

LoveReading Reader reviews of We Are All Made of Stars by Rowan Coleman

Below are the complete reviews, written by LoveReading members.

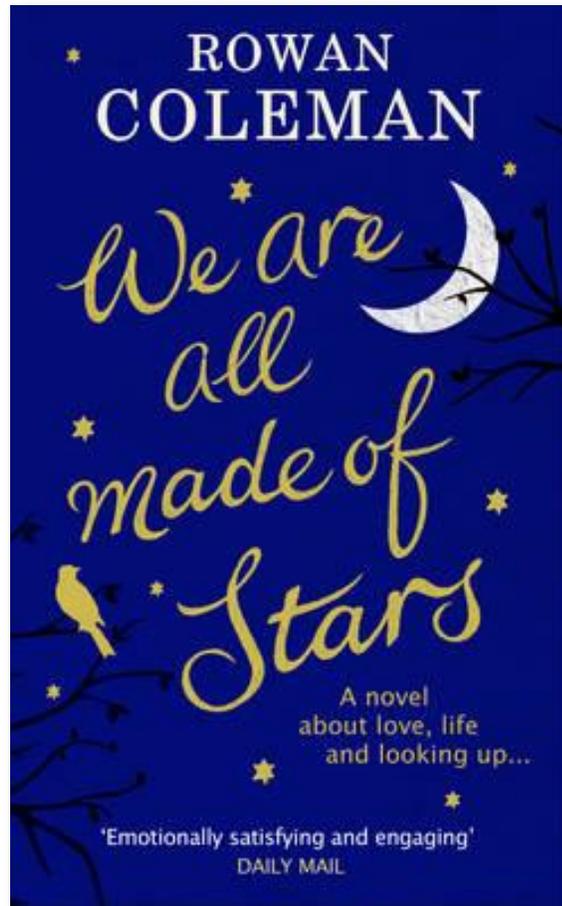
Joan Hill

This absorbing novel is beautifully written with wonderful characters. It exudes charm, empathy and compassion and is sprinkled with fabulous dialogue. It's a definite 'keeper' for me.

Stella Carey is a nurse at the local hospice. She works nights and writes cheery letters from her patients to their loved ones, only to be mailed upon their deaths. These letters are outpourings of comfort, advice, amusing anecdotes, fond memories and they sometimes divulge secrets straight from the hearts of her terminally ill patients.

One letter in particular tugs at the heartstrings of Stella. She carefully deliberates whether she should deliver the letter early, so that her patient can briefly live the life she has dreamed of every day, whisper of her love and go into her everlasting sleep with joy in her heart. But would this be the right thing to do, or should she respect her patient's last wishes?

This is a wonderful novel of love and loss, caring and empathy and of families and their brave and enduring support for each other. Although the subject matter is delicate and often sad, this novel balances these issues with hope and healing, laughter and joy and it literally oozes with charm, compassion and humour. Rowan Coleman has a terrific talent for this genre; her prose is bright



and elegant, her characters an eclectic mix but so true to life and their dialogue sparkles and fizzes. I absolutely loved this warm and delightful novel.

You can follow Joan on Twitter at: @JoanHillo7

Nikki Whitmore

A tale of endings that is also very much about beginnings...

Stella Carey is a nurse at a hospice and rehab centre. She works the night shift because it makes it easier to avoid her husband who has returned from war both mentally and physically damaged and who seems intent on pushing her away. Stella sits with the sick and dying and helps them to put their last thoughts on paper in the form of letters to their loved ones. Then one day, Stella is asked to write a letter she knows could change someone's life forever, but if she delivers it in time to make a difference, she will be breaking her promise to a dying woman.

I knew I was going to like this book the moment I started it. When I picked it up, there was no way it was being put down again until it was finished. I've always had a soft spot for books that involve letter writing and the letters in this book are so good - each was a small, perfectly formed story of its own.

*The three main characters, Stella, Hope and Hugh are all amazing and I wanted each of them to get their happy ending. I won't spoil it by revealing if they did or not but I will say that **this was such an optimistic, uplifting book** and to be honest, what I'd really like to do is go through it again, pick out all my favourite quotes and stick them up on the walls so I can see them all the time. A brilliant book, **I loved it.***

<https://whitterswitters.wordpress.com/>

Alison Jones

Gentle and emotive are the words that spring to mind when thinking about this book that follows troubled hospice nurse Stella. *She spends her free time at work helping her dying clients to write letters so that they can pass away satisfied and in peace. Yet poor Stella feels no peace in her marriage to damaged war hero Vincent.*

The story is a journey that is interspersed with letters that sometimes bring a tear to the eye. They also bring an individuality that is both appealing and charming.

Coleman manages the subject of death with ease and beauty and it is apparent that she understands the emotions it throws up. Her triumph is in how she makes a book heavily steeped in death so wonderfully life affirming.

Angie Rhodes

*It's been a while since a book has made me cry, well sob my heart out, but 'We Are All Made of Stars' did, like 'The Fault in Our Stars' and 'Firefly Lane', **it deals with loss in such a beautiful way, it stays with you after reading and you want to shout about it from the tops of buildings,***

Stella Carey is a nurse in her local hospice, her husband Vincent is a damaged soldier, after losing a leg in Afghanistan and they are both trying to come to terms with their new way of life.

Stella also writes letters for patients who wish to tell the ones they leave behind a message from the heart and instructions sometimes, on how to turn on the washer or not to forget to eat, Stella does this, with compassion, until there's the one letter, that instead of posting, she wants to hand deliver.

Tissues at the ready, for a beautiful haunting story.

Edel Waugh

*This is the story about a woman called Stella who works in a hospice for those very sick or dying. Stella writes letters for those she takes care of and the letters are posted after the patient dies. We get to know a lot of her patients this way, each with their own unique story to tell and each one more touching than the next. Husbands and wives, mothers and daughters, lovers, friends, every combination or relationship is written about here, young and old, male and female. While Stella enjoys working with her patients her home life has altered a lot since her husband came back from war badly injured and emotionally destroyed. **This is a tender story about how precious life is, how each moment counts and how those we have in our life, that mean the most to us, is who we think of at the very end.** If you enjoy a thought provoking read with a satisfying ending then this is the book for you.*

<http://edelwaugh.blogspot.com>

Janet Lambert

Rowan Coleman - you did it again - tore my heart in two, then sewed it back together. I'm clearly a more sensitive soul than I imagined, I sobbed my way readily throughout this stunning work, but by the end, even though I felt as though I'd been through the wringer, had a big smile on my face. *It IS uplifting and it's also heart wrenching, especially if you've ever lost someone and not had the time to say your goodbyes.*

This book cleverly tells the stories of several people, there is Stella (Stella means star by the way) who is working as a nurse in a hospice, throwing all her energy into helping people who have a terminal illness, nursing them and caring for them and helping them by writing last letters to their loved ones when they are too ill or tired to put pen to paper themselves. But at home things aren't going smoothly, the love of her life, her husband Vincent, has returned from Afghanistan with his leg missing and his soul in shreds.

These letters form the backbone of the book, one is included at the end of each chapter and even though you don't even get to know a lot of the people for whom these are written these little, poignant vignettes allow a peek into dying people's lives and hearts and it was often these which tore me up most.

One of her patients in the hospice is Hope, she is only 21 and has Cystic Fibrosis, a life threatening condition which has nearly finished her off, but she is going to live to fight on another day and throughout her life her best friend Ben has been there as her rock, her best pal and we get to know him as well as her (I fell in love with this lovely caring young man, more than a little bit)

<http://beadyjansbooks.blogspot.co.uk/>

Follow Janet on twitter: @Beadyjan

Linda Neill

Having never read any books by Rowan Coleman, I was unsure what to expect from this novel. It didn't disappoint.

The book opens with a letter from a wife to her husband. This is the last letter he will ever receive from his wife, and it sets the theme of the novel: relationships. The letter has been scribed by Stella who is a nurse in a hospice. Stella works nights and nurtures strong relationships with her patients. This gives them the trust to ask Stella to write their last letters to loved ones. Letters that are sad, funny and captivating. Each of these letters are intermingled through the lives of the four main characters- one of which is Stella. Although able to support and

care for others, Stella is having her own troubles at home with her husband who has returned from Afghanistan with brutal injuries. A strong bond with Stella is felt throughout the novel as we live through her troubles, concerns and pain. There are clever links between the stories, and we feel compassion towards each of the characters. Generally 'We Are all Made of Stars' has a real honesty to it and is certainly worth reading.

www.theliteracycompany.co.uk

Judith Smith

An extremely uplifting, sad and happy book about being on the brink of death and how one person, a nurse on night shifts can make such a difference.

Rowan Coleman has created such beautiful and believable characters. The story lines continue through the book and bring together a great deal of sadness, joy and forgiveness. A must read, but probably not just after losing a loved one. Every Hospice should have a Stella.

Julie Wragg

Another fabulous book by the brilliant Rowan Coleman.

I loved 'The Memory Book' and so had high hopes of the new novel by Rowan Coleman, thankfully it's just as brilliant and is another five star read from this wonderful author.

The story is told from the viewpoints of several characters who are linked through Stella, a hospice nurse who works tirelessly on the night shift. The chapters are interspersed with letters that Stella writes for the patients, sharing their secrets, advice and confessions only to be passed on after the person has died. Although we don't meet all these people, their letters are a touching and very human insight into life and love.

Away from her work Stella is struggling to settle into life with her beloved husband, recently returned from Afghanistan. Although he appears to be managing with his serious physical injury, he is doing all he can to push Stella away.

Hope is a young woman with Cystic Fibrosis who has a devoted and slightly odd friend in Ben, but she remains cautious and shuttered away from much of life. Her time spent in respite allows her to blossom and find her own way to

live the time she has.

Hugh lives alone with his peripatetic cat Jake, who takes on several important duties for different characters in the book. Hugh generally avoids relationships and his life revolves around his job as a museum curator, but the arrival of new neighbours shakes up his solitary life.

This book is beautifully and sensitively written with a cast of emotionally deep characters that provide some humour and much understanding of the difficult subject matter of loss and grief in its many forms. Simply wonderful.

Josie Barton

Rowan Coleman has delivered a beautiful story about love and loss, death and dying and the overwhelming value of dignity and respect.

Stella Carey is a hospice nurse with first-hand knowledge that life is sometimes filled with regret. Hopes and dreams are shattered when faced with mortality and yet, even as her patients face their death, Stella offers a nugget of hope. During her night shifts, Stella writes the letters her patients want her to deliver after their death, and as she does so, she discovers that deep within ourselves we all have a still, small place, where hope and resolution can often find peace.

The story is told from multiple points of view; we meet several characters who all have their own hopes and fears and through their letters we find out much more about them as people. Everyone has secrets, some people have told whopping great lies; whilst others have hidden things from those they love, but ultimately, when time becomes a precious commodity, the need to explain, is paramount and all consuming.

'We Are all Made of Stars' is beautifully written from start to finish. All the characters exude warmth and charm; some tug away at your hearts strings more than others, whilst some people we never meet, and yet, through their letters we are allowed a privileged glimpse into their innermost feelings. The story would not be complete without any of them.

It should be a sad book, but it isn't. True, it is gut wrenchingly emotional in places, but it's also warm and loving, sensitive and funny, with some beautifully observed moments that are so special they take your breath away. It is all the wonderful things I have come to expect from this talented author and I can't recommend it highly enough.

Just read it.

<http://jaffareadstoo.blogspot.co.uk/>

Kelly Silcox

Meet Stella, a trauma nurse happily married to Vincent a soldier. That is until a tragic event occurs. Badly injured Vincent returns home suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. Day by day, week by week, month by month their relationship slowly breaks down. Unsure of what to do she decides to work the nightshift as a nurse in a hospice and rehabilitation centre, leaving for work as her husband returns home from his.

Although the book centres around Stella, we are also introduced to those patients within the hospice. As well as caring for patients Stella also writes letters on their behalf. Letters that will only be sent after their death. For some people their letters consist of words of love, for others it is to inform those left how to use the washing machine and for some it is to tell their neighbours what they really feel. However, Stella writes one letter that she is compelled to deliver before it is too late. Meanwhile Vincent delivers his own letter.

*This is not a book I would normally pick up to read but I thought I would give it a chance and I am glad I did. It is **a heartfelt novel full of life, loss, love and humour with plenty of characters to meet and become involved with.***

Cat Hogwood

A story all about relationships and what you do for love.

This book follows various people; Stella, whose husband has never fully been the same with her since coming back from the war; Hope who has CF and isn't sure what life should mean for her; Hugh who doesn't realise he is lonely and has always missed his mother after she walked out.

Stella writes letters for the people in her care who are seriously unwell. These letters were interesting as it showed how different people are and in how they feel when the time comes.

Stella is faced with a decision as to whether to give someone a letter early and see if damage can be repaired.

The book is nicely written. It's about complicated relationships and the things people do for love. I didn't totally find myself believing the characters at all times but still enjoyed the book.

Zarina de Ruiter

'We Are All Made of Stars' is as heart-warming as it is heart-breaking.

Stella is a nurse in a hospice, which is a difficult and draining job at times, but also incredibly rewarding as she not only forms beautiful connections with those she cares for, but also provides a unique service to help them in their final days; she offers to write one last letter from them. Being on the receiving end of a letter in today's digital age may sound old-fashioned but getting the chance to hold a tangible message from a friend or loved one who has just passed away is of immeasurable value not only to the recipients, but also to the person it has come from as it means they can pass on words of wisdom, or even make amends and die peacefully.

A book with such a premise is bound to be a tearjerker, and it most certainly is. Yet the moments of beauty that shine through are worth the embarrassing blubbing on the train (I read on my commute) as they really reaffirmed my faith in people through the amazing things they do for another person to make their final moments worthwhile. It doesn't have to be huge either; take for instance Stella, something as small and simple as a letter can bring that invaluable piece of hope or relief that people cling on to towards the end of their lives.

*'We Are All Made of Stars' is as heart-warming as it is heart-breaking; the acts of kindness that run throughout are the former, while of course in a novel set in a hospice the loss of characters you've come to know and love leads to an emotional roller-coaster from one page to the next. **Rowan Coleman is quickly establishing herself as the queen of beautiful tearjerkers and I for one cannot wait for her next novel** for a good weep and a boost of faith in the selfless kindness of my fellow human beings.*

<http://www.pagetostagereviews.com>

Cathy Burman

*Set mostly in a hospice you would think that this novel would be quite depressing but it is quite the opposite. I found it to be **truly inspirational and beautifully written**. The book follows the lives of a number of colourful characters with a range of secrets, hopes and desires. The main character, Stella, is a nurse at the hospice and she helps put together the final letters to be*

*posted after the demise of the authors. Stella is facing an enormous challenge in her own life but somehow she still manages to provide comfort, support and a very personal, discreet service to her patients. This requires frantically juggling her home and work life and dealing with the emotions and trials of both. The stories surrounding the different characters flow so well and are injected throughout with such wicked humour. Yes there is some sadness but overall you will find it inspiring, funny, and romantic. You wouldn't expect humour to be found in such a sensitive setting but it is hilarious in parts, yet also uplifting and refreshing. **Highly recommended to read at any time but definitely one to pack in the suitcase. You will not be disappointed. I look forward to reading more from this author.***