Below are the complete reviews, written by Lovereading members.

Elisabeth Thomas

I challenge anyone to read this book and not be moved by it. I know that this book will stay with me for a long time!

Twenty four year old Lucy is desperately ill and has been for as long as she can remember. Urgently needing a heart transplant so that in order for her to live somebody must die. All her family want is for that call to come through saying a heart has been found but whilst they would be rejoicing they know deep down another family will be mourning.

Helen, Phoebe and Julia have been friends since they were teenagers. They have supported each other through everything from an unplanned pregnancy, a grandmother with Alzheimers and the trauma of infertility - they know that when the emergency call goes out they will drop everything and rush to their friends side. They think they know everything about each others lives....but do they? As circumstances become more stressful cracks begin to appear as everything they have been bottling up threatens to boil over.

One tragic accident is all that it takes to bring Lucy, Helen, Phoebe and Julia crashing into each other and none of their lives will ever be the same again.

Wow! The twist at the end is superb - I’m sure I muttered out loud 'Oh my goodness!' right at the end.

An amazing book which I throughly enjoyed. I cannot believe how Amanda Brooke managed to so accurately portray the feelings that Julia would have...
been going through as a woman unable to conceive - I actually felt as if I was reading about my own feelings. I challenge anyone to read this book and not be moved by it. I know that this book will stay with me for a long time!

Follow Elisabeth on Twitter: @ListheBookworm

Celia Cohen

A very readable book about the friendship between women.

An enjoyable book about the friendship between three women whose characters are skilfully drawn by Amanda Brooke. I found myself alternating between liking them, disliking them, sympathising with them and getting impatient with them. Woven into the story is the issue of organ donation and the effect that has on all the parties involved. Yes, a very readable book.

Helen Appleby

This was an enchanting novel and so hard to put down I read it in almost one sitting. It covers many emotions as it tells the story of three best friends, one tragic accident and one heart.

A gripping sensitive story of three best friends and the stories that have bonded them together over the years and a 24 Year old girl Lucy who is waiting for a heart transplant, in order for her to gain her new heart one of the others has to sacrifice theirs which one will it be? The book takes the reader through an emotional journey of joy, happiness, tragedy and sorrow. I was in tears by the end, it is a story that will stay with you and haunt you for a while after reading and will have you hooked from beginning to end and wanting more from this author.

Follow Helen on Twitter: @Helenrachel123

Sarah Webb

One for your suitcase.

Lucy is waiting for a heart transplant. Julia, Helen and Phoebe are best friends, and it’s clear from chapter one that their worlds will come colliding into contact with Lucy’s. The accident narrative opens the book and it’s woven through the story without giving too much away about what actually happens. It’s clear that the friends have been hiding secrets from each other over the years. The
secrets are revealed as the story progresses. The book covers some serious topics but in a light way, so it’s one for your suitcase.

Sophia Ufton

What a beautiful story. It was amazingly written had me in tears of sorrow and joy...

Lucy is waiting for a heart, there is nothing more the doctors can do for her. One day she gets the call and she is filled with both joy and sorrow because she gets a heart which means someone no longer needed theirs.

3 friends Julia, Helen and Phoebe, 1 tragic accident, the bonds of friendship are going to be tested but who will give the gift of life?

Annie Day

A tale of friendship, love and sacrifice that keeps you guessing until the very end.

The past and the present are interwoven in this engaging story which centres on the longstanding friendship between 3 women. At first you get the impression that they are completely inseparable. However, all is not as it seems, and this becomes very apparent when the reawakening of some unfinished romantic history threatens to undermine the dynamics of the group and the bonds between them.

The Goodbye Gift is an enjoyable book, and I was intrigued to know the end of the story. It would have been nice to see a few more angles to the characters than just their infertility/pregnancy/parenthood/caring responsibilities, but I still felt that I had an insight into each woman’s personality by the end of the tale.

Follow Annie on Twitter: @dayann1

Nicola Edwards

Compelling and emotional, I absolutely loved this book and highly recommend it!

The book drew me in straightaway as I really liked Amanda Brooke’s style of writing. It tells the stories of three best friends; Helen, Phoebe and Julia and intersperses this with the story of Lucy, in her early twenties who is desperate
for a heart transplant.

As well as the story of Lucy that is mentioned throughout the book, there are also short extracts of the present in which a tragic accident has occurred involving the three friends. These extracts add a compelling nature to the book and really makes you want to find out what has happened to lead to these dreadful circumstances.

The three characters of Helen, Lucy and Phoebe are written beautifully and their reactions and feelings feel so real, that it makes me identify with both my own emotions and feelings and that of my female friendship groups. Each woman is going through a different stage of their lives, but the friendship bond between them remains strong, until events start to test this friendship to the limit.

I really enjoyed this book, it kept me hooked the whole way through and by the end it left me in a messy, emotional state! It was such a powerful storyline that will stay with me for a while. I now can’t wait to read another book by Amanda Brooke.

Jane Brown

Tragedy, friendship - this author packs a punch. A great story with an incredible twist.

Wow gripped and super glued from page one - essentially this book is about three best friends-Helen, Phoebe and Julia and intertwined with the story is Lucy who is in her early twenties and in desperation for a heart transplant.

There is tragedy brings the friends together -the writing is so powerful and compelling with feelings that stretch out to you, these are so real.

The book comes tumbling down at the end with a twist I was not expecting.

I cannot believe this is the author's sixth book and I am just reading her first. Due for publication in August which will make this a great summer read.

http://browniebookworld.blogspot.co.uk/

Emily Wright

Surprisingly uplifting, this celebration of friendship and new life left me with a tear in my eye and hope in my heart.

The Goodbye Gift opens with a fleeting look at a tragic accident before
rewinding to tell the story of Julia, Helen and Phoebe. These three friends each experience challenges, which the author explores compassionately. From Julia’s fertility heartache to Phoebe’s duty to her over controlling Gran, their stories alone would be an impactful and insightful read.

The theme of organ donation makes The Goodbye Gift stand out from other novels of its genre by adding extra poignancy and depth. One of Helen’s patients is Lucy, who has spent her life facing the challenge of heart problems and is currently on the transplant list. The lives of the female characters are skilfully interwoven, showing that people we encounter daily could be fighting battles we know nothing about.

The author does not become entangled in the minutiae of Lucy’s medical story. Amanda Brooke strikes just the right balance, with glimpses of Lucy’s life showing some of her struggles without becoming mawkish. The characters all have differing viewpoints on organ donation; the discussion this promotes would make The Goodbye Gift an emotive book group choice. I shared Lucy’s hopes for a new heart, despite the fact that someone has to lose their life for Lucy to continue living. It is this bittersweet contradiction which lies at the heart of this absorbing novel.

Helen Claire

This book is all about friendship and love between friends and family. It is also about the harm we can do to those we love through our actions. I found myself wanting to shake various characters and I suppose this is the mark of a story that grips you. Read it and see if you agree with me, I recommend you do.

Emma Caddick

A great story about the complexities of adult friendships and a reminder to never take those you love for granted.

I thoroughly enjoyed this book. It would be a perfect book to take away with you as you need to spend some time understanding the characters and their connections in the beginning. Harder if you dip in and out of it.

The story follows three friends (and one husband) taking a now and then approach chapter by chapter. So although you know something fundamental right at the beginning Amanda Brooke still keeps you guessing right until the end. It is a story about friendship, marriage, fertility, infertility, parenting,
organ donation and secrecy. One of those books to make you realise how lucky you might be and that highlights the importance of not taking those around you for granted.

A well thought out plot and convincing characters, I would recommend this for fans of Jodi Picoult and Lisa Jewell.

Wendy Stubbs

A good pick for a holiday read. Not my type of story, but found myself wanting to know more about the tangled web of the lives of 3 friends. Hidden agendas, secrets old and new make you read on.

Not sure where to start with this one, not a big fan of stories that tell two stories at once. But this has to be an exception.

Three friends grew apart, got back together and each is caught up in their own lives, each with their problems.

They agree to take a holiday of a lifetime, despite all the ups and downs of their everyday lives, none of them expected it could turn in to this!!

A very sick woman, cosseted by her Mother and feeling hopeless.

Who would have thought their paths could cross, in such a way.

A believable storyline with individual stories within. Secrets, lies and unexpected turns made this a good read. However, I found myself disappointed by the ending.

Rebecca Whymark

Excellent story of friends and the trials that they go through together.

This was an excellent book with complex characters that you can't help but love. Knowing that something is going to happen with Julia, Helen and Phoebe keeps you wanting to read to find out how their stories interlink and how Lucy will be affected. The feelings that all the characters have regarding family, infertility, past mistakes or regrets are written very well and you can relate to them very easily. A very enjoyable book to read.
Joanne Dibb

*Reading ‘The Goodbye Gift’ has reminded me what a brilliant and totally absorbing writer Amanda Brooke is, this is a story that will touch your heart and stay with you for a long time.*

An intense read from the very start Amanda Brooke’s new novel ‘The Goodbye Gift’ focuses on friendship, heartbreak and betrayal as four lives become three. Friends Helen, Phoebe and Julia have been close for most of their lives, but when Julia’s desperation for a baby begins to unravel secrets from the past can their friendship ever recover after its reached crisis point.

I found this a deeply emotional read and I loved the way it was written. Intertwined between the story of Helen, Phoebe and Julia we are introduced to Lucy who is waiting for a heart transplant and are also given glimpses of “The Accident” so you can guess where the story is heading, but what an emotional and addictive journey before we get there.

Helen, Phoebe and Julia are all very different woman but the bond between them was strong and real. Reading about the moral dilemmas they each faced in this book was incredibly fascinating, very honest and deeply moving and kept me gripped until the very end, where the twist left me shocked as I was not prepared for that ending.

*Reading ‘The Goodbye Gift’ has reminded me what a brilliant and totally absorbing writer Amanda Brooke is, this is a story that will touch your heart and stay with you for a long time.*

[www.thatthingshereads.blogspot.com](http://www.thatthingshereads.blogspot.com)

Follow Joanne on Twitter: @joanne2913

Suzanne Beney

*An interesting read about everyday lives that are all brought together with one common life-changing theme. ‘The Goodbye Gift’ tackled some interesting, and some might say controversial, topics.*

Brooke wove the story well, introducing characters and their traits throughout the book in a way that added to the story. It was quite an obvious path from the start, but the way the characters’ lives were packed full made it a page turner with a nice twist at the end.

*I think there could have been more focus on some of the key topics, particularly organ donation. It was integral to the plot, but it seemed the characters just*
brushed over it and I'd have liked to have seen this discussed and debated further.

I would certainly recommend this for those looking for a book that covers friendship dramas and the issues that everyday life presents.

**Sharon Wood**

This book looks at the lives of three friends, Julia, Helen and Phoebe, who have known each other since they were children. They know each other's lives and support each other's struggles - Helen's demands of being a single parent and her job as a nurse, Julia's desperation and frustration at being unable to conceive a baby with husband Paul, and Phoebe's tough life coping and living with her Nan who has Alzheimer's. Alongside this runs the separate story of Lucy, whose illness makes life nearly impossible and who needs to have a heart transplant to survive, together with a background story of a major accident. Secrets start to be revealed and the friend's involvement becomes more complicated before the three stories suddenly come together in a startling way.

At first I felt I had picked up a public health advice leaflet on organ transplant - it became apparent why the author feels passionate about the subject when I read her notes at the end of the book - but I did feel it was a bit too evangelical about the whole subject. The characters were a bit two dimensional too - I just didn't get any depth from them, some of the conversations were a bit twee and indeed the later revelations were all the more surprising because Julia, Helen and Phoebe seemed to be too good to be true a lot of the time. However, I didn't not enjoy the book for all that and I am sure Amanda Brooke fans will love it. **I'd recommend for teenage readers and as a holiday read.**

**Genevieve McAllister**

**A readable tale of three friends and their modern issues. Accessible and emotional - perfect for reading in one hit.**

This is a readable tale of three friends and counterpointed with the story of their accident which ramps up the suspense throughout the book. Julia, Helen and Phoebe are all facing different problems and how they deal with them – and each other – form the main focus of the book. At various points they meet Lucy, who is desperate for a new heart, and while we know that someone will end up donating their heart, the question is ‘who?’
The issues raised in this book were serious, yet Amanda Brooke’s style of writing remained easy to read, keeping the storyline moving. The minor characters in the book were interesting and I could have read more about them – Anya in particular. Overall, I found The Goodbye Gift accessible and emotional – perfect for picking up and reading in one hit.

@genmcallister

Suzanne

The Goodbye Gift is a beautiful emotional story about friendship, love, betrayal and loss.

The Goodbye Gift is a beautiful emotional story about friendship, love, betrayal and loss. I shed quite a few tears while I was reading this book. Amanda Brooke writes about difficult topics with compassion. She knows what she’s dealing with and that makes her story feel very real. It’s incredibly moving in many different ways. One of the main topics of this book is having children versus not being able to conceive them. Amanda Brooke describes this in a strong and sensitive way, while perfectly capturing the multitude of feelings that are involved, which is quite an achievement.

Amanda Brooke has written a fantastic multi-layered thought-provoking story. There are several dilemmas and there’s room for the reader to decide how to feel about certain issues and decisions. Is there a right or wrong or are there shades of grey that make certain actions forgivable? Who needs to forgive and who needs to be forgiven? It starts with something sad and it ends in the same way, while hope was my main motivator to keep reading as fast as I could. I flew through the pages, because I wanted to get the exact details of what happened before, during and after the accident. I loved that the reader roughly knows what the ending is.’

www.withloveforbooks.com

Clare Turner

An intelligent and absorbing novel about friendship and life with all its problems. Great holiday reading!

The ‘Goodbye Gift’ of the title could hardly be more momentous – it is the gift of life itself, indeed life defined in more ways than one. And in the author’s dedication - “to my son’s anonymous bone marrow donor”- there is already an
indication that this will be handled seriously.

The main narrative deals with the intertwined lives of three close friends, Julia, Helen & Phoebe. Each of them has her own troubles, and in those troubles the author raises some of the problems and questions so prevalent in our time, ranging from infertility and infidelity to organ donation and old age. Perhaps the most dominant issue is Julia’s yearning for a child, which colours all aspects of her life and relationships.

And there is also another strand to the tale – Lucy, a brave, attractive and delicate young woman is in desperate need of a new heart, and it is clear that the others will be drawn in somehow. Although from the beginning we realise that the eventual outcome cannot be positive for everyone, the journey to that point is engrossing and thought-provoking.

This is a book that could too easily be dismissed as a light entertainment – and it is certainly absorbing – but the issues are real, the characters engaging and the action moves along. A perfect read for a holiday, but no less commendable for that.

**Humaira**

*The Goodbye Gift tore out my heart- there is no way about it. It's so heartfelt and heart-wrenching.*

The Goodbye Gift tore out my heart- there is no way about it. It's so heartfelt and heart-wrenching. Amanada Brooke has outdone herself with this amazing novel. Suffice to say I love this book very much.  

https://www.instagram.com/cookie_bookie_/?hl=en

**Steph Blakey**

*This was a mesmerising story with a unique theme. I enjoyed it so much that I raced through to the end.*

I loved all of the characters with their unique struggles and the way the book switched back and forth from one story to another. The conclusion was a surprise and added to the completion of this well-written tale.