Below are the complete reviews, written by Lovereading members.

Celia Cohen

A wonderful believable book.

What a wonderful book. A beautifully written heart rending story of two people who could never quite forget each other even though they went their separate ways and made alternative lives for themselves. I read this book in one sitting, I just had to know how it ended. And what an ending too!

Susan Coleman

A beautifully written love story with huge emotional depth and intensity. A truly outstanding debut novel.

Gabe and Lucy meet on the 11th September 2001 and recognise straight away that they are Soul Mates. However, their shared experience of the Trade Centre bombings on the day they meet defines different priorities for each of them, in terms of how they want to live their lives. Over the next thirteen years they are repeatedly separated and reunited, both forming new relationships with other people, but their love for each other remains constant. This love is tested to the limit as the story develops and leads to a heart-wrenching conclusion - you will need to keep a box of tissues by your side!

The book explores the extent to which the course of peoples’ lives are predetermined by fate or whether free will can influence why one path is taken over another. Jill Santopolo beautifully captures the initial feelings of euphoria and excitement felt by Lucy as she falls in love with Gabe. She then sensitively develops their relationship to show that people are loved despite their
imperfections and that it is possible to love more than one person, and to love different people for different reasons. I really wanted to know what happened to Lucy after the story ended, and can’t wait to read more from this outstanding author.

Helen Appleby

A heart wrenching love story about the choice one women must make in this debut novel. If you enjoyed ‘One Day’ and ‘Me Before You’ then this novel is for you. This book described as a cross between ‘One Day’ and ‘Me Before You’ and it certainly lived up to expectations. I pretty much devoured this novel in one sitting and couldn’t put it down. It has many qualities that would make it into a good film. Its 11 September 2001 and the day of 9/11 and Lucy and Gabe meet at Columbia university on a day that will then go on to change both of their lives.

This novel is the story of how the next 13 years pan out and of them being torn apart from one another and brought back together again and the events which take place in between. Then Lucy is faced with a heart wrenching decision, is their love a matter of destiny or chance as she looks back on her turbulent relationship with her first love.

Such a beautiful heart rending book that will stay with me for a long time and one that I know I will read and enjoy all over again.

Victoria Halliday

The kind of book you tell yourself you’ll just read one more chapter... and suddenly you’re at the end and wishing you could go back and do it all again!

‘The Light We Lost’, by Jill Santopolo, is an addictive, un-put-downable, wonderful page turner! Lucy and Gabe meet on September 11 2001 and, a few years after meeting, have a short and very intense relationship which shapes the course of the rest of their lives. Written as Lucy telling the story of their relationship to Gabe, this is the kind of book where you keep telling yourself you’ll just read one more chapter... and then suddenly you’re at the end of the novel, cursing yourself for having powered through it all so quickly. This is a wonderful story about relationships with real, interesting characters and is a novel I’m sure I’ll go back to reading again and again and again. Can’t recommend it enough!
Sarah Jones

A captivating and absorbing love story that will leave you with a tear in your eye and a pang in your heart.

Everyone has wondered how their life could have turned out if they had made different choices. As they watch the Twin Towers fall, Lucy and Gabe meet and quickly fall in love. Over the years they cling together and are pulled apart. Lucy wonders whether they are meant to be together. Is it fate or free will? Above all, she ponders, "What if?" Their love story isn't straight forward but it is captivating and I hurried along reading, desperate to know how it would end. I loved the characters, even if I couldn't always agree with Lucy's decisions. The writing flowed well with lovely descriptions and I especially enjoyed the narrative with Lucy talking directly to Gabe. This beautiful and interesting love story really touched me and I wished the characters were real. If they had been friends of mine I felt sure I could have jumped in and helped them to sort out the issues in their relationship! But that's just wishful thinking! I would definitely recommend this book as I loved it.

Jane Brown

Beautifully written on two levels - the love story and personally what if - most readers will experience this in this book.

This book was on two levels for me the story and made me think about me and what I still think about but with a sense of good memories.

We spend our lives making what we think are informed choices, but were they good choices- we have to live with them.

This book was so beautifully written, and heart wrenching at the same time, I read this in one sitting I was entranced, wept and thought.

The story told over ten years is about two people Lucy and Gabe who meet in university. The day they met was 9/11 and that is a day most of us will never forget this shook the world.

What makes this book so special is it makes the reader think, but boy did I weep, I knew where this was going but needed to keep going. Surprisingly at times I found myself laughing as there are some comical parts to this too.

This book will be a main contender on the sunbeds this summer- well
Laura Delve

There are some books you read that just completely take your breath away and ‘The Light We Lost was one of those’.

‘The Light We Lost’ is Lucy and Gabe’s story. It's their love story but maybe not quite the love story you were expecting. They seem fated to be together, but one decision changes their course forever.

I was actually so surprised by how much I was taken by ‘The Light We Lost’. Normally I don't mind the odd romantic story, but I cannot even begin to describe just how romantic and raw this was. This is a story about true love. The joy of it, the pain of it and also about the choices and mistakes we make along the way.

I was blown away by Jill's writing, it is just so stunningly descriptive and she makes you feel like she is personally telling you the story of Lucy and Gabe. These are two characters whose love story will capture your heart. This felt like love in it’s purest form and I have never known characters that were so meant to be together. I can’t even put into words just how much their story touched a part of me that I didn’t even know existed, just such raw, real emotions.

‘The Light We Lost’ also gets you questioning so much. Is life really mapped out for you? Are there any coincidences and how much do the decisions you make in life affect your future? A surprisingly thought provoking read, it also gets you wondering about your own life and the choices you have made.

There is so much I want to say about this beautiful book, but this is one that you need to read for yourself without knowing too much beforehand.

Be prepared for heartbreak, this read is an emotional one and I don't think I have ever read one quite like it. I don't think I will be forgetting Lucy and Gabe's story in a hurry.

Tina Tse

An easy to read exploration into an all-consuming, enduring first love.

Lucy and Gabe meet on 11 September 2001 and their history is narrated to Gabe
by Lucy. Although the ending was pretty predictable, that did not stop me from wanting to read more to find out how they got there.

Several days on, I am still pondering over 'what ifs?' and the importance of being true to yourself.

Sharon Butler

A heartfelt story about "first love", choices, second chances and fate. A great easy read.

I’m not really a fan of books that talk at you and The Light We Lost does exactly that. It’s written in a way that the main character – Lucy is talking to someone. To whom she is talking is only explained at the end of the story.

This is however a real old fashioned “first love” story – about how Lucy and Gabe met, were together for a time, but due to the choices each one made, eventually were not. They do however stay in touch over the course of the book (some 13 years) and are still a part of each other’s lives in some way.

The story makes the reader question what is important in life – are one person’s dreams and ambitions more important that someone else’s?

Saying that, I can’t remember the last time I read an entire book in a day which is exactly what I did with this one. It’s easy reading and most enjoyable. I would say it’s definitely going to be on the reading lists of various book clubs. After reading, it made me wonder if there really is only ever one ‘true love’ in everyone’s life...

Carolyn Huckfield

This is an amazingly moving love story and it is one of the most accomplished first novels I have read in a long time.

The story begins in New York on the 11th September 2001. Lucy and Gabe meet in class at university in New York. It is the day the two towers are destroyed and their relationship is defined by dramatic events.

Over the next 13 years they come together and then get separated by events but their love for each other never dies. Dramatic and devastating though their relationship is it feels very real and you understand their passion. Gabe meets Lucy one last time and they will have decisions to make when he returns from his next photographic assignment. However another violent event intervenes
leaving Lucy to make one more decision about Gabe. The ending of the novel is very moving and could make you cry. This is a story of love, passion missed opportunities and tragic events. It is told by Lucy herself and it is a superb first novel.

Sarah Harper

An emotional retrospective of a once-in-a-lifetime, all consuming love.

In ‘The Light We Lost’, Lucy narrates a retrospective of her relationship with Gabe, from the moment she met him as a university student, 13 years ago, to the present day. We don’t realise why the narrative takes this form or the significance of certain statements until the very end of their story but, once I had overcome the initial strangeness of all of the events and characters emotions being presented from a single point of view, it was easy to slip into Lucy’s mind. It appeared that she and Gabe shared a once-in-a-lifetime, all consuming love and yet there was also a limit to how much of themselves and their ambitions that they were prepared to sacrifice in order to nurture this relationship. Rightly or wrongly people usually end up putting themselves first at some stage in their lives and this can tear a couple apart. Real life seeps into the gaps and we move along. But sometimes a bond is so strong that it can draw people back together, regardless of time or place, and Lucy and Gabe shared such a bond.

I enjoyed reading ‘The Light We Lost’ but I wanted Lucy and Gabe’s relationship to be more ‘all encompassing’ somehow, just to make their behaviour seem more plausible. I see why the story was set up as it was but I just needed to be rooting for them more as at times I couldn’t help thinking that Lucy was over-analysing her past relationships without any real purpose or goal in mind. The story reminded me slightly of ‘The Bridges of Madison County’, probably because of the photojournalist aspect and its reflective nature, however in my opinion it couldn’t quite match its power or passion.

Joanne Dibb

It’s a stunningly beautiful novel which left me with tears in my eyes and my heart in pieces, it’s definitely one of those books which will stay with me for a very long time.
Told from the perspective of Lucy, ‘The Light We Lost’ by Jill Santopolo is a memorising tale of love and loss spanning thirteen years. Gabe and Lucy meet on September 11th 2001 in the aftermath of the bombings on the twin towers. Drawn together they become inseparable and consumed by their love for each other, until Gabe drops a bombshell that he’s leaving. Over the next thirteen years they spend time moving in and out of each other’s lives never quite forgetting the power of the love they once had, questioning many times, what if? Until they day comes when Lucy is faced with the biggest what if of all.

This is an utterly absorbing novel about love in its many forms and how sometimes we just can’t let it go. Jill Santopolo’s writing is simply stunning and truly captures the emotions many of us go through during our relationships and those times in our lives when we have to make the big decisions. I loved everything about this book especially the characters, they all have taken a little place in my heart, especially little Violet who was just adorable.

It’s a stunningly beautiful novel which left me with tears in my eyes and my heart in pieces, it’s definitely one of those books which will stay with me for a very long time and I urge everyone to please read this, you won’t regret it.

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Nicola Kingswell

A tale of love, life and loss.

Gabe and Lucy meet at University and instantly fall for one another. They share their first kiss watching the Twin Towers fall. They graduate and move in together. Lucy is convinced they have a future together; marriage, kids, the whole nine yards. When Gabe ends it to go overseas to chase his dream of being a photographer, Lucy is devastated. Eventually she moves on and meets Darren, who she marries and has children with. As Lucy’s life progresses down the path she thought she would take with Gabe, he makes a few appearances over the years. It is clear that Lucy has never really stopped loving Gabe, and in his own way he hasn’t forgotten her either. Lucy wonders what could have been with Gabe. Fate brings them together one afternoon where they reminisce and sleep together. Then Gabe is posted overseas in Gaza. A few months later Lucy finds herself pregnant and flying to Jerusalem to see Gabe.

I read the comparisons to ‘One Day’ and ‘Me Before You’ and the reviews on the inside cover and kind of wish I hadn’t. These slightly tainted the book for me as I
was expecting an amazing read from page 1. What 'The Light We Lost' is, is a slow build as the story of Lucy and Gabe unfolds, but oh my word, the ending! I’m not ashamed to say I sobbed. Jill Santopolo has created a wonderful read that stays with you long after the last page is turned.

Beth Winsor

A very engaging story and lovely characters, I really loved this.

From the start this was a very engaging story and the characters were very believable. I really loved this and didn’t want it to end!

My only slight complaint was that the end was heavily signalled throughout, and I would have preferred it to be surprise - but then it would have been even more heart-rending, of course!

Sarah Tilley

Absolutely beautiful, and totally engaging, so much so that you will not want to put this down until the very last page.

I loved the way the narrative flows, with Lucy telling her story to Gabe – you feel her emotions as if they are your own.

It is a magical story that brings you to the crescendo, hoping above all else that the two lovers will be reunited – the final chapters will have you reading through a fog of tears.

A book that will make you re-examine your own life choices, and the what-ifs that happen along the way.

Just totally unforgettable.

Angie Rhodes

Are you ready to fall completely and utterly in love? A love that stays with you, over years, a love that will make your heart and soul sing, but will also make your heart hurt? This is the love that Gabe and Lucy have, a love so strong that no matter where they both are, they stay connected.

Lucy and Gabe met in Columbia University, on a day that will not only change their lives but also the lives of the whole world, September 11 2001.

While the Towers fall to the ground, and lives are lost, they kiss, and with that
one kiss, Lucy loses her heart forever. Over time they are torn apart, through work, dreams and both wanting to change the world, Life is odd, and fate has more to offer Gabe and Lucy, who meet each other, time and time again, For Lucy, each time Gabe leaves, he takes a bit more of her heart, brings it back and then takes it again and again. **This is one of the most feel good and romantic books I have read for a long time and it left me sobbing my heart out.** It has been likened to ‘Me before You’ and ‘One Day’, personally I loved this one more!

**Alison Bisping**

This is a wonderful story about first love - about how most people remember it, perhaps we over-romanticise it as time goes by, but we always remember it.

Lucy and Gabe meet at College, and what follows is the story of thirteen years of everyday life, set amongst historical events we will all be familiar with (9/11 for example). In many ways, this makes the story seem so real.

**I was hooked from the word go. It is a wonderful love story, beautifully written -** I’m not saying more because I don’t want to give anything away.

However, do **read this book! I am certain you will not be disappointed.**