



## **The Cast: A Novel**

*Amy Blumenfeld*

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## **The Cast: A Novel** Amy Blumenfeld

Twenty-five years ago, a group of ninth graders produced a *Saturday Night Live*–style videotape to cheer up their ailing friend. The show’s running time was only ninety minutes, but it had a lasting impact: Becca laughed her way through recovery, and the group—Jordana, Seth, Holly, and Lex—became her supporting cast for life.

On the silver anniversary of Becca Night Live, the friends reunite over the Fourth of July to celebrate Becca’s good health—but nothing goes as planned. The happy holiday card facades everyone’s been hiding behind quickly crumble and give way to an unforgettable three days filled with complex moral dilemmas and life-altering choices. Through humor, drama, and the alternating perspectives of five characters, *The Cast* explores the power of forgiveness, the importance of authenticity, and the immeasurable value of deep, enduring friendships to buoy us when life plays out differently than expected.

## **The Cast: A Novel Details**

Date : Published August 14th 2018 by SparkPress

ISBN :

Author : Amy Blumenfeld

Format : Kindle Edition 294 pages

Genre : Fiction

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# From Reader Review **The Cast: A Novel** for online ebook

**Iryna (Book and Sword) says**

**3.75/5 stars**

**The Cast** is a wonderful and emotional story of friendship, illnesses and loss. I think it would be perfect for bookclubs - there is a lot to discuss in here! I'd especially recommend this book to be read in the month of October - if you read this, you will know why. Hint, no not because of Halloween.

?The cover caught my eye - I loved the greens and the blues, and the casual prettiness of it. And for the cover whore like me - that's an important aspect of the book.

?I do have to say that **The Cast** deals with some heavy topics, although it handles them with a gentle hand. But if anybody out there is as much of a hypochondriac as I am - beware.

Before I talk about the cast (get it?) I wanted to mention quickly that this book is very rich on Jewish traditions and customs - which was so great to read, because I feel like I've learned so much. It was also nice, because to be honest I haven't seen many books out there featuring Jewish characters (besides the ones set in time of WWII of course).

?There are quite a few alternating points of view, but the main focus is on Becca. A childhood cancer survivor. I was rooting for Becca all the way through.

?Nolan, well in my book Nolan can jump up his own ass and die! For me there was no redemption for him. I understand what his point of view meant to portray, but I just couldn't get on board with it.

?Jordana was next after Nolan in her annoyingness, although I might have disliked her so much because I saw pieces of myself in her. Jordana's OCD and constant need to control and micromanage everything showed me that maybe some of my tendencies in life aren't pretty.

Holly, oh Holly. I absolutely adored her. There was not enough of her in the first part of the book, but later she became the central figure and oh my goodness that was tough to bear.

Lex was fun to read about and surprisingly I totally understood and supported where she came from, and why she did what she did.

Seth was alright, but his POV was kinda annoying, mostly because his inner dialog was so childish I had to keep rolling my eyes.

?Adam and Sal did not have enough page time, especially Sal - I feel like I even don't know Sal at all.

This was a solid 4 star read all the way through, but the ending did feel rushed and a bit unfinished so down to 3.75 it went. I realize that this was supposed to be one of "*life goes on*" endings, but I still felt like I needed some more closure.

?I am very happy that I read this - it just randomly caught my eye on NetGalley, and surprise books often turn out to be the best books.

Big thanks to **Get Red PR, SparkPress and NetGalley** for an advanced copy of the book. All opinions are my own, honest and come from the heart.

My WEBSITE

My INSTAGRAM

### **Jamie Rosenblit says**

4.5 wonderful stars for The Cast!

I am hands down a sucker for books about friendship that evolve over time and take place from multiple perspectives (The Interestings, anyone?!?) and when I learned that this was going to be the format of The Cast, I was immediately interested. Blumenfeld does a wonderful job of giving voices to each of the characters that really let the differences in each of their personalities shine. I loved seeing how the relationships changed over the years from childhood to present day in this group of friends.

I can't wait to see what comes next from this new-to-me author who is now cemented on my must-read list!

I received an advance copy. All opinions are my own.

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### **Rebecca says**

Childhood friends--Becca, Jordana, Holly, Lex, and Seth--reunite years later for a weekend getaway. Will they all get along as well as they used to? Or, has time and distance changed their friendships?

Even though it was Becca who was diagnosed with Hodgkin's lymphoma when they were teens, her health scare affected all of them in numerous ways and for years to come. Even though there were a large cast of characters and numerous story lines, I didn't have any trouble keeping everyone straight and following along. If you love stories about lifelong friendships, then don't miss this humorous, authentic, and heartfelt debut!

Trigger warning: Breast cancer

3.5 stars

I received an advance copy of this book. All opinions are my own.

Location: New York City

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### **Tammy says**

The Cast is a bit of The Big Chill with Friends mixed in! I loved this story of childhood friends dealing with all the problems in adult life, health issues, marriage, jobs and children. Amy Blumenfeld's writing made me feel that these characters were MY friends! The Cast is a must read from a debut author!

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## Katie B says

When ninth grader Becca was in the hospital, her friends made a *Saturday Night Live* style video to cheer her up. Twenty five years later, the group of friends, Becca, Jordana, Seth, Holly, and Lex, have made plans to celebrate the anniversary of the video and Becca's good health. However, nothing seems to go according to plan, relationships will be tested and some things will never be the same.

I thought this was an interesting idea for a story, a group of teenagers who share a lifelong bond due to their friend Becca, spending so much time in the hospital when they were younger. While the story is mainly centered around Becca, each chapter follows a different character including Becca's husband, Nolan, and each friend, with the exception of Lex. Maybe in an effort to trim the length of the book, the author made the choice not to have Lex's perspective represented, but I just thought it was jarring not to include her as her life and problems were no less interesting than the other characters.

I really struggled with one of the characters, but even though the reactions and behavior seemed over the top at times, it unfortunately was realistic. Like I said earlier, I like the idea of the story but as a whole the book felt incomplete. I ended up enjoying different bits and pieces, but after reading the entire book, it was more like an average read. Given the subject matter though, I think some readers will connect much better with the story so I do recommend giving it a shot.

I won a free copy of this book Chick Lit Central and Get Red PR. I was under no obligation to post a review and all views expressed are my honest opinion.

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## Anna says

The Cast is an emotionally charged story that involves several main characters all trying to have a great weekend for THE main characters, Becca. There is a Big Chill-esque quality to the friendships in this cast of characters. So much raw emotion. Kudos to the author for harkening me back to the early 90s of my youth.

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## Deanna says

My reviews can also be seen at: [https://deesradreadsandreviews.wordpress...](https://deesradreadsandreviews.wordpress.com)

When Becca was just a teenager and struggling with health issues, her good friends banded together and made her a video recording to lift her spirits. It was ninety minutes long. A take on Saturday Night Live they called it "Becca Night Live". It did cheer her up and it's one of the reasons her family still owns a VCR to this day.

The cast consisted of Jordana, Seth, Holly, and Lex. All these years later the tape is still being played...mostly by Becca's seven-year-old daughter, Emma. She can't get enough of it.

Now **twenty-five years** later Becca and her friends are going to reunite in honor of Becca's 25 years of good health.

Becca is really excited about the trip. However, a phone call she receives a few days before they are

scheduled to leave changes everything. She has some tough decisions to make. Her husband, Nolan who should be making things easier on her, is actually making things much worse.

Jordana has put a lot of effort into hosting the “Cast Party” reunion on the Fourth of July. So if the guest of honor doesn’t show ...she’ll be devastated.

**Becca doesn’t know it but her friends are also having troubles of their own. Will the reunion be over before it’s even begun?**

This was an interesting novel that I read in just a couple of sittings. The story is told from multiple points of view. We get to see how each of the other cast members/friends have grown and what their current struggles are. Though the novel deals with a lot of emotional issues, there were also some funny parts that helped lighten things up.

I enjoy stories that deal with lifelong friendships. It was interesting seeing how these characters and their relationships changed and developed over twenty-five years. There were a couple of characters that I wish I’d heard more from, but overall, I thought that the characters were well-developed and their stories relatable.

**“The Cast” was an engaging read about friendship, marriage, illness, and many of life’s other challenges.**

I'd like to thank SparkPress for giving me the opportunity to read this book in exchange for my honest review.

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### **Chandra Claypool (wherethereadergrows) says**

I'm just going to get right into it. I absolutely LOVE this book. My friends and I have made video tapes for each other, done silly things to bring joy to our crew and it's just FUN to do these types of things. When you can be completely silly and YOU around a group of people who appreciate you for who you are... well, you just can't ask for much more than that. The other side is that the also know just about everything about you and this can also make for some heated and very emotional moments - upswings and downswings ... they're no longer just friends, they're FAMILY.

I'm in awe that this is a DEBUT! The chapters alternate between the various characters of The Cast and it's done SO WELL. Each group has their different personalities and lifestyles and she captures this brilliantly. I knew from the first 40 pages that this was going to be an emotional read. Captivating, heartfelt, string tugging.... and all so relatable. Each character in here is human, visceral and I fell in love with each and every one of them.

You can't plan for life to happen - it just does. When you have people around you that you can count on - it makes that journey just a tiny bit easier. I'm grateful that I have those people in my life. Thank you, Amy, for making me appreciate them all the more.

Highly recommend you put this on your TBR. Set aside a few hours and don't move until you're done.

Thank you to GetRedPR and Spark Press for this copy.

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## **Linda Zagon says**

My Review of "The Cast" by Amy Blumenfeld , GetRedPr Sparkpress August 14,2018

OMG! WOW! I loved everything about "The Cast" by Amy Blumenfeld. Kudos to Amy Blumenfeld for her storytelling and her vivid descriptions and colorful cast of characters. I was captivated and enthralled with this emotionally charged intense novel. The Genres for this Novel are Fiction and Women's Fiction. The story takes place twenty five years before in the past, and the present.

The characters in this story are complex, complicated, emotional, confused, loyal, and flawed, which adds substance to the story. Twenty five years ago, a group of ninth graders make a video to cheer up Becca, their classmate who has cancer, and is in the hospital. They make the video in the style of Saturday Night Live. This video is significant throughout this story.

Now in the present, it is twenty-five years later, and the entire cast of friends are celebrating Becca's life. A very good friend of Becca's has made copies of DVD's for each person as a gift of the original tape. Becca's daughter enjoys watching this slap-stick comedy that her friends had put together. What the friends don't realize is that from all the radiation that Becca had, she now has a diagnosis of breast cancer, which seems to be contained with surgery.

Becca appreciates life and knows she will have the surgery but is thinking long and hard about reconstructive plastic surgery and the complications. Her husband doesn't understand Becca's reaction. Becca's husband also feels at time as an out-cast to the group of friends.

As the friends are to get together, each one has their own dramatic problems to deal with. Wrong decisions are made, and wrong conclusions are made. This is a novel that looks at deep and loyal friendship that withstands time, and the ups and downs in life. I love and appreciate that the author brings up such a difficult topic of cancer with such dignity and class. She also discusses the importance of emotional support, family, friendship, forgiveness, love, faith and hope. I would highly recommend this novel to readers that enjoy women's fiction. There are some Kleenex moments. I received an ARC from NetGalley for my honest review.

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## **Karen says**

I enjoy reading books written in multiple perspectives. It helps me as a reader better understand the drivers behind behavior. The Cast is told from the perspectives of five friends. I loved the depth of their friendship and growth over the course of 25 years. Each were relatable and well-played. A very entertaining story and makes for a great beach read.

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## **Karly says**

There's not much more important in life than good friends. When Becca is 15 she suffers from Hodgkin's Lymphoma and her family and tight knit group of friends fear she might not make it. One day the friends make Becca tape modeled after a Saturday Night Live show to try and cheer her up and thus The Cast is born.

Fast forward 25 years, Becca is happily married to Nolan and has a precious daughter Emma and best friend Jordy has planned a reunion of the cast to Celebrate Becca. But Becca has a secret she is keeping from The Cast and a crack is forming in her relationship with Nolan. Decisions made during the reunion weekend will change the lives of The Cast forever.

I really liked this book! I was interested in the story lines of all of the cast members, Seth, Lex, Holly and Jordanna - not just Becca's. I found Becca and Nolan's issue to be an interesting one and not one that I had seen tackled in fiction before. I did wonder many times while reading how often that is an issue in a relationship.

Overall an interesting, entertaining read!

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## **Katie says**

I requested an advanced reader's copy of this book from NetGalley because I love books about close groups of friends who reunite after many years. I enjoyed what the author did with the novel with combining multiple points of view of the friends and spouses who came together to celebrate 25 years since the "cast" of friends made a Saturday-Night style video to cheer up an ailing friend. However, I didn't realize before I started reading it that the ailing friend had cancer and for personal reasons, that topic is too close to my heart right now. I ended up skim-reading parts of it to keep a distance from it. I would like to re-read this in a few years, possibly by audio book as I think it would be an absorbing audio-read. The book is now out and I would recommend it, just with a caveat for those sensitive to cancer topics.

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## **Janelle says**

Thanks so much to Get Red PR for providing my free copy of THE CAST by Amy Blumenfeld- all opinions are my own.

This surprising and lovely debut is exactly what I needed to read right now. The story centers around a group of old friends at 40 years of age who decide to have a reunion. This cast of characters (Becca, Holly, Jordana, Lex, and Seth) have all been friends since childhood and have kept in touch throughout Becca's cancer diagnosis of Hodgkin's lymphoma as a teenager and treatment. When they were teenagers they made a video in the style of Saturday Night Live in order to cheer up Becca after her diagnosis and this video holds great significance throughout the book. Twenty-five years later, Jordana decides to organize a reunion to celebrate Becca's 25th year anniversary of being in remission. What starts out to be a simple celebratory get-together quickly goes awry. There are marital troubles, an old flame, unexpected health issues, contemplative lifestyle changes, and friendship turmoil: typical things that can crack any facade when old friends reconnect.

This is a stellar, complex story about what it means when your friends are more than just that, when they are also your family. I absolutely love Blumenfeld's writing style and the masterful way she gives a distinct



voice to each character. Most of the story takes place over a weekend, but there is so much depth, complexity, and authenticity that you really get to know each character in such a short time. I loved every unique personality as I found each of them interesting, fun, flawed, complicated, and relatable. THE CAST reveals the importance of having an emotional support system, people you can count on, and what it means to be a loving and loyal friend. If you enjoy emotional, intricate stories with vibrant, well drawn out, and complex characters, then you will love this book!

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### **Amy says**

The Cast has one of my favorite structures in a book, it's told from several various perspectives and gives the reader the opportunity to see the dynamics of a group of lifelong friends through all of their eyes. I love the insight this provided into their thoughts, feelings and emotional processes and felt pretty bonded to these five people by the end of the book.

I think anytime an author writes an ensemble story it must be tricky to maintain different voices for each character and Blumenfeld does an admirable job. This is also the authors debut making it all the more impressive and besides maintaining individual personalities and voices for each character, she also manages to write really smoothly about some heavy topics.

This is definitely a pretty emotional read about the highs and lows of life and the friendships that help people keep it together when things are really tough. The relationships between Becca, Jordana, Holly, Lex and Seth are both complicated and sweet and entirely relatable on so many levels. There was also some humor and lightness so it's definitely not all heavy, but it's one that makes you think and be grateful for the people in your own life who are there no matter what may be happening.

The Cast in three words: Meaningful, Honest and Tender.

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### **Francesca says**

I absolutely loved this book! It is a must read at the very least for women in their 40s yet relevant far beyond and before that. The characters develop vividly: their beings and emotions feel palpable. If I could have I would have read it one sitting; I had to force myself to put it down each night. It was like an unfolding movie. The choices these women and men make are choices we face and they give you pause, making you wonder what you yourself might do at each juncture with no choice being easy. It is told from the perspective of each character in a group of friends: this cast lives in our world and suffers the heartbreak and trauma we know both as young friends forever altered by the life-threatening illness of one in the group and with new life choices in their reunion 25 years later when they've grown into their adult and complicated selves with the addition of marriages, children, careers.

Although switching characters for each chapter has become common fare in novels, hearing these voices is anything but: the reader is exposed to the perspectives of how different people in a close-knit group deal with each other and themselves, with illness and friendship, with hierarchy, group dynamics, loyalty and what that actually means. Each voice is unique and recognizable.

I am eager to share this story with my book club in the fall when it releases. I am glad it was written and that it came into my hands. I don't know anything that has been written yet on this subject with quite the honesty, intensity and at times raw emotion with which it was written through the characters; and yet it is fluid and absolutely accessible.

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