

Life at the Speed of Us

Heather Sappenfield

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COLORADO BOOK AWARD FINALIST

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Silence is safe. Fate is not.

When Sovern Briggs survives a car crash, she stops talking to seal in the memory of the final sounds from her mother's life. As conflict with her father builds and failure in school looms, Sovern seeks relief in a dangerous boyfriend and in speed's adrenaline edge. These needs collide, leading Sovern to a snowboarding accident that changes her future and perhaps that of our universe.

Life at the Speed of Us weaves dyslexia, math, cutting-edge science, genius, and love into a young woman's reluctant journey toward grace.

Life at the Speed of Us Details

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Author : Heather Sappenfield
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From Reader Review *Life at the Speed of Us* for online ebook

Laurel McHargue says

This unique story of a teenage girl (Sovern) trying to make sense of her mother's tragic death had me eager to return to it each night. Sappenfield's writing style has flashes of Steinbeck in its rhythm and sentence structure, leaving me delighted and convinced of the author's command of her craft.

While some might find the lingo of life at a ski resort a bit much, Sappenfield's understanding of that world enriches the complex plot. Exploring rudimentary principles of quantum theory (just enough to make us 'almost' believe certain events!), she takes us in and out of worlds we recognize, and we're never completely sure where we'll end up.

The angst surrounding Sovern's budding sexuality is also genuine. We feel her struggling with her own desires while still wanting to spare her patient father further grief.

I found the book to be satisfying from beginning to end. Oh, and I even learned a few things about the Ute culture along the way!

H-Dog says

Cool

Nancy Stebbins says

This is one gorgeous novel. The vivid, precise language drew me in and kept me there with Sovern as she negotiates her grief, and then explores the amazing talents she begins to recognize. I, right along with Sovern, kept searching for patterns and reasons, and the quest kept me mesmerized. And this story, as with the author's first novel, was set in the wonderful ski resort town of Crystal Village, which comes alive in the books. In addition to their physical world, the story allows us to explore the worlds of quantum mechanics and dyslexia. I highly recommend.

Jayana says

Would like to thank the Author who provided me with a Review Copy of this book for an honest review. For the record, I'm always honest in my reviews. Sometimes, brutally.

Have to admit: this book was *different*. Not at all one of your mainstream YA novels.

"Time is so much more than one line. It moves from past to present to future, yes, but also in every direction imaginable. There are multiple universes, each with a past, present and future, and they all overlap. A constant living and changing thing."

This book is going to be with me for some time. I have always enjoyed books with strong protagonists but after reading this book realized that one doesn't always have to be strong, you've got to be weak and break once (or twice) to know the difference and get back up.

It also taught me a good lesson: after reading the blurb presumed it to be a classic boy-meets-girl scenario while rolling my eyes at a potential love triangle.

Ha. Boy, was I wrong. Author shattered those assumptions with a Hulk Smash.

It was rather based on Science, Physics and Maths! With references to Hawking's, Einstein's, Bohr's works which was a bonus for me as I'd recently studied all about it. I absolutely loved this part!

What's interesting is that Sovern is a reluctant Math genius while being dyslexic, Sovern employs Math equations to construe her reality which is quite endearing sometimes.

In the first few chapters, the writing was a bit choppy, some misplaced punctuations made it hard to read the sentences correctly which bugged me a lot in the beginning but strangely it evens out for the rest of the book. In hindsight, this is what elucidates the fact that the protagonist was not in her best shape and state of mind during that part.

While Sovern is constantly on the path of self-destruction, not able to deal with her mother's death, she experiences an epiphany.

We see her self-destruction then see her lift out of it, constantly trying to make an effort to rise above the pain and grief which becomes so personal to the reader that I find myself cheering her on.

Her worst fears, for which she even stopped speaking, unfurls again by her own hands in a cruel twist. I personally cannot imagine living with the amount of guilt that she does. Unknowingly, she sets off a chain reaction of destruction and this phrase which she uses more than often in the book was never more true.

Me + anyone I love = disaster

This book was complicated in many ways and yet so intricately beautiful.

Jasmine says

Heather has a distinct way of writing in this book she combines math, science and makes it all tie in with the entire story. Sovern (the main character) has shut the world out, she never speaks and constantly lashes out at the world. Because she blames herself for the death of her mother. But suddenly a drastic event changes her completely in an attempt to save the memory of her mother she's thrown into danger. This is a story of heartbreak and a tale of a young girl struggling to stay connected to her mother.

Michele says

I like to check out the new YA novels and see what they are offering our younger readers these days. Always fun to imagine time travel. I think this novel would make for an interesting movie.

Sana says

Silence is safe. Fate is not.

When Sovern Briggs survives a car crash, she stops talking to seal in the memory of the final sounds from her mother's life. As conflict with her father builds and failure in school looms, Sovern seeks relief in a dangerous boyfriend and in speed's adrenaline edge. These needs collide, leading Sovern to a snowboarding accident that changes her future and perhaps that of our universe.

The cover immediately caught my attention and then I read the blurb and wanted to immediately read this.

There were some things I liked. I liked how the author used dyslexia throughout the story. I liked how original and unique this story was. I have never read anything about different dimensions and time traveling in a YA contemporary. I also enjoyed the scenes in the Ute tribe. I would have liked more details on the accident though. ^_^

The plot was very interesting. Sovern refused to speak again since the accident was caused because of her whining. It was tragic what happened to Sovern and I guess I was glad with the way things turned out at the end.

In my opinion, Sovern was a really weak character. She depended on a bad-boy boyfriend, smoking, and drugs to deal with her grief. I was glad when she decided to change and stop hurting her father by doing these things and started helping her self cope better.

The writing was beautiful and easy to read. It was very appealing and straightforward.

I liked this book, but not as much as I was expecting to like it.

M.J. Evans says

This is a very compelling novel about a teenage girl who struggles with the loss of her mother for which she blames herself. In a surprising twist, it develops into a time-travel, science fiction story based upon Quantum physics. I found that part really interesting. Fortunately, the author simplified the concepts. There is also a heavy dose of reincarnation, something I don't believe in but had fun reading about anyway. This is a book that will appeal to older teens. M.J. Evans, Author of "The Centaur Chronicles."

Laurie Baggott says

It's been a long time since I was a teenager, but I could still identify with the strong feelings of how to deal with the loss of a loved one, guilt and not knowing how to let go. Then suddenly there is quantum physics, 11th dimensions, and time travel, which took me totally by surprise. But quickly turned into a pleasant surprise.

Living in the mountains, with bright blue sky's and wonderful deep powder on the hill, helped to made it so I could really picture Sovren out riding and hiking!

Very well written, a page turner and...hopefully a sequel?

Jillian says

Life at the Speed of Us by Heather Sappenfield took me by complete surprise. Nowhere in the description of the book does it mention time travel, quantum physics, or parallel universes, but this coming of age love story truly does have it all.

Sovren (misspelled because at an early age her dyslexia made Sovereign impossible) finds that her life has spiraled out of control since the death of her mother. On the anniversary of her death, Sovren's boyfriend dumps her, and she has a snowboarding accident that awakens her again to life.

Despite Sovren's dyslexia, she's a mathematical genius, and the new boy she meets makes her investigate quantum physics, quantum entanglement, parallel universes, and M theory. The author uses this science to create a lovely romance that hints a bit at reincarnation. This science fiction also has some fantasy in that the characters are able to travel through time, but are unable to choose the moments they travel.

Sovren must come to terms with her own reality, her loss, and her loves, and she learns that she can love someone who has died as well as loving life as it becomes, not simply as it was.

The message that dyslexia doesn't make someone stupid is very clear. Sovren has great coping mechanisms, and they allow her to make her genius shine.

One thing I would change would be how abruptly the book ended. The climactic event of the book is very traumatic, but Sovren doesn't tell us much about how she will cope or does cope with these events. I would have liked an epilogue or a bit more to tie up her relationship with her boyfriend at the end.

I did enjoy this book very much. Recommend.

I received a copy of this book from the publisher in exchange for a fair and honest review. All opinions expressed in this review are my own.

Once Upon a Twilight says

A teenager lost in the midst of life and its trials and tribulations. Trying to get by after her mother dies Sovern takes a vow of silence of sorts. Wanting to be able to release her pain in destruction and not caring she one day realizes that isn't really how she should be handling things.

I feel like everyone who reads this book will be able to relate to it. I lost my grandmother almost a year ago, and while reading this I kept feeling as if this book was put there to help me. This is a great story about learning how to deal with life. No matter how bad things get - or how rock bottom you reach - you can always get back to yourself and on top of the game.

I feel that Sovern is a strong character whom is very relatable. And while I haven't lost my mother, I'm able to feel her pain through Sappenfield's writing. Sappenfield has a way with words that puts the reader right in her character's emotions and shoes. I enjoyed that about this book. - Bri

Aditi says

"Don't time travel into the past, roaming through the nuances as if they can change. Don't bookmark pages you've already read."

----James Altucher

Heather Sappenfield, an American award-winning author, pens a gripping YA tale, *Life at the Speed of Us* that unfolds the story of a teenage high school girl, who after the death of her mother in an accident, chooses to become silent and to seek solace under the company of her badass boyfriend, but another accident leaves her out of the world in a different era, somewhere in the long forgotten past.

Synopsis:

Silence is safe. Fate is not.

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Life at the Speed of Us weaves dyslexia, math, cutting-edge science, genius, and love into a young woman's reluctant journey toward grace.

Sovern decides to stop talking at all, after surviving a car crash that killed her dear mother, as she blamed her own voice for the cause of it. That eventually distances her relationship with her father. To seek comfort, she even spends her time under the company of a bad guy, named, Gage, who used to provide her with booze and drugs. But a skiing accident leaves her curious about space and time as she meets a guy who intrigues her with the idea of quantum physics, the ideas about parallel universe, the dimension concept (*think Interstellar, the movie!*). Soon, Sovern makes up her mind to travel back in time so that she could reunite with her dead mother.

Firstly, I must say, the author has introduced her readers with a rarely used subject, i.e., quantum physics to explain the facts and fiction about time traveling, which really kept me glued and engaged. The writing of the author is fascinating, yet at times, there are too much technical jargon, that made the story to divert from it's main story line. The narrative as usual overshadowed by the use of too much rules and theorems of quantum physics, but in general, it is interesting. The pacing is bit slow as the story develops at a snail's pace.

The characters are well-developed and are kept closer to reality. The main characters, Sovern, at times annoyed me, and at times made me fall for her bravery and intelligence. Sovern is suffering from grief and her way of dealing with it is very much inspired from reality and I liked how the author compassionately justified Sovern's shifting demeanor. The rest of the characters are captivating enough to keep the readers on their edges. Although the characters aren't that evolving in nature.

The concept that is used is quite unique and highly enlightening for the readers. And everything, all the scientific aspects have been descriptively depicted by the author into this story. The romance is sweet and the author has portrayed it with lots of emotions that will make the readers feel for the characters.

Overall, this is a compelling book of time-travel centered around a teen love story.

Verdict: *An intelligent fiction!*

Courtesy: *Thanks to the author, Heather Sappenfield, for giving me an opportunity to read and review her novel.*

Cynthia (Bingeing On Books) says

I received this ARC from NetGalley in exchange for my honest review.

I have been procrastinating with this review, mainly because I don't have any strong feelings for this book, one way or the other.

The book was extremely slow and I felt zero connection with the main character. It had some paranormal elements that I wasn't expecting, such as time travel. It's hard to imagine that I could be bored by a book with time travel and a girl dealing with the grief of her mother, but I was. Maybe it was all the quantum physics. The author did a great job of dumbing down the stuff, so it's not like I didn't understand it. But there was just so much of it and very little in terms of character development with Sovern. Early on in the book, Sovern hints that she stopped speaking because she blamed her voice for the car crash that killed her mother. But then for some reason, an accident on a ski lift inspires her to start talking again. She never fully explained what happened the night her mom died, so I never got the whole no talking thing. And since she started speaking again pretty soon in the book, I didn't really care that there was a time when she refused to.

There was a boyfriend who was supposed to be a bad boy, but he reformed about five minutes after the book started. There was also some talk of reincarnation and soul mates, but since Gage was only in a handful of scenes throughout the whole book, I didn't sense any chemistry and I didn't care if they ended up together or not. While I understood the concept of the alternate realities and time travel stuff, I did not understand the whole plot, or lack thereof. There didn't seem to be a point to any of it. The whole book was kind of a wash. I can't even really think of anything else to say because, once again, I DID NOT CARE. I had to force myself

to even finish it.

Rekha says

I don't even remember anything. I'm pretty sure I sat there for 2 hours straight reading words but not taking them in. I just couldn't.

Anastasia says

This book blew my mind. Point blank.

I love when novels incorporate things like this novel did with physics. Even though most of it went right over my head (and I can't speak to its accuracy), I thought it was a facet that made the story stronger. Also loved the fact that Sovern was dyslexic. I could just be reading to wrong books, but that's something I don't see often.

INDIGENOUS REPRESENTATION! RESPECTFULLY DONE! Can we just slow clap it out for that? As an indigenous woman myself, this made me really happy to see.

I also thought that most of the character relationship dynamics were well executed. Except Gage. I understand his purpose in the story and thought that was well executed up until the last chapter. Preferably, we never would have heard from him again, but that's more my feelings about him as a character than his purpose in the novel. At least we got closure.

I'm also not sure how I feel about that last chapter. My concerns are certainly not enough to dock any stars, but something about it didn't feel totally....complete.

Sovern's relationships with her parents were the best part of this novel for me, hands down. Very realistic betrayals. Sovern's characterization as a whole was brilliant.

I picked up *The View From Who I Was* recently and now I can't wait to check it out. Sappenfield's writing is definitely my cup of tea.
