotional tension that extends throughout the piece and draws you in as a reader even further. This piece has helped me to learn the importance of generating emotionally relatable experiences for (at least) the protagonist when writing, which allow readers to experience, rather than simply witness, the changes the character undergoes throughout the piece.

Robin Whitney says

So beautifully written. Like buttery poetry, unexpected and original and oh so dark. I'm feeling like an amazingly fantastic mother right now.

Chris Desmottes says

Finished this in one day! Very disturbing story of a mother who is obsessed with her child and can't handle the fact that he is growing up and out of her control. Very scary look at obsessive love.

Molly says

What a shudderingly strange tale--not entirely of parenthood, but of obsession and inability to bounce back from a heartbreaking trigger, of fully dysfunctional love being passed on in a new manifestation.

The hospital flash-forwards--and these are truly flashes, small glimpses of a scene we cannot flush out--keep the reader propelled through the narrative. The reasoning for the hospitalization is terrifying and somehow exactly right, exactly where Redel was leading us the entire time without peeling back the revelation too early.

Hananaki says

The prose was too lyrical for my taste. The story let me down to be honest. I don't know why exactly but this book just wasn't for me.

Karyn says

Not sure how I feel about this book. I found it quite confusing to get through. Although most of it makes sense by the end, it still leaves me a bit muddled. A little bit weird for my taste.

Gloria says

I wish there was a 3 1/2 stars option. This book was well written, even if confusing at times. (the confusion is cleared up at the end, however).

It flips back and forth between a woman in and out of consciousness in a hospital bed to the story of her raising her son.

A fascinating (and slightly horrifying) look at a woman who was basically ignored by her own parents as they were so absorbed by each other.

To make up for this, she goes on a quest to produce her own child-- one whom will have 100% of her affection and attention.

And he does.

And, inevitably, as he grows, he balks at this.

I don't want to spoil the ending, but needless to say, she doesn't handle this inevitable separation well.

A fascinating read on a mother's love that becomes obsessive.

Janet says

An interesting story told through the voice of a brilliant, beautiful, rich and disturbed woman. Victoria Redel spins a poetic and fascinating character study. I cued up the movie. I can't wait to see how close the screen play sticks to the book and how Kiera Sedgewick plays the main role.
