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Lucy desperately wants a baby. Sam is determined to write a hit movie. The problem is that both their efforts seem to be unfruitful. And given that the average IVF cycle has about a one in five chance of going into full production, Lucy's chances of getting what she wants are considerably better than Sam's.

What Sam and Lucy are about to go through is absolutely inconceivable. The question is, can their love survive?

Inconceivable confirms Ben Elton as one of Britain's most significant, entertaining and provocative writers.

Inconceivable Details

Date : Published May 26th 2010 by Delta (first published 1999)

ISBN : 9780385334655

Author : Ben Elton

Format : Paperback 288 pages

Genre : Fiction, Humor, Comedy, Contemporary, European Literature, British Literature, Literature, 20th Century, Novels, Drama, Modern, Romance

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From Reader Review Inconceivable for online ebook

Dhen Hawke says

Lucy and Sam trying to get pregnant. I could relate to this (so I thought) that's why I picked the book. I never thought that such a sensitive issue could be tackled in a non-conventional way; hilarious BUT also heartbreaking at some point. I could relate to Lucy's frustration and desperation to get pregnant so I asked my husband to read it and let me know if Sam is a realistic character. My husband finished the book in 2 nights (hahah) and bounced back to me with loads of questions relating to Lucy! Two thumbs up for Ben Elton.

Peter says

Different Than The Average: Ben Elton, as many of us fans out there know, tends to write murder thrillers with that touch of comedy that everything he has ever done, and ever will do, has. This however does not follow his traditional murder mystery whodunnit. This book is even written in a totally different narration style. Generally he writes in the third person to explain the story throughout. This time there is NO third person involved. He writes in a style that many writers have tried and only half have pulled off successfully. He uses two characters as the focus, Sam and Lucy a couple trying to have a baby but cannot conceive. The way their stories are told respectively are as a form of diary entry.

It is set up so that they are writing private letters to no-one to let out their sad emotions and frustrations at the inability to conceive. The focus of the story is love. Whether love between the two is strong enough to survive if they cannot conceive or reliant on a child. Each character also has their own private battles. Sam is a BBC worker dreaming of writing a hit programme or film, but he has no inspiration. Lucy is an agent's assistant, whose newest client happens to be the hottest new, gorgeous British actor on the scene. As the two face their separate battles, can they focus on Lucy's main goal, a child. Sam isn't as determined seemingly to have a child as he feels that it would just be a bonus, he feels he loves Lucy enough to be happy with her forever, child or not.

The story has great one liners that will make even the person with the least sense of humour in the world to crack a smile. It is funny throughout but also has the touch of seriousness also. Tears could flow at points. I enjoyed this, finished it just this afternoon. If you like his other books you'll love this too. If you have never read anything of his before this could be a good start as it shows how he can hold a story well and keep things moving. It also displays the difficult technique of balancing two characters' roles equally, which he succeeds seemingly with ease.

Enjoy.

K.A. Hitchins says

I'd read Inconceivable some years ago and decided to pick it up again this week. I was instantly gripped by the voices of the two main protagonists, Sam and Lucy Bell, who are trying for a baby.

Ben Elton perfectly captures their voices - the laddish and insensitive Sam and the desperate and hormonal Lucy. It's written in the form of their diary entries. Not an easy feat but it's perfectly sustained throughout. As well as capturing the raw pain of infertility, Ben Elton explores other yearnings: the desire to be successful and validated by others; the yearning to be found attractive and loved. The ending is clever and unexpected, but emotionally satisfying. A great read, despite the earthy language.

Geoff Battle says

Ben Elton taps his personal career to produce a book centered around a couple working at the BBC. The entire book is formed from the couple's personal diaries, created to help them deal with the difficulty of getting pregnant. As per usual, the Elton brand of wit is sharp, rude and cutting edge, hitting on the taboo areas of our everyday lives most people don't feel comfortable talking about. It's interesting reading since Elton never hints at where he's leading you, or to about which subject he will open up like a can of worms next. The characterisation will make you ask questions of yourself as Elton is uncanny in his portrayal of human psychology and behaviour - it's very Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus. So far, it's all good news. However, I did find that the actual flow of the book was somewhat impeded by the Diary Entry form of the book. Overall it's a good read; which is on-the-ball with cultural events and humour, but the format, although original, prevents real immersion and gets rather stale towards the end.

Carla says

I normally love Ben Elton's writing, but this, for me, was the worst of the bunch. The main characters were sooooo annoying, selfish, stupid, whiney, vapid, and self-involved, I had trouble reading it. The ending was quite sweet and there were definitely some funny bits, so I can't say it was all bad.

Fuzzy Gerdes says

Probably the most interesting thing about *Inconceivable* is the structure—it's presented as alternating diary entries from a couple who are experiencing fertility issues. And when the characters get off topic and go on comedic rants, it's reasonably funny. But the main storyline is overwrought, overcomplicated, and for a supposedly comedic novel, not very funny. So.

Amy says

This is one of my favourite books and I have gone back to it time and again, because the characters, especially Sam are so endearing. This book is written in diary form from both Sam and Lucy and it gives their thoughts on the IVF they are going through.

Some parts are moving and I sympathised with their situation, especially when Lucy dreams of reading Beatrix Potter to her potential child, it struck a chord with me because I read those stories to my own children. But what I love about Ben Elton is that he has taken a difficult subject and given us an honest

insight into how the opposite sex deals with the issue of IVF.

I would recommend this to anyone and although I have read most of Ben Elton's books and have found them all enjoyable, this remains my favourite.

Nicole says

The book is set up as the two main characters' diaries as they pursue fertility treatment. Perhaps it's because I'm reading this at a temporal distance from this setting (the mid 90s), or it could be the fact that I don't want children therefore don't comprehend the all-encompassing desire for a baby which the female character has, but I found them both immensely unpleasant. I found most of the novel predictable and dull, and the resolution was too short and under-developed. Finally the reinforcement of gender stereotypes - woman desperate for child, man skeptical and uncaring - were too much to bear.

Lainy says

Time Taken To Read - 3 days

Blurb From Goodreads

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My Review

This is a story about a happily married couple who want a baby. The book isn't in chapters but rather diary entries. Lucy writes hers as Dear Penny, a childhood friend whilst Sam goes with dear book or sometimes without title. The entries follow their journey from hitting 5 years of trying for a baby but now seriously looking at why they aren't pregnant and investigating it.

For me the book reminded me of Bridget Jones diary, not just in format but in that there is a lot of humour involved. You can empathize with both characters and you get to see the same story from two view points. Despite the serious nature of the main issue there is a lot of humour involved in the book, there is also a lot of crass and crude language throughout, so not for the easily offended.

The book covers some serious issues and despite it being a fairly humourous book I did learn a bit about the IVF process and what couples have to go through when facing difficulties in trying for a baby. Funny, sad, emotional and a bit of a rollercoaster I did enjoy this and wasn't too sure how it would end which is always a plus, 3/5 for me this time and I would read Ben Elton again (I have read one or two of his before).

The Reading Bibliophile says

Or "The self-centred, egomaniac, smug 'Bridget Jones diary' of infertile conception". Meh. Hails barely one star just for the joy of incessantly reading "shag", "bonk", "wank" and "willy".

Deborah Brannon says

The first and biggest thing that irritated me about this book, told through dual consecutive diary entries written by husband and wife, was the voice of Lucy. Obviously the wife. She was completely two-dimensional, flat as a caricature, with her depressing obsession about as luridly painted as a two dollar whore. Pretty much the only thing Lucy does is whinge on about wanting a baby, her entire point in life being having a baby, having wanted a baby since she was one herself, desiring nothing beyond the replacement of herself on this Earth. I'll admit that desire is pretty foreign to my character, hence the lack of sympathy; however, even if I was actively jonesing for a child, I still think I'd be sickened by the voice of this character. For GoD's sake (no irony intended here), there's more to life than just reproducing.

Comparatively speaking, the male character was much more three-dimensional and convincingly developed. This is what irritated me even more... the author was obviously capable of writing well-rounded characters (apparently). So why didn't he give Lucy the benefit of a proper character? I'm aware it was a satire, apparently about infertility, but it didn't feel very socially progressive to me. Or was it the point that they were completely obsessed with themselves, completely absorbed in their own apparently miserable lives, that they couldn't even once consider adoption to form their precious family unit?

Anyway, Elton almost redeemed himself when, in the course of the book, the main character (who's writing a screenplay based on the shared suffering of him and his wife) admits that he hasn't got the woman's voice developed and she is, indeed, a bit of a flat character. Ha! I thought. He's making fun of himself, and it IS the point that Lucy's flat as the proverbial horizon. Except, then, no, there's no further evidence that that's what was intended at all. In fact, it's after that point that Lucy finally manages to become a bit more three-dimensional. This isn't high literature, so I can't even convince myself that this was all part of Elton's plot to somehow manipulate us into believing that Lucy wasn't a real character until that point because Sam wasn't paying enough attention to her. You can't countenance that theory when the entire book is based on purely separate diary entries they've both been writing for the entirety of the novel. She's been a separate and ostensibly complete person for the entire sad parade.

There's also very little emotional impact to the story because you knew where it's going (both characters are boringly predictable) and they both pretty much deserved what happened to them. Of course, credit where credit's due: I respect the way in which Elton manipulated the two points of view to convincingly portray a couple's malfunction of communication. It was amusing to see how they both interpreted the other's words, especially when you did really know what the other person was thinking.

There's a maudlin cast to the last forty pages that viciously and ham-handedly grabs for the heart-strings. But it's too much too late, over-loading whatever sympathetic capabilities I possessed at that point and leading to a cruelly insensitive "meh" reaction on my part. The book ends as lackluster as it began, and I am definitely not impressed.

I should watch some *Black Adder* to restore my faith in Elton. Despite what the cover of the book proclaims (in regards to at least this book), Elton the novel-writer IS NOT funnier than Ben Elton the comic or script-writer.

Nikki Winson says

4.5 Ben Elton is fast becoming my favourite writer. I've yet to find a book I don't like. He can switch genres with ease and still keep the same humour throughout so you know who you are reading. This book is Chick lit and follows the trials of a couple who are trying to conceive. I dropped half a mark because I didn't like how it was written in the style of 2 journals and it did make many characters come across as very 2 dimensional. The story itself was fantastic and gave great insight into how heartbreaking trying for a baby can be. It mixes this well with humour and i i found it hard to put down. All in all another great book by Ben Elton and I would definitely recommend it.

Pandit says

Ben Elton is a famous British comedian, with several successful (and rather laddish) sitcoms to his writing credit. He was also one of a generation that took standup away from gag telling (blue collar) and story telling (white collar) towards standup-with-a-message. That message was usually left wing politics.

I read one of his other books many years ago and it was surprisingly well crafted.

This story, *Inconceivable*, however read like something rattled off in one draft when under a deadline for his agent. The 'humour' comes from the diary format, written by the two characters who are trying for a baby, and their different interpretations of events. It is pretty one dimensional however. And having two voices like this makes it hard to really introduce other characters.

The last quarter of the book though, gets a bit more interesting as some of the plot lines start to intersect. It probably wasn't worth getting there however, unless you are out for a simple, untaxing read on a plane.

Sumit Singla says

Alternating diary entries from a couple who are dealing with the inability to produce a baby together - that's how this book is written. Sam wants to be a writer, but there's only one problem. He isn't writing.

Lucy wants to be a mother, but there's only one problem. She can't seem to get pregnant.

Ben Elton tells a story about a serious issue (infertility) with loads of humour and some great dialogue. However, he doesn't manage to completely break the stereotypical gender moulds - the man who appears aloof and disconnected, and the woman who is desperate for a child. So, while the story moves along with great speed and has some really funny moments, there are also parts that are a bit cliched. Also, the characters remain a little two-dimensional.

Nevertheless, I did enjoy the book and I'll surely be reading more from the author.

ThatBookGal says

I don't even know where to begin with this book, I thought it was horrible. The characters were awful people, neither of them had a single redeeming quality. In a book about infertility, I'm sure you are supposed to root for the characters to get pregnant, but I found myself eternally grateful that they couldn't reproduce. There was absolutely no love between them, they were horrible to each other. The storyline was lame, and pretty predictable, the whole secret movie thing was ridiculous given that they were moving in the same circles. Sam in particular was unlikeable and unbelievable, no man who cared about his wife would think the way he did, about nothing but his sperm, he seemed to have zero concerns for his wife at all. Speaking of Lucy, she just had nothing to her. She wasn't likeable, she wasn't interesting, there wasn't enough pain in her for me to feel sorry for her. I really can't think of anything redeeming about this book. I just found it slightly offensive and ridiculous, and not a lot else. Thank god its over!
