



The Story of Us

Dani Atkins

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A gripping love story from the bestselling author of *Fractured*.

Emma Marshall can't wait to marry her childhood sweetheart, Richard. But then a tragic accident changes everything, and introduces a stranger, Jack, into her life. Gorgeous and mysterious, Jack is like no-one Emma has met before. But Richard is the man she loves...

Two different men.

Two different destinies.

How will Emma end her story?

The Story of Us Details

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From Reader Review *The Story of Us* for online ebook

Emma says

Horrific.

Carol [Goodreads Addict] says

The Story of Us is the second book by Dani Atkins. It was first released in the UK last year and is due out in June here in the U.S. Her first book, *Then and Always* was a completely wonderful book. So I had high expectations for this second one. And let me tell you, it did not disappoint.

Just when you think you are exactly where you want to be, that your life is going in just the direction it was meant to, life has a way of turning everything upside down. One little moment in time can change the entire path your future is set to take.

Emma Marshall is a twenty seven year old woman who was just embarking on a successful career when she decided she needed to go home to help her Dad take care of her ill mother. After coming home and reuniting with her two best friends, she also rekindled her romance with her childhood sweetheart, Richard. They soon became engaged and the wedding is just two weeks away. It's the night of the bachelorette party as I would call it or 'hen' party as she calls it. A tragic event that night changes the entire course of Emma's life. A tragedy that only two of the three best friends would walk away from.

Jack just happened to be on the road that night. He is the one who saved Emma's life. A bond was formed that night between Jack and Emma, a bond that neither of them could understand but it was there none-the-less.

“How is it possible to love one man and feel so mysteriously connected to another at the same time? Do I feel this way because Jack saved my life?”

Emma and Richard are forced to postpone the wedding to deal with the aftermath of the tragedy. As time goes on, though, secrets are slowly revealed, secrets that shake the very foundation Emma's life was built upon. Her trust in everyone is shaken.

“The three people whom I trusted more than anyone else in the world had each betrayed me, in one way or another, and the bitter taste of deceit seared my throat whenever I thought about it.”

This book is such a beautifully told story of dealing with not only grief, but betrayal. The growing

relationship between Emma and Jack is her saving grace. But Jack has to return to the States when his research for a book he is writing is complete. And Emma's life is in England. Throughout the book, we get little snippets of the ending, but until the very final pages, we don't really know how it ends. And when you get there, you will be shocked.

This book is full of emotion. It's full of friendship, love, betrayal, forgiveness and hope. Dani Atkins has a way of weaving a tale like no other. Her books are not easily forgotten. And I can assure you, I will not soon forget this one.

Yv says

Terwijl ik de laatste bladzijde omsloeg, veegde ik stiekem de traan die over mijn wang rolde weg en trok ik de mouwen van mijn vest omlaag om de mientietjes te verbergen. Ik weet niet wat het precies is wat mij zo heeft gegrepen, maar feit is dat ik het zeer zeker niet heb drooggehouden. Bij *Fractured*, het eerste boek dat ik van Dani Atkins las, had ik hetzelfde gevoel.

Als de vriendinnen Emma, Amy en Caroline terugrijden van de gezellige bachelorette van Emma, staat er ineens een dier op de weg. Ze moeten uitwijken en krijgen een heftig ongeluk. Amy is uit de auto geslagen, Caroline verkeert in shock en Emma kan geen kant op omdat de auto over haar benen verbogen is. Terwijl Caroline gaat kijken hoe het met Amy gaat, wordt Emma gered door de Amerikaanse auteur Jack. Ik kan nu nog veel meer over het plot gaan vertellen, maar dat zal alleen maar betekenen dat ik spoilers ga plaatsen en dat is zonde. Het is een boek waar je eigenlijk gewoon blind in zou moeten gaan.

Atkins weet wederom een emotioneel verhaal neer te zetten, wat mij in elk geval van begin tot eind bij mijn strot heeft vastgegrepen. Niet alleen liefde en familie spelen een grote rol in het boek, maar ook meerdere manieren van verraad, vergeving en omgaan met problemen. Vooral Emma wordt in het boek verraden en de manier waarop ze dit een plaats in haar leven geeft en ermee om leert te gaan is benijdenswaardig. Haar moeder kampt met dementie en er wordt op een mooie manier weergegeven wat voor impact dit op liefhebbers heeft.

Helaas is het niet allemaal rozengeur en manenschijn, want het plot van het boek is helaas voorspelbaar, alhoewel Atkins toch goed haar best heeft de gedaan hier verandering in te brengen. Ze sluimert af en toe een vaagheid door het verhaal heen om de lezer op het verkeerde been te zetten. Niet iedereen zal hiervan houden, maar ik geef toe dat ik het heerlijk vond :-).

The Story of Us is een mooi romantisch verhaal dat goede en harde elementen in zich heeft, wat de teleurstelling op het voorspelbare plot op een goede manier verzacht. **4***

Shannon says

I really enjoyed reading this book, but it honestly wasn't something spectacular. I liked definitely liked the storyline, and even though the ending was not exactly how I predicted it to be, the book was rather predictable. Regarding the spectacularity, this book wasn't anywhere near *Fractured*, sadly enough.

Patrizia says

3.5 Sterne für viel Gefühl

Kiran says

Is every Dani Atkins book pretty much based on the same weak naïve premise?! This is the second one I've read within the space of a few weeks (as they were all on the 99p daily Kindle deal). And it's yet another tale of a close-knit group of school friends, who on the eve of some change in direction for their lives (high school graduation, wedding etc) are involved in some type of car accident where one dies and one is scarred physically and emotionally. There ensues some sort of revealing about a hidden affair within the group, someone breaking off an engagement, finding another man blah blah blah

Julie Watkins says

i loved dani Atkins first novel fractured so much I gave it 5 stars. I was excited to begin this. at first I wondered if it was the same book or some sort of follow up. when I realised it wasn't I began to feel it was in no way as good as the first novel and entirely chic lit. disappointed I read on. neat little twist at the end but basically quite contrived. and and this is my pet hate... it finished at 83%!!

Hildy says

This is my first book by Dani Atkins. I'd not heard of her before but my friend was reading this so I thought I'd pick it up as well.

Overall, I was entertained. I don't think it will be one to stick with me for too long but I was definitely interested as I was reading it. The best part was that Atkins created a story with really good, kind men. It's nice not to read about chest-pounding, over-bearing alphas sometimes. The first half had me appreciating the way she gradually revealed her story. It was reminiscent of the style of Liane Moriarty, but not as seamless and polished. Unfortunately, I read this right on the heels of reading *What Alice Forgot*, *The Glass Castle* and *Room*, which were all completely gripping stories. It was hard not to compare those books to the quality of this as I was reading it. Having said that, I think I would pick up another book of Dani Atkins. The last 20% became contrived and it made me wish that she hadn't felt the need to make those choices with her story. I think the story would have been stronger without it but I'd still recommend it.

Steffi says

3.5

Ich habe "Fractured", den Debütroman von Dani Atkins, absolut geliebt und es war eines meiner Jahreshighlights im Jahr 2014, dementsprechend hoch waren meine Erwartungen an ihren zweiten Roman.

Nach dem Lesen bin ich nun etwas hin und her gerissen, denn die Geschichte hat mir zwar gefallen, aber sie konnte mich leider nicht so tief berühren wie "Fractured".

Ein Grund dafür ist vermutlich, dass man gleich zu Beginn mitten ins Geschehen geworfen wird, die Charaktere noch nicht wirklich kennt und somit konnte ich nicht so mitfühlen bzw. die Ereignisse haben mich nicht so berührt wie sie es vielleicht zu einem späteren Zeitpunkt getan hätten.

Im Laufe der Geschichte wachsen die Charaktere einem schon ein wenig ans Herz, aber es ist auch ein wenig vorhersehbar. Zum Ende gab es zwar noch mal einen Moment, an dem ich gezweifelt habe, ob die Geschichte wirklich so weitergeht wie erwartet. Insgesamt ist die Handlung aber etwas an mir vorbeigeplätschert, ohne mich wirklich mitreißen zu können.

Der Schreibstil von Dani Atkins ist aber wieder wunderschön, so dass ich auch alles weitere lesen werden, was sie veröffentlicht.

Odette Knappers says

De boeken van Dani Atkins vind ik erg bijzonder. Ze schrijft niet bijzonder goed of knap vind ik, op enkele momenten in haar boeken na - die me dan zo enorm aangrijpen dat er een ugly cry aanval van meerdere minuten volgt.

Dit boek, dit verhaal, vooral het begin, gaf me echt een brok in de keel. Je zou maar in die situatie zitten, mijn hart brak al een beetje.

Ondanks de voorspelbaarheid van het verhaal bleef de brok in mijn keel zitten. Best knap. Ik had niet zoveel met de love triangle (#teamjack), maar ik vond het wel mooi dat het steeds werd opgehaald met die stukjes tussendoor. Deed me wel steeds afvragen voor wie ze zou gaan.

En toen kwam dat laatste hoofdstuk. Heel mooi en ontroerend. En ik dacht op de ene-laatste bladzijde 'oh en de schrijfster heeft dit keer mijn hart in mijn lijf laten zitten. Mooi verhaal, maar ik had nog wel zo een denderend einde verwacht, jammer eigenlijk.'

Nou, ik kreeg precies waar ik om vroeg op de laatste bladzijde. Ik kan de exacte combinatie van twee woorden aanwijzen die mij doormidden braken en die in een heftige, lange huilbui resulteerden.

(view spoiler)

Dus, ze deed het weer. En weer zo goed en knap. Ondanks dat er veel aan te merken is op de kwaliteit van de rest van het boek, is het die laatste pagina die het de 5* dubbel en dwars waard maakt. Want er is maar één schrijfster die dit met me kan doen.

Megan • Reading Books Like a Boss (book blog) says

I was absolutely hooked on this story in the beginning but didn't like how the author made the reader like and dislike the two love interests for the sake of convenience.

Two weeks from getting married to her longtime on-and-off boyfriend Richard, Emma is in a car accident with two of her best friends. The accident is the catalyst for the new path her life will now take. The man who saved her life—Jack—left an impression on her and she can't seem to stop thinking about him and soon finds herself falling for him. Outside her love life, you learn that Emma has pressed pause on her career in marketing to help her ailing mother. The Alzheimer's disease continues to progress, slowly stealing the person Emma knows as her mother. After the accident, Emma uncovers secrets that make her question everything, torn between the life she wants and the life she had mapped out.

The beginning of this book was so good. I was riveted and couldn't put it down. The way the car crash and the moments afterward were written had me glued to the pages. I also really liked the developing romance between Emma and Jack.

One of the themes I liked about this novel was the strength and bond of friendship. Caroline, Amy, Emma, and Richard had been best friends for many, many years. In the face of tragedy, they clung to one another and the memories that comfort them. I really admired the way that Richard cared for not just Emma but her family too.

What kept me from rating this book higher and from enjoying it more was the way the author toyed with your opinions of the two male leads. In the beginning, Richard came across as selfish, jealous, and irritating. It was almost like the author really wanted the reader to dislike him so that you favored Jack more.

Meanwhile, Jack was portrayed as the patient, kind, thoughtful, and heroic type who takes Emma on romantic walks to the lake. Then later in the novel, the author begins to rehabilitate Richard's character so that you like him while tearing down Jack's character.

I did appreciate that this wasn't the type of love triangle romance where the heroine is annoyingly going back and forth between the guys, unable to make a choice. It felt like it was the reader, rather than the heroine, who was tossed between the two guys because of the reader's perception of the male characters shifted so often at times of convenience. I didn't like the author trying to make the choice for me. The end result just felt far too contrived, and really I was hoping that she didn't choose either of them.

** I received an advance copy from the publisher in exchange for an honest review.*

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★★UPCOMING BOOK RELEASES★★

Astrid says

Sehr, sehr, sehr vorhersehbar. Ich wusste nach den ersten 10 Seiten um was es gehen würde. Es gab keinen wirklichen Wendepunkt, alles lief genau auf das hinaus was ich vermutet hatte. Keine Kreativität oder Spannung, weil die Hinweise quasi Neonleuchtreklamen waren. Echt schade.

Megan Readinginthesunshine says

I am a MASSIVE fan of Dani Atkins and her writing. Her first novel, Fractured, was one of the BEST books I read in 2013, so with this in mind I was eagerly anticipating her latest novel!

Emma Marshall is so excited to marry Richard, her childhood sweetheart. But when there is a tragic accident, this changes everything – and unexpectedly brings a stranger, Jack, into her life. Jack is gorgeous and mysterious, like no one Emma has ever met before, but Richard is the man she loves. With two different men, there are two different destinies...

Wow. I was hoping for something good given how I had fallen in love with Dani's first novel and The Story Of Us did not disappoint one bit.

I LOVED Emma as a character – she is very down to earth and I really liked that – it made her so relateable and likeable. I truly wanted to be her friend for the book, to hug her when she needed it, to give her advice and to help her on her journey. I spent the book really rooting for her and hoping so much for a great outcome for her.

I liked that I had absolutely no idea where the story would go, I like to be surprised and I really was, I didn't expect any of what I read, and it was moving and heartbreaking and wonderful all at the same time. I felt so many emotions reading this book, and Dani Atkins is such a talented writer to be able to stir up and bring out all of these feelings in her characters and her readers too. The Story Of Us is so BEAUTIFULLY written, wow.

I'm very keen not to ruin this for everyone, as it is best to go into this book without knowing too much and experience everything as it comes. I'm not ashamed to say that again I cried at a novel written by Dani, she turns me into an emotional wreck but the experience is SO worth it – so as I said in my review for Fractured – buy some tissues too along with The Story Of Us, and just cry all your feelings out! The Story Of Us is a very touching, moving and emotional novel that will take you on such a journey – it is full of love, life and I really recommend this.

Tanya (Girl Plus Books) says

REVIEW TO BE POSTED ON RELEASE DATE: JUNE 9, 2015

*ARC provided by NetGalley and Random House/Ballantine Books in exchange for an honest review.

4 STARS

The Story of Us is so much more than meets the eye. I was expecting a pleasant contemporary romance but what I got was an emotional tale that touches on themes of grief, infidelity, love, friendship, family, and so much more.

Emma is days away from marrying childhood sweetheart Richard but the night of her bachelorette party takes a tragic turn when an auto accident ends with a horrific loss. Thankfully, Emma was pulled from the wreckage by Jack, who happened upon the scene of the accident, and quite literally saved her life. The impact of the accident is far-reaching as truths are revealed even as Emma is struggling to deal with her grief.

The aftermath of that night includes the postponement of Emma's wedding to Richard. As Emma struggles to adjust to life after the accident, she finds herself drawn to Jack and feeling a connection to him that has her questioning her feelings for her fiancé. Is it gratitude she feels toward Jack for saving her life... or something more?

Dani Atkins is a remarkable storyteller and I was captivated from the very beginning. What I loved most about The Story of Us is how completely realistic it felt. It wasn't angsty or melodramatic but instead felt totally plausible. Emma was faced with situations where there were no easy answers. Atkins never took the easy way out by creating heroes and villains. Characters were imbued with human flaws and weaknesses but also love and compassion and kindness. There were times I truly wanted to dislike certain characters and it's a credit to Dani's writing that I was often conflicted and felt empathy for those same characters.

The few flash-forward sections interspersed throughout the book were so cleverly done. Kudos to Atkins for those just-vague-enough snippets which kept me guessing and ultimately led to a conclusion that had me shedding tears.

My only quibble: I would loved to have seen the aftermath of Emma's decision and been able to enjoy more of the couples' life together beyond the journey of them coming together. But this in no way detracted from my reading experience. The story was realistic and heartbreaking and heartwarming and I loved it.

The Story of Us is top-notch contemporary romance/women's fiction with substance and I highly recommend it.

Paula Sealey says

I really wish I hadn't left this book languishing on my Kindle for so long, because it hands down has become one of my favourite romance reads this year.

Emma and her best friends Amy and Caroline are involved in a tragic accident on their way home from Emma's Hen party. Jack, an American visitor stops to help, and ends up saving Emma's life. Strangely drawn

to each other, Emma begins to question her relationship with Richard, her childhood sweetheart. Their wedding is postponed to allow them time to cope with the accident's outcome, and during this period, a secret is revealed that devastates Emma, pushing her further away from him. Does her heart lie with Jack or Richard? Well, Dani Atkins takes you on a fantastic, somewhat emotional journey to find out!

Loss, grief, illness, friendship and love are topics covered in a beautifully sensitive way. I instantly adored Jack's character, and wished a happy outcome for Emma. Cleverly structured to prevent you from guessing the conclusion, this is a super book I will no doubt read again in the future.
