



Love Saves the Day: A Novel

Gwen Cooper

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From the author of the *New York Times* bestselling memoir *Homer's Odyssey* comes a tender, joyful, utterly unforgettable novel, primarily told through the eyes of the most observant member of any human family: the cat.

Humans best understand the truth of things if they come at it indirectly. Like how sometimes the best way to catch a mouse that's right in front of you is to back up before you pounce.

So notes Prudence, the irresistible brown tabby at the center of Gwen Cooper's tender, joyful, utterly unforgettable novel, which is mostly told through the eyes of this curious (and occasionally cranky) feline.

When five-week-old Prudence meets a woman named Sarah in a deserted construction site on Manhattan's Lower East Side, she knows she's found the human she was meant to adopt. For three years their lives are filled with laughter, tuna, catnaps, music, and the unchanging routines Prudence craves. Then one day Sarah doesn't come home. From Prudence's perch on the windowsill she sees Laura, the daughter who hardly ever comes to visit Sarah, arrive with her new husband. They're carrying boxes. Before they even get to the front door, Prudence realizes that her life has changed forever.

Suddenly Prudence finds herself living in a strange apartment with humans she barely knows. It could take years to train them in the feline courtesies and customs (for example, a cat should *always* be fed *before* the humans, and at the same exact time every day) that Sarah understood so well. Prudence clings to the hope that Sarah will come back for her while Laura, a rising young corporate attorney, tries to push away memories of her mother and the tumultuous childhood spent in her mother's dusty downtown record store. But the secret joys, past hurts, and life-changing moments that make every mother-daughter relationship special will come to the surface. With Prudence's help Laura will learn that the past, like a mother's love, never dies.

Poignant, insightful, and laugh-out-loud funny, *Love Saves the Day* is a story of hope, healing, and how the love of an animal can make all of us better humans. It's the story of a mother and daughter divided by the turmoil of bohemian New York, and the opinionated, irrepressible feline who will become the bridge between them. It's a novel for anyone who's ever lost a loved one, wondered what their cat was *really* thinking, or fallen asleep with a purring feline nestled in their arms. Prudence, a cat like no other, is sure to steal your heart.

Praise for *Love Saves the Day*

“Prudence [is a] sassy but sensitive feline heroine.”—*Time*

“Unforgettably moving . . . a hard one to put down.”—*Modern Cat*

“If you are the Most Important Person to a cat, you will hold them much tighter by the book's end. If you don't have a cat, Prudence will have surreptitiously lured you into the danger zone: Falling in love with a cat because they need family, too.”—*The Vancouver Sun*

“Cooper brings readers a fictional tale that cat lovers will treasure. . . . This book will make most readers laugh and cry, and probably lead them to wonder more often what, exactly, their pet is thinking.

Love Saves the Day: A Novel Details

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From Reader Review Love Saves the Day: A Novel for online ebook

Jen says

As a human who is owned by a very feisty and opinionated cat, I truly loved that this book is in part narrated by Prudence the cat. She has such a personality! It is also heartbreaking to know right away that Prudence's "Most Important Person" has died and isn't coming back. Fortunately, Prudence's owner's daughter Laura adopts Prudence and while as a human narrator we know it's going to be okay, seeing the move and the grieving of daughter for estranged mother is heartbreaking.

Laura is a newlywed, has been estranged from her mother for years and a terrible workaholic. As all these stories unfold, and Prudence starts to see herself as Laura's comfort, and then begins to recognize Laura as her "Most Important Person" I giggled and cried and just couldn't stop reading. Whether you are owned by a cat or not this is a great story, but if you are owned by a cat, you will love it even more.

Kat (Lost in Neverland) says

Gwen Cooper is coming out with another cat book?!

The very same woman who wrote Homer's Odyssey?! ONE OF MY FAVORITE BOOKS EVER?!

After Reading it

Look at the cover of this book.

Look at it.

Look at the title.

Do you see what I'm seeing?

An adorable kitty looking at you with big green eyes and a nice, kind of cheesy title *Love Saves the Day*?

That adorable little kitty.....is a liar.

I was expecting a cute, fluffy, makes-you-feel-warm-inside kind of book.

What I got?

A slow paced, gut-wrenchingly depressing, sad story, yet has a happy ending.

This was me during the last 50 pages of this book;

Obsidian says

Told in three different points of view, Love Saves the Day though at times heart-breaking and thought provoking did not do much for me in the end.

This story is told from three points of view. The first POV is from Sarah a 40 plus year old woman living in the Lower East Side in Manhattan. The second POV is told from Laura, Sarah's slightly estranged daughter. And the third POV is told from Sarah's cat Prudence's point of view.

The most engaging perspective for me by far was any chapters told from Prudence's point of view. I smiled, laughed, and teared up a few times. Reading Prudence and how she and Sarah are "roommates" and how Sarah and Prudence first found each other was very sweet.

I was very fascinated by Sarah's life before and after she had Laura and I wish that Ms. Cooper had devoted more time to developing Sarah's back-story. To read about how Sarah was involved in the music scene in the 1970s and her life as a record store owner.

Laura's chapters until almost the very end really were just frustrating to read. What led to Laura's partial estrangement from Sarah honestly doesn't make a lot of sense after you read the story. If anything once you read the full story you kind of want to shake Laura and tell her to get over it.

If Ms. Cooper had told the entire story from Prudence's point of view I think this would have been a five star book hands down. I think it also didn't help that Prudence and Sarah's chapters were told from the first person point of view and Laura's chapters were told in the third person. I think that hurt my ability to connect with Laura.

The plot really is about Prudence and how she came to live with Sarah and Laura and how Laura ultimately is able to come to terms with her past.

When the story is told from Prudence's point of view the writing at times is haughty, self-absorbed, funny, and wise. So pretty much it sounds like how a cat would sound.

Stories told in Laura's voice includes writing that I find to be flat and boring at times. I think it's because as I

said earlier it was told in the third person point of view so it was hard to engage with her story.

The pacing was off too since we go from present, to past, to present and back again depending on who is "speaking" in the chapter you are reading.

The setting of the Lower East Side really feels like a living and breathing place. I think that Ms. Cooper including a real life event of a building being condemned and torn down in a manner of hours in 1998 made things feel even more alive. I wish that Ms. Cooper had added in more details of Sarah's life during the Disco era in New York. I found it so interesting.

The ending was done very well and I liked how things were not just automatically tied up with a great big bow at the end. We realize that Laura and her family are still having to deal with some pretty big events soon and not everything is settled.

Though I think that this may not be a story for everyone I do think parts of it worked pretty well. I definitely think this is a 3.5 star book.

Valerie says

Purrfect Purpose: A review of Love Saves the Day.

Quite a bit has been written and remarked about the feline-perspective narration of Love Saves the Day. Being a cat lover, I was enchanted with the idea of a novel written from the cat's perspective. Would it be adorable? Would it be catarular? Or would it be an overly-long exercise in precocious cat-speak? One hopes going in to this kind of thing that the plot of the story can live up to the expectation of the idea of if all being written from a cat's tongue, but one also guards oneself against the very real possibility that the novel's highest achievement is its premise. Fortunately, Love Saves the Day is an accomplishment every bit as great as the idea of a story told from the perspective of a cat.

There is an old adage that everyone knows; "There's three sides to every story- yours, mine, and the truth". Love Saves the Day is an observation of abandonment, and loss, and love- from three perspectives: A mother, abandoned by a lover to raise a daughter on her own in bohemian East-Manhattan. A daughter, who feels abandoned by a mother more in love with her record shop than her daughter. And a cat, abandoned from Mother to Daughter as the course of life unfolds.

What Gwen Cooper brings to the table in her triple-perspective observation of abandonment, loss, the solidarity of neighborhoods surviving the urban-squalor of New York City, and the reconciliation of one daughter's childhood against the unsung sacrifice of one mother's life, is much much greater than the simple parlor trick of telling it from a feline narrative. It's a very real and heartfelt exploration of what life sometimes demands. And she makes it that much greater still, by fully delivering upon the promise of delight of hearing it told from Prudence, the cat.

I adored this novel. I received it through Goodreads First Reads. I recommend it, unreservedly, to all readers who love a good book, cats and mothers.

Lori says

I would give this book a 3.5. Seen through the eyes of several characters. Prudence is a cat. She has lived with Sarah for a few years. Prudence likes her person Sarah a lot. they get along fine. Sadly Sarah leaves their home and does not come back. We find out later that Sarah has died. Enter Laura, Sarah's daughter. she cleans out the apartment and has no choice but to take Prudence with her. Laura is nothing like Sarah so this is hard for Prudence we see how this is for Prudence since a good part of the book is seen through Prudence's eyes. The book also follows the goings on of Laura, Sarah from years ago and Laura's boyfriend Josh. I liked the parts of the book that is seen through the cat Prudence's point of view. the other parts were not as interesting to me. Okay for the most part. the author shows a good sense of humor with trying to see from the viewpoint of the cat.

Pamela Barrett says

I must confess I'm more of a dog person, although I've been owned by a few cats in my lifetime. When I got this book as a break from my usual dog books, I thought it would be a sweet quirky story from a cat's point of view; I was wrong. It does start out that way with Prudence (the cat) narrating, but this is so much more, as the author winds her story between the cat, the mother and the daughter's memories. *Love Saves the Day* is about the things left unsaid, miscommunications and how everyone remembers things differently. I loved it; every heart tugging page. All the characters seemed like someone I've known, almost like family.

Anyone who has loved a cat, or who has suffered a loss will be touched by this story. There's an extra bonus for music lovers of the 1960's -1990's especially those that remember the New York music scene in late 1970's. Prudence is named for a Beatle song, now try and get that out of your head, I keep humming Dear Prudence. Since I didn't know who Gwen Cooper was before I read this book, I now need to go back and read more by her. Definite 5 stars for this heart tugging story of love after loss.

Reese says

There's only one reason why I chose to read a book with a title that could make a person who doesn't work for a greeting card company puke. Its author, Gwen Cooper, wrote *Homer's Odyssey*, an unforgettable eight(out of five)-star book -- at least "in my book." That being the case, how bad could this new novel be? But its title is -- oh crap -- *Love Saves the Day*. But Gwen Cooper wrote it. But. . . . But. . . . But. . . . Ceasefire. Harold Kushner, stop holding back already; there's a market for "When Bad Titles Happen to Good Books" or "When Good Books Happen to Bad Titles." What,HK? Not gonna happen? Okay, so I'll put a nickel on the author's end of the seesaw. Game over. I'll read the book.

But alas, I didn't **read** the book. I decided to abandon my sensible suspicions and listen to the opinions of others. Or perhaps I was preparing for the highly unlikely possibility that I will discover that I'm a direct descendant of Oedipus and that someday guilt is going to make me poke out my eyes. In such a situation, wouldn't being accustomed to listening to audiobooks be advantageous? Besides, the paperback edition (which I would have bought) hasn't been released yet. Listening to *Love Saves the Day* validated every reason why I've never wanted to hear a novel instead of holding it in my hands and using sticky paper to mark noteworthy lines and analyzing what I can stare at and hearing voices originating in my own mind. I

don't want this review to become an assessment of the audiobook's reader, about whose faults I could write a much more specific review than I can of Cooper's book. However, Cooper's words are, unfortunately, not in front of me; and the reader's voices **are** with me. To folks interested in listening to the audiobook, I must offer a warning: "Don't let those voices enter your head!"

Giving four stars to *Love Saves the Day* required imagining my responses to a text. Perhaps I'm overrating it because I want to believe that the reader is irritating enough to ruin even an extraordinarily good novel. *Love Saves the Day* **is** sappy, but not to the degree that the title suggests; and, frankly, I can easily swallow a measured dose of sap. Despite the picture on the cover/case and the importance of two cats in the novel, one of which is used to narrate several chapters, a reader's attitude toward cats is not likely to determine whether or not (s)he appreciates the work. If you've lost one or both parents, if you've delayed mourning the loss, if you've allowed a moment in the past to shape present relationships, or if you've known the enduring pain of certain missed opportunities, then this book is for you -- as it was for me. Fellow cat lovers, unlike *Homer's Odyssey*, *Love Saves the Day* is really not about the cat. You're disappointed? Get over it. Gwen Cooper already wrote a book about a cat, and it was as good as a cat story gets.

Judy says

Anyone who is a cat lover will enjoy this book. I am--and I did! Most of the story is told from the viewpoint of Prudence, a cat who is saved by Sarah (the first human who belongs to Prudence) and when Sarah dies Prudence goes to live with Laura, Sarah's daughter & her husband, Josh. There has been a breach between Laura & her mother dated back many years, but Laura honors her mother's wishes & gives a home to Prudence. I listened to the audio version, which I loved. I don't know whether reading it in print would give the same result, but the audio really conveys the superior tone that comes across in a cat's condescending way they deal with humans. I've heard it said that you don't own a cat-- a cat owns you. And if you've ever had a cat, you understand that. This is a sweet story of resentment, forgiving and coming to grips with ones past. All is aided by Prudence, the cat. It is a great story.

Miz says

Struggled reading this book as the cat's voice irritated me. Eventually when the story became interwoven, it was okay, but I still struggled with the concept and thought it could be better executed.

Or maybe I'm bitter and twisted about family dynamics and cats haha.

Rosemarie says

Love Saves the Day is a highly unusual book because the main character is the cat, Prudence, and it is told mostly from her point of view. I have always believed that cats are VERY misunderstood - and 90% of this book goes to prove my theory. So I was very happy to find and read it!

There is, unfortunately, some 10% of the time when Prudence does, in fact, take on that stereotypical attitude that "cats are smarter than humans." I really wish that this book had not gone there at all - but - like I said - the majority of the time we learn that cats are actually not so aloof and superior as we think they are. In fact,

cats suffer from a lot of anxiety - especially related to change - and we see this in Prudence.

Prudence truly loved Sarah - who found her as a kitten when she was accidentally separated from her littermates. Sarah is her Most Important Person, and so Prudence is confused when Sarah leaves for work one day and does not return. For most of the book, Prudence is devastated that Sarah has left and tries to hold onto the hope that Sarah will come back for her. While the reader may suspect the truth sooner, Prudence does not learn until about 3/4 of the way through that Sarah has passed away. And then she wonders why no one bothered to tell her such important news! Prudence misses Sarah so much that she has trouble sleeping until she is given one of Sarah's old dresses that still has the Sarah smell on it. This book will truly make you think twice about what your cat, or any pet really, sees and hears in your home.

Prudence is taken to live with Sarah's daughter, Laura, and Laura's husband Josh. At first, Laura is not really happy about having Prudence there, but as time goes on we see how Prudence and Laura both help each other get through losing Sarah. This is a very touching story that cat lovers will, of course, love. But all the cat haters out there really should read it too - it might just make you change your attitude.

Elements of the story are based on true events. Evidently, there was a condemned building on New York City's Lower East Side that was torn down about 20 years ago. The residents were simply evacuated and not given any time to gather their belongings. In the story, Laura lived with her mother in this building. The day they were kicked out of their home and lost all their belongings, Laura also lost the neighbor's cat, Honey, whom she had been very close to. Honey was lost in the building demolition along with other pets in the building. The authorities, very cruelly, would not even let anyone go back in to save their pets! What a truly horrible event! I don't fully understand how such a thing could have happened.

The trauma of the event, though, drives a wedge between Laura and her mother. Laura and Sarah had been very close, but never were again after that horrible day. Laura somehow blamed her mother's love of music, and wanting to live on the Lower East Side in the first place, for what had happened to them. I have to confess that I don't truly understand Laura's motivations here. It doesn't seem like it was Sarah's fault. It is implied that Laura just needed someone to blame - being young and not knowing how to deal with the trauma. It's very sad though because Sarah is dead and there was no reconciliation.

Another major factor in this story is the music scene on the Lower East Side at that time. It's actually very interesting, if like me, you don't know much about it. Sarah had tried to be a DJ -- not easy for a woman at that time and eventually opened a record store. The situation is made even worse for Laura when Josh takes an interest in Sarah's large music collection - Prudence calls them "black disks." And even worse when Josh - knowing nothing about the day that changed Laura's life forever - decides to help save another building that is about to be torn down in Laura's old neighborhood. Laura is horrified by this - it's like the past coming back to haunt her when all she wants to do is move forward.

Since Prudence cannot, obviously, know everything, we do get a few chapters from Laura's point of view and a few even from Sarah's to round out the story. But I truly loved the chapters that are from Prudence's point of view! She is so sweet and the things that she doesn't fully understand are written in such a way that we do. Although Prudence is a smart and very perceptive cat and understands a lot more than you would think. This story is clever and entertaining, heartwarming and a bit sad, but also very uplifting.

Anna says

I loved Gwen's other book, Homer's Odyssey, and I'd recommend that for anyone who's thinking about getting a blind or otherwise "special" pet.

And I wanted to like this one too. This one has a kitty hero too, so it should be as likable, right? What I liked best was the perspective of Prudence, the kitty.

But there were too many things that made it much less enjoyable than Homer's Odyssey. It seemed too long considering the ingredients - perhaps a 60 page novella would have worked better. Prudence was likable, as was her first human, Sarah. But the other characters felt flat and one-dimensional. Especially Laura, a 30-year daughter of Sarah, who ends up with Prudence. Self-centered, money-obsessed, with a bad self esteem she thinks she can hide in her ah so successful career. There were elements that add to the story, such as 1) difficulties in housing in Manhattan from the past decades 2) music history in Manhattan 3) orthodox Jewish celebrations and 4) more Manhattan - if you like those elements being among the main ingredients in a story that was supposed to be about cats and humans. Those elements with the flat human characters made it surprisingly boring.

Preeti says

This book is definitely recommended for cat lovers but I'm not sure how non-cat fans would take to it. The story is (mostly) told from the perspective of Prudence, a brown tabby, who's been uprooted from her home and her human and taken to live elsewhere. She doesn't realize what's happened and why she has to live with the daughter of her owner.

It was a bit slow to start and it took some time to get used to the "cutesy" way the cat would explain things. Some stuff was beyond cutesy, venturing into the annoying territory. But the story picked up maybe midway through and I started to enjoy it. One thing that I did find jarring was all of a sudden one of the chapters was from the perspective of another character or told from third-person. After a bunch of chapters from the cat's perspective, this felt like cheating even though the story probably couldn't have advanced the way the author wanted without this.

One really interesting (and anger-inducing!) thing I learned from this book was the real story of a tenement building in NYC that was demolished in the 90s without any notice given to its residents. I thought that kind of thing only happened in other countries, and it was really astonishing to learn that it happened right here in the US, in the 1990s, in NYC! I'm planning to learn more about that incident. I liked that the book included an acknowledgements section in which the author listed some of the books that helped her write this one, such as books about music, the Lower East Side, and Alphabet City.

I'm giving this 3.5 stars, mostly for the last 1/3 of the book, which I enjoyed.

Note: I received this from the LibraryThing Early Reviewers program.

Kirsti says

I have wanted to buy this book for YEARS. No, seriously. Every time I saw it on my to-read list, I'd grit my teeth and plan to buy it, but it just never happened. I knew when I finally put it on an online order a few weeks ago that I wanted to read it right away. I'm glad I did!

I loved Gwen's true story of Homer, and I knew that I would love the fictional Prudence as well. Gwen just knows cats, and I liked how she made Prudence think and interact with her humans. I adored the way the story softly drew you in, until you just HAD to know what happened, and what would happen. Plus, it's just so damn sad in places that you can't help but be drawn in. I sure was!

My only shame is how long it took me to hunt down this book and read it. I loved it, and I'm sure if you love cats then you will too! Five stars!

Rachel says

Well, now that I've stopped sobbing, let's get to the review.

A lot of people will look at the title and cover of this book, note that the story is told in part from the point of view of a cat, and then bypass it. That's unfortunate because there's nothing gimmicky or cheesy about *Love Saves the Day*; it's a well-constructed, affecting novel about grief, regret, and reconciling with the past. This is the story of Laura and her mother Sarah, whose close and loving relationship become almost irreparably strained on the day in 1995 when the building they lived in on Manhattan's Lower East Side was condemned and Laura, then 15, and Sarah were forced to move. As the book opens, Laura is almost 30, newly married, and on the partnership track at a white shoe law firm, when Sarah suddenly dies of a heart condition Laura knew nothing about. Sarah has left instructions that her cat Prudence is to live with Laura, and it's through Prudence's eyes as she tries to figure out where Sarah has gone and how she can make her come back that we see how awkward the mother and daughter were with each other, Sarah chattering away nervously during Laura's infrequent visits and Laura's sudden flashes of anger or annoyance. As the story progresses, the point of view shifts to Laura's and then to Sarah's, and the terrible events of the day in 1995 are, after earlier oblique references, finally revealed.

In the hands of a lesser writer, I think the characters could easily have devolved into caricatures -- the bohemian mom and her career-driven daughter -- but Cooper is a talented and subtle writer and instead gives us two fully realized people and does an equally good job with Prudence the cat and the other humans who play smaller but important roles in the story. There are no villains here (aside from the faceless real estate developers and maybe Rudy Giuliani), only ordinary people doing their best to get through life, sometimes falling down, and sometimes finding that soldiering on contains its own kind of grace. Not to get sappy and weird about it because they are, after all, fictional characters, but in the week since I finished the book, I find myself missing them all a little. *Love Saves the Day* might be wrongly dismissed as "a cat book," and so I don't know if Cooper will reach an audience wider than the one she gained after *Homer's Odyssey*, but she definitely deserves to.

Orsolya says

As a cat person (and proud owner of the best cat in the world); I thoroughly enjoyed Gwen Cooper's heartwarming sort-of-memoir of her relationship with Homer, her blind cat ("Homer's Odyssey"). My enjoyment of Cooper's prose overcame my worries of a fictional novel about a cat and I was thus eager to read, "Loves Saves the Day".

"Loves Saves the Day" begins with a narration by a cat named Prudence (the point of view alternates

throughout the novel of that of Prudence and of Laura -- who comes to own her mother's cat after her passing-- and even that of her mother, Sarah). Prudence's voice and character is surprisingly believable and will cause the reader to truly deem these as the thoughts of a feline. Instead of viewing them as foolish, cat owners will look twice at the behaviors of their own cats (at least, I did). Cooper combines her own cat observances with cat behavior research to result in compelling yet simple narration and storyline. However, this would certainly strike a cat-lover more than an average reader.

Although a story about a cat, "Love Saves the Day" is much deeper than that and is a character and relationship study regarding the broken relationship between a mother and daughter. The point of view of a cat is not only a unique perspective for a novel regarding such a topic but allows for simplified understanding. Sometimes, as humans, we overanalyze, over-worry, and over-complicate things. Prudence's voice allows Cooper to explore deep topics with an almost child-like and psychologically basic view (in a good way) resulting in a substantial (and moving) break down of the issues and plot.

Cooper's prose is steady and she excels at creating a visually vivid piece/setting without focusing too much on them. Her character development is also strong although I, personally, enjoyed that of the cat more than Laura.

"Love Saves the Day" is not simply a cutesy, cat novel but includes profound and thought-provoking illuminations. At the same time, it is easy to read (and quick) making it equally fulfilling and saturating but not *too* heavy.

The conclusion of "Love Saves the Day" was too cheesy and "happily ever after" making it a minor disappointment and weak. However, overall, the novel was still likable and not diminished in value.

Cooper's "Love Saves the Day" is unique, a page-turner (although not in the traditional sense) and terrific for cat lovers. Another success by Cooper!

Also a side note: I learned that lilies are extremely toxic to cats. Don't let them eat lilies!
