

Friends Like Us

By Lauren Fox

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With her critically acclaimed debut novel, *Still Life with Husband*, Lauren Fox established herself as a wise and achingly funny chronicler of domestic life and was hailed as “a delightful new voice in American fiction, a voice that instantly recalls the wry, knowing prose of Lorrie Moore” (Michiko Kakutani, *The New York Times*). Fox’s new novel glitters with these pleasures—fearless wordplay, humor, and nuance—and asks us the question at the heart of every friendship: What would you give up for a friend’s happiness?

For Willa Jacobs, seeing her best friend, Jane Weston, is like looking in a mirror on a really good day. Strangers assume they are sisters, a comparison Willa secretly enjoys. They share an apartment, clothing, and groceries, eking out rent with part-time jobs. Willa writes advertising copy, dreaming up inspirational messages for tea bags (“The path to enlightenment is steep” and “Oolong*!* Farewell!”), while Jane cleans houses and writes poetry about it, rhyming “dust” with “lust,” and “clog of hair” with “fog of despair.” Together Willa and Jane are a fortress of private jokes and shared opinions, with a friendship so close there’s hardly room for anyone else. But when Ben, Willa’s oldest friend, reappears and falls in love with Jane, Willa wonders: Can she let her two best friends find happiness with each other if it means leaving her behind?

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Friends Like Us By Lauren Fox Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Guest Reviewer: Eleanor Brown on *Friends Like Us* by Lauren Fox



Eleanor Brown is the author of the New York Times *and national bestselling debut novel,* The Weird Sisters.

I am fascinated by this thing we call adulthood. When I was younger, I assumed that at some point in the hazy, distant future, I would magically transform into an adult, with all the confidence and organization I saw in the grown-ups around me.

Of course we all know now the process of becoming an adult is complex—equally joyous and painful. Years or decades in, we find ourselves still fumbling around in one way or another, doing the best we can, and occasionally stumbling across a miracle.

Lauren Fox's *Friends Like Us* powerfully illustrates these painful, joyful moments as we cross the tricky threshold of adulthood. Willa, the novel's whip-smart and laugh-out-loud funny narrator, is a loyal and devoted daughter, sister, and friend, especially to her roommate, Jane. Willa and Jane's friendship is giddily intimate—their drive to "establish and reestablish the specific degree of our astounding similarities" is a reminder of teenage friendships lost and a harbinger of the coming end of their protracted adolescence. They are overeducated and underemployed, and nearing the time in their lives when those things will become frustrating rather than charming. Willa's only broken relationship is with her high-school best friend, Ben, so when she runs into him at a reunion, she is delighted to welcome him back into her life, and thrilled to connect her friendships with Jane and Ben into a circle.

I cringed and laughed sympathetically watching Willa, Jane, and Ben try to navigate their way through this new relationship, opening a door to adulthood that they are not all ready to go through. Someone, inevitably, must be left behind, someone must be left out, and all of them have to change, whether they want to or not.

Friends Like Us is funny most of the time, and devastating when it's not. It is a novel about loyalty, identity, and lost chances. It is also about what happens to friendships as we grow up, and how we fight even the right changes in all the wrong ways. Lauren Fox is a smart, clever writer, with a heartbreakingly keen insight into human nature. *Friends Like Us* may possess a light exterior and an effervescent sense of humor, but beneath these easy pleasures lies a beautifully complicated and true heart.

Review

“[A] hilarious, heartbreaking novel.” —*Marie Claire*

“A strikingly wise exploration of the bonds people forge and break. Fox delivers on plot, but it’s her insight, emotion, and eye for universal truths that make *Friends Like Us* memorable.” —*People*

“*Friends Like Us* is at once a hilarious page-turner and a wise meditation on friendship, marriage, and the ways in which our parents’ mistakes so often shape our lives.” —J. Courtney Sullivan, author of *Maine*

“[A] poignant comedy. . . . Fox makes you care about Willa and everyone else in *Friends Like Us* long after you’ve finished.” —*The Washington Post*

“Reading *Friends Like Us* is like finding an old photograph of yourself when you were in your twenties…. Fox will have you laughing and crying and calling your best friend in the middle of the night.” —Rebecca Rasmussen, author of *The Bird Sisters*

“A perfect . . . page-turner for cozy winter nights.” —*Glamour*

“Fox has drawn a sharp portrait of . . . female friendship, inscribing both the joys and the needs that maintain its bonds while also illuminating the countervailing forces that could send its partners flying apart.” —*Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel*

“Rings with the familiarity of a long-lost friend.” —*Minneapolis Star-Tribune*

“Fox delivers a punch (and a story I can't stop thinking about) with her surprising and deeply honest novel.” —Laura Dave, author of *The First Husband*

“A funny, astute examination of the fragility of friendship.” —*Entertainment Weekly*

“*Friends Like Us*, with delicacy and humor, captures the ambiguities of attraction in an ironic age.” —*Vogue*

“Absolutely killer. . . . It’s a punch in the gut, watching how friendships change as these women move into adulthood.” —Eleanor Brown, author of *The Weird Sisters*

“Willa’s multifarious humor is well matched by Jane’s quieter presence. . . . Fox proves herself here, as in her first book, attracted to the crumbling, collapsing character of friendships as well as romances.” —*San Francisco Chronicle*

“How to make a novel about the shaky geometry of romance feel fresh? Lauren Fox, in her second novel, succeeds admirably, partly because she places her twenty-something characters against a grim backdrop of economic uncertainty and the not-quite-healed wounds of parental failures.” —*The Boston Globe*

“Sure to resonate with anyone who has experienced regrets and complications in a super-close friendship. . . . This is a story filled with true-to-life people complete with their messy relationships and salted with hilarious word play and other witticisms that don’t take away from the poignancy of the plot. To sum up: Pure. Enjoyment.” —*Bookreporter*

“The hard emotional truths go down easily amid the smart, rapid-fire wit. A pure if heartbreaking pleasure.”

—*Booklist* (starred review)

“Dazzlingly entertaining and utterly engaging, *Friends Like Us* draws an intimate sketch of need and loss, crosshatched by friendship and love. Willa is funny, fallible, and fierce as she navigates family's inexorable pull and the self's desire for individual orbit. Fox’s gorgeous novel grapples with ordinary truths in an extraordinary way, and will leave you paying more attention to the people who matter to you most.” —Gwendolen Gross, author of *The Orphan Sister*

“Wounded, witty Willa is a remarkably complex creation. Moving, artfully written.” —*Kirkus Reviews*

“*Friends Like Us* is smart, funny, and winning, but the thing that strikes me most about it is how honest it is. Lauren Fox perfectly captures the way best friends love each other, make each other laugh, and sometimes, at their worst moments, break each other’s hearts.” —Lauren Grodstein, author of *A Friend of the Family*

About the Author
Lauren Fox is the author of *Still Life with Husband*. She earned her MFA from the University of Minnesota in 1998, and her work has appeared in *The New York Times, Marie Claire, Seventeen, Glamour,* and *Salon*. She lives in Milwaukee with her husband and two daughters.

www.laurenfoxwriter.com

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Clarence Anderson:

The knowledge that you get from Friends Like Us may be the more deep you digging the information that hide within the words the more you get serious about reading it. It doesn't mean that this book is hard to comprehend but Friends Like Us giving you buzz feeling of reading. The article author conveys their point in selected way that can be understood through anyone who read the item because the author of this publication is well-known enough. This particular book also makes your own personal vocabulary increase well. That makes it easy to understand then can go to you, both in printed or e-book style are available. We suggest you for having that Friends Like Us instantly.

Hope Giles:

Spent a free time to be fun activity to do! A lot of people spent their sparetime with their family, or their own friends. Usually they performing activity like watching television, likely to beach, or picnic inside park. They actually doing same thing every week. Do you feel it? Do you wish to something different to fill your own free time/ holiday? Could possibly be reading a book might be option to fill your free of charge time/ holiday. The first thing you ask may be what kinds of guide that you should read. If you want to try out look for book, may be the reserve untitled Friends Like Us can be fine book to read. May be it is usually best activity to you.

Jerry Montgomery:

Many people spending their time by playing outside along with friends, fun activity along with family or just watching TV all day long. You can have new activity to invest your whole day by reading a book. Ugh, do you think reading a book really can hard because you have to bring the book everywhere? It okay you can have the e-book, bringing everywhere you want in your Cell phone. Like Friends Like Us which is obtaining the e-book version. So , try out this book? Let's view.

Shawn Young:

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