

"Thoughtful, restrained (yet very sexy) . . . Merullo captures what it feels like when you meet 'the one'—and what you're willing to do to hold onto that person." —*The New York Times*



A LITTLE
LOVE STORY

A Novel

ROLAND MERULLO

A Little Love Story

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A Little Love Story Roland Merullo

In *A Little Love Story*, Roland Merullo—winner of the Massachusetts Book Award and the Maria Thomas Fiction Award—has created a sometimes poignant, sometimes hilarious tale of attraction and loyalty, jealousy and grief. It is a classic love story—with some modern twists.

Janet Rossi is very smart and unusually attractive, an aide to the governor of Massachusetts, but she suffers from an illness that makes her, as she puts it, “not exactly a good long-term investment.” Jake Entwhistle is a few years older, a carpenter and portrait painter, smart and good-looking too, but with a shadow over his romantic history. After meeting by accident—literally—when Janet backs into Jake’s antique truck, they begin a love affair marked by courage, humor, a deep and erotic intimacy . . . and modern complications.

Working with the basic architecture of the love story genre, Merullo—a former carpenter known for his novels about family life—breaks new ground with a fresh look at modern romance, taking liberties with the classic design, adding original lines of friendship, spirituality, and laughter, and, of course, probing the mystery of love.

A Little Love Story Details

Date : Published August 8th 2006 by Vintage (first published 2005)

ISBN : 9781400032556

Author : Roland Merullo

Format : Paperback 288 pages

Genre : Fiction, Romance, Contemporary

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From Reader Review A Little Love Story for online ebook

Lynn says

On the face of it, and given the title, this would normally be the type of book I would shy away from. The last two books by Roland Merullo were so outstanding though, that when this was on the shelf at the library, I just had to take it home. I am so glad I did. Jake is a painter/carpenter with a tragic past. Janet is one of the governor's top aides with a seemingly tragic future. Sounds like time to reach for the Dramamine, right? And in other hands, that might be the case. In Merullo's grip, however, the reader can relax and be entertained. His descriptions of physical things, as well as emotional ones are humorous, real, and true. When he describes a season, you want to look out the window to assure yourself of the reality of our own world. Often when he describes a common human emotional situation the reader is startled to recognize themselves, and to identify with the character on a level where they might otherwise have felt they were alone. He takes the small, everyday feelings, and the big, sort of cosmic ones, and expresses them in a way that makes one feel as if that was exactly the way they had always wished to explain things. This is not smack-you-upside-the-head writing but rather slice of life, simple and satisfying. Interesting characters, an uncommon twist to a perhaps familiar story-line, and nice Boston setting all add up to another winner for Merullo.

Carol says

Half way through this story, I realized I was reading the wrong book. Now how bad is that? Somewhere last week I read an accolade about Breakfast with the Buddha by Roland Merullo. To make a long story short by the time I plucked it off our library shelves, I had A Little Love Story in hand. Right author, wrong title.

Jake has sworn off sex for a year after his girlfriend is killed in the Pennsylvania 9/11 flight. Stepping out for a donut his car is hit by Janet, an aide to the governor. Jake immediately becomes besotted with Janet and asks her out on a date. Janet calls Jake her Joe Date and their first outing is a head over heels disaster, but in a funny way. They agree to see each other again and a romance begins. Establishing trust, Janet shares with Jake that she has CF, Cystic Fibrosis. Under less skilled narration this could have been just one sad story. Like real life, Merullo faces the challenges of these two lovers. It made me laugh, it made me cry, it made me think. Somewhere within its' pages I started thinking Love Story by Segal but then, I said, no; better! Merullo has a nice way with words, with humor, with feelings, with life. Satisfying.

So though I thought I got the wrong book, I actually got the right book. Funny how that happens.

Read It Forward says

My very favorite love story. Unsentimental, without cliché, Roland Merullo's novel goes to the heart of what it means to love someone. A great choice for book groups - lots to discuss, including the male narrator, who presents his love with a raw honesty that's moving and absolutely unique.

Kim says

Loved, Loved, Loved this book will not be getting rid of it !!I just read it about 2 weeks ago and already I am ready to read it again .In fact I am going to try some of Merullo's other titles !!

Jan Risher says

A stranger sent this book to me. I thought it was because he or she thought I would like the book. In that sense, she was right. I enjoyed the book much more than I expected. The story shouldn't work, but it does. When I got to the last page of the book, much to my surprise, the stranger who sent it has written a note, in a type of handwriting that can only be described as "grandmotherly." The appearance of the note jolted me. I had no idea it was there until I turned the page.

It said:

In the spring of 2007, our sweet, granddaughters, Elyse and Alaina, were diagnosed with cystic fibrosis. May they witness a cure in their lifetimes.

If you've read the book, you get it. I write a weekly column for my local newspaper. This grandmother was doing what she could -- through a simple book -- to help educate others about the plight of her grandchildren. Her effort touched me deeply. And I pray that someone out there does find a cure for cystic fibrosis for all the little Elyses and Alainas out there.

Katie says

I loved that it was a very realistically modern love story. There's nothing mushy gushy about it. It dealt with real life issues and the effects on people and relationships.

Ingrid says

I have read a few of Merullo's books and have always enjoyed them very much. I think that Merullo is a wonderful writer and really brings his characters alive. This book did not disappoint. Jake meets Janet Rossi after a year of grieving for his girlfriend who died on 9/11. He and Janet fall in love, but Janet is very ill with cystic fibrosis. After a few months together it is clear that her lungs are giving out. This is the kind of story that could be very sappy or become a soap opera, but it never does. The story comes across as very real. I thought that the ending was really effective too.

Hannah Petosa says

I really don't know how I feel about this book as I got towards the end. I loved the story and the author's writing style is pure talent! I would recommend this to anyone who needs a love story without complete mush and sadness. I am unhappy with the ending, but I understand why it ended the way it did.

Annike Timmermans says

This is a gem of a book, so honest and sincere and at times also quite funny.
And yes, as someone else mentioned, when you finished, read the prologue again.

Bethany says

Definitely little.

Grace says

I read through 172 pages of a 270 odd pages of this book when a vague memory surfaced..
That I had indeed read this book a few years back, disliked it at precisely the same page !

There are parts of the book that read well and I had suffered the protagonists up to a point..
till I told myself, that I was under no compulsion to finish the book.

Juli Timney says

I liked this book, although I didn't think I would as it is a rather depressing story of a terminal disease.
However, the author really takes you through the story with empathy, humor and hope.

Judym says

This is a lovely story about two lonely people who date, have difficulties and fall in love. The characters are quirky. There is something to learn from all of them. This is the fourth book I have read by this author.

Laura says

I loved this book. Although some of the reviews I read equated it to Erich Segal's "Love Story" from the 70s (which I read ages ago and even saw the movie), I think it has so much more to offer. I wasn't quite sure what to make of the first opening chapters, but found myself eventually glued to the story. I loved the quirky sense of humor of the main character, the several references to Greek Americans, the medical aspects of the book, as well as how the story took place in Boston (lots of references to Beacon Hill, Newbury Street, the Charles River, etc). It is a sad love story of a man overcoming the loss of his girlfriend after 9/11 and a

young woman who has battled cystic fibrosis her entire life. It's interesting how the relationship of these two souls develops into something that is truly remarkable. After finishing the book, you have to go back and reread the prologue. I highly recommend this one and am curious about other novels by this local author.

Melanie says

I liked it. Just what I needed, a bit of fluff. This story is the title, A Little Love Story. There is some sadness though, one of the main characters has a terminal disease and there is a tie-in to the 911 tragedy. I didn't cry though. I guess I'm not in a weepy phase right now. The main character, Jake, has a best friend, Gerard, who had me chuckling out loud at times. The ending probably pisses some people off :-). Not a bad read if you're looking for this type of story.

John says

One of my favorites. Very touching story with great characters. I found it difficult to put down. The surface story about two lonely people who almost seem desperate develops to expose a painful history and joy filled albeit quirky relationship in the present. If you've ever wasted time dwelling on the past or over planning the future this book can help show you how to be grounded and appreciative of the present.

Amy says

This is the fourth or so book I have read by Merullo. I was not particularly fond of Golfing With God. I really liked American Savior, and I would have to say that this book probably ties for first place as my favorite Merullo book, Breakfast With Buddha.

This book was not as heavy on spirituality as some of his other books and didn't hold a lot of answers, but it reminded me that no matter how hard the situation is, no matter how hard the battle, you cannot give up.

I literally had to go back and read the first page of the book 3 times after finishing it to make sure that I got the ending right.

Another great thing is that Merullo books are quick reads. Started and finished in one day.

Jane says

One of the best books I have read this year. Poignant and moving without being trite or sappy. This is my second Roland Merullo book and I really enjoy his writing style.

Maria says

I enjoyed this but it was also torture. The story itself is heartbreaking and to top it off, the ending really left me hanging.

Amy says

This one was hard for me to get fully into. Perhaps it has more to say about me than it does the author. Personally, I could not be on a date with someone who was coughing so badly that they required long enough in the restroom for me to think they've left me mid-date and not ask a single question upon their return. I couldn't suspend my disbelief that Jake was that pure a soul.

However, by the end I was drawn in - and again, perhaps it has more to say about me and my experiences. I know a live organ donor, and I cannot imagine doing it (Am I inherently selfish? Who knows). The last part about the donor was interesting to me as it was a bit of insight into someone I know.

Overall though, I think I preferred Breakfast with Buddah and The Talk Funny Girl over this one.
