

Loath Letters

Christy Leigh Stewart , Megan Hansen (Illustrator)

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Step into the world that exists inside all our heads. There are no secrets, no taboos, just humans being human. This book opens the door to our innermost sanctum so we can all gawk at the odd, horrific, fantastic side of human's less spoken of nature. In this collection of short stories, you'll both laugh and cringe, maybe be left feeling violated or finally understood. Dive into the minds of humanity and view a world through gray-tinted glasses. If women ruled the world there would be no war, but we would all have been aborted.

Loath Letters Details

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Author : Christy Leigh Stewart , Megan Hansen (Illustrator)

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From Reader Review Loath Letters for online ebook

Christy Stewart says

This is the least worst thing I have ever done.

Pan says

Unlike a lot of the older reviews here I didn't win this book nor did I receive a free copy. I purchased the kindle edition after reading the raving reviews here; I wish I could return it for a refund.

There is nothing ghastly appalling here unless cable television drama (think law and order) jars you. These stories are mostly flash fiction, although a few of them were more than a page or two long. Almost all of them have a punch line. An ending twist sentence that is supposed to shock you. Some little blurb that's supposed to make the seemingly semi-normal few paragraphs you've read suddenly shine under some sort of new unforeseen gruesome light. But after the first or second story you can see it coming a mile away.

If you're shocked and unnerved by common "taboos" and brief stories with zero emotional development containing rape fantasies, child molestation, prostitution, kidnapping, emotional dependence and self loathing then by all means this is for you. Be shocked and awed!

But if you're like me and you're somebody who barely flinches at Irvine Welsh and Andersen Prunty this is probably not going to enthrall and entertain you. It's probably going to seem rather dull and repetitive.

Oh, and two stars instead of the dreaded one because the art work is lovely and while there's nothing notable about the writing style and word play there isn't anything truly flawed about it either.

Kate says

This is a book that begs to be read more than once.

The first time I read this book, I read it all the way through in one sitting and I didn't even realize I was holding my breath until the very end.

The second time I read it I took one story, read it, then contemplated on it for the remainder of the day and always came to the same conclusion that Christy Leigh Stewart is a master of the short short, since she can convey more emotion in one page then some writers can in a 200 page book and that Megan Hansen is a phenomenal illustrator/artist.

This is one of those books I'm glad I have in my permanent library to read over and over again.

I can't wait to see what they will come up with next!

Kevin Shamel says

I had no idea what to expect when I opened this book. It amazed me when I did. This is excellent writing blended with excellent art. The stories and the artwork entwine and compliment each other perfectly. This is a gorgeous, honest book. GET IT NOW.

Danny McPhillips says

This is a great book of short stories with some fantastic illustrations. It's honesty will make you laugh and cringe on the same page. There are stories here that I think we can all relate to and some I hope we can't.

Matthew Revert says

I love writing that makes the reader feel uncomfortable. If I read a book that makes me squirm then I think the author has succeeded in something. Let's face it - a lot of fiction treads a fairly tried and true road, which although sometimes nice, never really challenges the reader. Christy Leigh Stewart's 'Loath Letters' is not one of these books.

As the title implies, 'Loath Letters' is comprised of letters or vignettes that act as a confessional outpouring. Societal masks are stripped away, revealing writing so naked in its seeming honesty that it causes discomfort. The effect is like reading someone's private journal and instills something akin to guilt. These 'letters' are bleak, shamelessly emotional, disturbing, sexual and dripping with pitch black angst.

The real power of Stewart's prose is in the unwavering way its thrust into the reader. It's like she's pushing the book in your face and daring you to read it. It's not much of a dare though. These stories flow into each other in short, sharp bursts and are so very readable. It's a brave collection, and one that deserves to be read.

Special mention should be made of Megan Hansen's brilliant artwork that, other than appearing on the striking cover, pepper the book in perfect accompaniment.

Highly recommended.

Jason says

This is an amazing conglomeration of emotion. It literally holds every human characteristic and personality flaw that ever existed (I counted) - and all told with genuine honesty. I felt like this collection of thoughts served as a glove that housed my brain-hand. I felt like a voyeur who wanted to see more through peek-a-boo eyes. Whether the particular passage was based on a situation of strength or a weakness, they all ended with a middle finger.

Veracious, vengeful, vulnerable, and violent "Loath Letters" casts an unabashed statement of personal fortitude that Christy Stewart should be quite proud of. A book that can be as positive as it can be negative, as selfish as it can be giving, or as humane as it can be tyrannical is not an easy one to create. But Stewart did.

Megan Hansen says

I was the cover artist, so I am completely unbiased when I say... Doesn't it look awesome?!!!

My ego aside, these short stories were fantastic! Each story was like a small, whiplashing masterpiece. Stewart took the reader into the darker side of the human psyche and makes one both laugh and want to cry. It's a deep honest look into human nature and society which was all at once entertaining and horrifying. Her way with words and her comedic timing was perfection!

Lisette Brodey says

Christy Leigh Stewart's "Loath Letters" is a surprisingly emotional powerhouse of writings that reveal the author's quirky, often irreverent wit. With unexpected insight, she exposes the uncomfortable and pulls the lid off the acceptable. Stewart doesn't "color within the lines" and that's precisely what draws the reader to this book. Artist Megan Hansen's edgy, contemporary illustrations couple brilliantly with Stewart's prose to make this a book that you just may find yourself reading more than once.

Donald says

I didn't win the paperback in the giveaway program, but I received this fine PDF to read on my Kindle. The first copy I tried to read was an unedited/under-edited version which I didn't finish. I received a second, more refined copy and got through it.

Loath Letters is a collection of shorts with clever twists or some angst to spill forth. They are sometimes angry, sometimes pained, and somewhat nihilistic. Quite a few of them are flash fiction at under a thousand words which make them quick reads. They deal with feelings and emotions that can be uncomfortable. They elicit a response, even if it is only to yourself.

There is a difference between the words 'then' and 'than'. 'Then' is used for time, and 'than' is a word regarding comparisons. Using then in lieu of than is just wrong when comparing things. It comes off as unrefined, a bit of Ikea in a room full of Queen Anne. This one error can be termed a pet peeve of mine and occurs nearly a dozen times in Loath Letters.

In spite of the problems, I enjoyed this short collection. It is sometimes a face-slap. Often it had me smirking and nodding. I have not read anything quite like this before. It is unique.

Amber says

Recurring misuse of then/than aside... YES! YES! YES! The short stories that comprise Loath Letters are twisted, funny, sad, sweet, demented, biting, surprising...FANTASTIC.

I had actually read a number of these short stories a few years ago, and it was a joy to read them again. The short stories in Loath Letters showcase the kind of writing that made Christy Leigh Stewart one of my favorite writers.

Hats off to the artwork by Megan Hansen as well. I especially liked the mixed media/collage work!

FabulousRaye says

Christy and Megan make an excellent coupling. I don't mean this in a perverted lesbian way, either.

Megan's artwork fits insanely well with the stories. Every medium she used was fantastic! I was especially enamored with the photographs and colleges. It's beautiful work, that I want to look at again.

This is the third book I've read by Christy. Not one of them has bored or disappointed me. They have drawn me in so well that, I end up cramped, parched & starving in my computer chair. I can't be bothered to take care of my needs, until I've finished reading.

I loved, loved, LOVED this collection! The stories end in unexpected, unanticipated ways. Some of them caused me gasp in shock, others had me laughing like an insane rat.

My only complaint is that the book ended. I'm left wanting a hell of a lot more.

Sheri says

Loath Letters (Christy Leigh Stewart).

A fascinating and often macabre book of short stories. Each filled with emotions. Some intriguing, others sad, or happy. One thing for sure Loath Letters will stay in your memory for a long time. I tried to pick my favorite story, but that would be like trying to have a favorite child. But I must admit, BFF (beach front funeral) really got my attention, how true those words are!

Another great reason to read this book is the awesome artwork of Miss Megan Hansen. If the stories do not get you thinking, the artwork will leave you speechless. Fantastic read! I look forward to more Good Reads from Miss Stewart. Also visit meganhansen.deviantart.com (to view more of Ms Hansen's artwork).

Matt Margo says

First off, I WON!

Now that that is out of the way, I must begin by stating that little else in life thrills and enthralls me in the way that an incredible book from a still new or undiscovered author does. As an aspiring writer, I tend to have those occasional moments of doubt, panic, and uncertainty that I am sure any wannabe author has. Despite what people may say about my work or what praise I may receive, I sometimes wonder whether or not I will be able to actually make anything of myself one day. After all, Creative Writing is such a competitive field. Folks such as Christy Leigh Stewart (as well as Megan Hansen) then come along at just the necessary moment, helping me to keep my chin up and reminding me that it is still possible for someone to capture the dream of reaching out to others with writing. All sentimental fluff aside (which seems so unfitting for this particular book), "Loath Letters" is thoroughly impressive, every single page of it. Stewart's short stories tell of the macabre, the absurd, the surreal, the disheartening, and the hilarious in distinctly tongue-in-cheek mannerisms, and her flash fiction packs pure adrenaline and emotion within the context of spacious, detached sentences along with a vividly depraved imagination. Think the fanzines of Harmony Korine plus the transgressive fictions of Anthony Burgess multiplied by the empty narratives of Anton Chekhov. Whether the tale is that of a woman who cannot accept the reality behind her deformity, or a teenager who has "a problem fitting in," or a father who is struggling to separate his past from his future, you will be left somehow inescapably affected by this anthology.

As a side note, it seems that people dog Christy Leigh Stewart for her sparse mistakes and typos throughout this book, but for now "Loath Letters" is self-published and we are all human beings. However, I honestly believe that if the author wills it to happen, this publication shall become an early draft of an authentically published masterwork. Until then, consider this edition the "Stephen Hero" to James Joyce's "A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man."

Stephen says

I can not, **CAN NOT** recommend this collection more strongly or with greater enthusiasm. It is one of the great surprises of 2011 for me. Ms. Stewart's raw, amazingly keen insight into the darker aspects of the human condition left me feeling **sliced open** and **psychologically coldcocked**. Categorized as transgressive flash fiction (one of my first experiences with either), these extremely short stories are towering when it comes to their depiction of loneliness, pain and that dark inner voice that never (we hope) finds expression.

These stories shredded me and left a mark that will scab over and scar but never completely go away.

These pieces are snatches of dark thoughts, bitter memories and life-changing regrets. They are the conversations people have inside their head that never get uttered aloud. The internal monologues where people are free to confront their deepest fears, torments and disturbed fantasies. These are the uncensored thoughts we have at our darkest moments. They are emotional sucker punches and will leave you feeling raw and exposed.

I've included two sample stories so you can get a sense of the writing style and the unvarnished and unapologetic intensity of the stories. Here is the first.

I Love, Love, Love You

*I love you, I love you, I love you.
I'm sure I do.
I must.
I have to.
Sometimes though,
I want to put my hand over your mouth to muffle your voice.
I want to clamp my hand down so hard that I can't even hear you whimper.
I want my nails to puncture your skin.
Make it bleed.
I want to feel your fragile bones break and burst under my palm.
I see you.
Beautiful,
Sweet.
Innocent.
But when I close my eyes I see you slick with blood.
Your whole body twisted and crushed to a pulp.
I want you.
I wanted you.
I want this to end.
I wasn't like this before you.
I wasn't disgusting,
Immoral,
Morbid.
My darling,
My baby,
My child.
I can't look at you.
I know I'll kill you.*

A sufferer of post partum depression?...a regretful teenage mother?...a suburban housewife just having a bad day? Part of the answer to that may be what luggage you bring with you to the reading. One thing is clear, it screams of pain, out of control helplessness and a fear of falling down a dark pit from which no escape is possible.

As amazing as that story was, there were so many pieces in tis collection that just oozed heartache and darkness and "**things of which we do not speak**" that I could almost randomly select a story whose reading would slam you in the gut and squeeze your heart. This next one...well judge for yourself.

With Time

You can't ignore things and expect them to go away. Everyone hears that throughout their life. It's one of the main reasons women go in for pap smears, or breast exams, and men go in for prostate exams. Pretending you don't have a problem, or not checking to find one, doesn't make you healthy. I can only hope that doesn't apply for things that aren't physical.

It's hard to stare something in the face that is so horrifying that it will change your life forever. You may judge someone for not stepping up and doing the right thing in those situations, but unless you are there, you can't know what it's like. We're all just human; we can't all be expected to be heroes.

Just like everyone else, I do what I can to live. Day to day, I would like to say I always did the right thing, but I can't. I can say I've always done what I thought was right at the time though. I can't help it if some of those things turned out to be the worst possible decisions.

I know now I shouldn't have brought that man into my house, my bed. I know I should have allowed him alone with my daughter. I know I should have believed her when she said he touched her. I know I shouldn't have felt jealous.

Knowing these things doesn't change the past, but I hope time might. I hope that with time she will forget. I hope with time I will forget. I hope with time I can ignore her crying in the night, the sounds of her vomiting in her closet, the cuts along her forearms and stomach.

Dark, beautiful, brilliant and full of emotion and violence....and life. I have rarely been this powerfully and lastingly affected by stories as I was by this literary masterpiece.

What a collection. Buy it...right now. This one is special.

5.0 stars. HIGHEST POSSIBLE RECOMMENDATION!!
