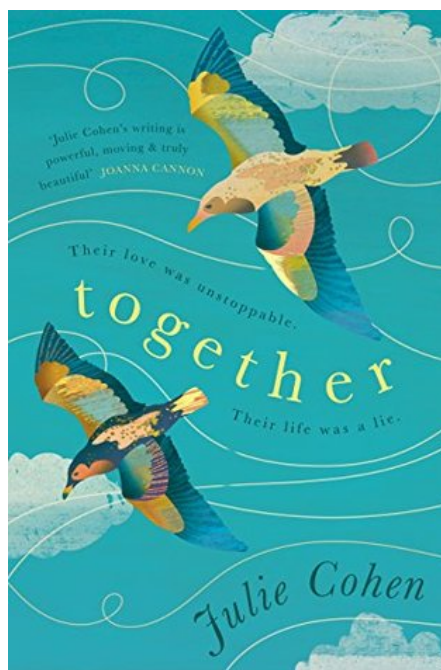




Together

Julie Cohen

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Together

Julie Cohen

Together Julie Cohen

*Is this a great love story?
Or a story about great love?
You decide.*

On a morning that seems just like any other, Robbie wakes in his bed, his wife Emily asleep beside him, as always. He rises and dresses, makes his coffee, feeds his dogs, just as he usually would. But then he leaves Emily a letter and does something that will break her heart. As the years go back all the way to 1962, Robbie's actions become clearer as we discover the story of a couple with a terrible secret - one they will do absolutely anything to protect.

*'Julie Cohen's writing is **powerful, moving and truly beautiful**' Joanna Cannon, author of The Trouble with Goats and Sheep*

*'It takes a lot to tempt me from crime, but this is one of **the most beautiful and heartbreaking stories I've read**' Emma Flint, author of Little Deaths*

*'This big, clever, tender and twisty love story reminded me of **One Day & The Time Traveler's Wife**' Erin Kelly*

*'Complex, **compelling** and beautiful, Together is **the kind of novel that will stay with you forever**' Rowan Coleman, author of The Summer of Impossible Things*

'Brave, compelling and original' Alice Peterson, author of A Song for Tomorrow

Together Details

Date : Published July 13th 2017 by Orion

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Author : Julie Cohen

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Genre : Romance, Fiction

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From Reader Review Together for online ebook

Donna Irwin says

A stunning emotional read. A story of great love and secrets told backwards and it really works. Beautifully written, starting with the end, and going back to the beginning.

One of my top reads of the year.

Liz Barnsley says

I don't really do love stories.

This one I did.

Told backwards and utterly compelling first word to last (sob fueled) moment.

Review nearer publication.

Ann Brogan says

It's not often that I rate a book with less than three stars because as a translator myself, I fully appreciate the amount of work that goes into producing a novel. Nevertheless, this book is so dreadful that I cannot bring myself to give more than two stars. So here are the reasons:

1. It started off quite promisingly, and the style was reminiscent of an Anne Taylor family saga.
 2. The structure, while innovative, is also the novel's downfall. Travelling backwards means so much is lost just to maintain the style.
 3. It's jam-packed with heavy topics, each of which would merit exploration in a novel of their own: suicide by an Alzheimer's sufferer, infidelity, alcoholism, parental abandonment, illegal adoption and to cap it all, incest! Unfortunately, stuffed in together in one book, and yet only given a superficial treatment, all this amounts to was a wasted opportunity. The characters are one-sided at best and the plot laughably predictable. Two things to close with: In the Acknowledgements section at the end, Cohen thanks her agent and editor for their support. If I were her I would sack both of them for their misguided advice. I just cannot comprehend why one or both of them didn't tell her that adding that ridiculous shocker at the end was going too far? I'm quite cross with myself that I've wasted three weeks of my life on this second-rate novel. I urge anyone out there who might be considering reading it not to do the same!
-

Renita D'Silva says

Absolutely beautiful! I could not put it down.

♥ Jx PinkLady Reviews ♥ says

Quick review thoughts:

I really loved it, such a beautiful read with emotions that crept up on me. About a married couple who overcome huge obstacles to be together, one of which is not truly revealed until the end and made the story even more thought provoking. It's about a love so very deep. A love that lasts a life time.

Book Club read - most of our group thoroughly enjoyed this one-

PattyMacDotComma says

5★

“‘We’re the only people left alive who know it.’

‘Yes,’ she said. ‘Yes. Just you and me.’

‘Then we’re free,’ he said. ‘Finally, you and I are free.’”

I’m not a great fan of romance novels. I like character and plot and tension that isn’t just flutterings of “be still my foolish heart”. There is plenty of weak-kneed shock and overwhelming compulsion to flout the rules (and current commitments), but there’s quite a story here as well.

We meet Robbie and Emily in Maine in 2016 as they celebrate their 43rd anniversary and are now facing Robbie’s increasing forgetfulness. He’s a life-long sailor, and many passages in the book use sailing terms and analogies to great advantage. You don’t need to know beans about sailing to appreciate how Robbie describes his failing memory:

“It was like the fog that came in silently and out of nowhere, and socked you in so solid you couldn’t see a single thing, not even your own sails. . . . You were in waters you knew like the back of your hand, but you couldn’t tell where you were.”

Emily absorbed his world, just soaked it up as she spent time around the boats and workshop.

“He’d built this boat. He hadn’t said so, but she could feel Robbie in the curve of the bow, the blunt end of the stern.”

The author works her way back in time to Emily’s medical school days in Cambridge when she and Robbie first crossed paths accidentally a couple of times in a couple of days. They both felt an instant attraction, but he’s sailing a yacht around the world for an American businessman (Robbie is American), and she, of course, is studying hard for her degree, to be a good English doctor like her adored father.

We jump a bit back and forth in time, but it’s not confusing, as it’s quite obvious from the storyline where we are and why. Her family has disowned her, he has a bitter first wife who moved away with his son and cut off all contact, so Emily and Robbie have been together alone much of the time. We are reminded often that **“their love could only last if silence held it together in certain places.”**

The story moves between England and Florida and Maine, and there are just enough characters for us to sympathise both with their family situations and with their desire to commit to each other and be together. He has flashbacks to Vietnam while she feels guilt for not practicing medicine in third-world countries where she could make such a difference.

It’s a compelling story, beautifully told. It comes full circle and the gaps are eventually filled in.

You'd think the obstacles in their way, the hurdles, and the complications would make their getting together impossible. You'd think. You'd be wrong. Whether others could overcome these as they did will be the subject of much discussion, I imagine. But no spoilers here!

Thanks to NetGalley and Hachette Australia for the preview copy from which I've quoted, so quotes may have changed.

Marieke says

Een uitgebreidere recensie is te vinden op Marieke's Books.

Vanaf de eerste bladzijde zat ik middenin het verhaal. Robbie en Emily zijn geweldig samen en je voelt de liefde tussen die twee. Echt heel erg knap gedaan, want hun liefde voelde enorm natuurlijk aan.

Het verhaal zit apart in elkaar. Het bestaat uit 5 delen welke zich allemaal in een ander jaar afspelen. Het eerste deel speelt zich af in 2016, dus de tegenwoordige tijd. In de verdere delen gaan we terug in de tijd, totdat we in 1962 zijn aanbeland. Ik vond deze manier erg vernieuwend. Ik kan me niet herinneren ooit een boek gelezen te hebben waarin het verhaal terug in de tijd ging. Maar het levert wel extra nieuwsgierigheid voor het einde. Wat is er zo veel jaren terug gebeurd, wat ervoor gezorgd heeft dat Robbie en Emily zo zijn als dat ze in 2016 zijn.

Ik ben uitgeverij de Fontein heel erg dankbaar voor dit boek. Wat een pareltje! Dit verhaal had ik echt voor geen goud willen missen. Robbie en Emily heb ik echt in mijn hart gesloten, wat een geweldige personages.

Agi says

OK guys. Confession time. "Together" is my first book by Julie Cohen. So there. I do admit, I have some of her previous books on my bookshelf, it's just that I've never succeeded to read them. However, after hearing so many brilliant things about Ms Cohen's books, it's no wonder I was so looking forward to reading "Together" and now, after reading this brilliant, unique new release I am going to make it my priority to read the other novels as soon as possible.

So we meet Emily and Robbie in 2016 in Maine and then we go backwards, to 1962 in Cambridge and it bothered me a little how the story was constructed. I didn't find the book being written backwards confusing but I had one issue. We start in present and go back in time, so it's written in a kind of reverse order, so we actually know what happened, and we are only finding out about facts and details about the characters' lives and their interweaving ways. I'll be honest, there came a moment, and it was when we were in the 1960's, that I lost my interest a little, as I had a feeling that I've read about it already, I know what's happened - but it was then that my review copy suddenly ended at such a cliffhanger that I truly came to know the meaning of the word frustrated. Luckily, I was allowed to open the envelope with the last torn away pages and continue reading, and this is when I've seen that the book couldn't be constructed in a different way. It may make us wonder but this way the things that we were asking ourselves about on the previous pages get a great clarity.

The story is not dominated by descriptions - a huge part of it is dialogues and conversations, and I have to say that they are flawless, they fly easily and effortlessly, there is nothing pushed or forced in those conversations, they just feel so realistic and honest - and let me tell you, creating such great dialogues doesn't

happen a lot in the books that I read. They just feel so natural, just like conversation between me and you.

The characters of Robbie and Emily were lovely - they were full of heart and love and such love as theirs probably happens once in a hundred years. They are not only soul mates, but also friends and lovers - a unit. Robbie loved Emily unconditionally and with fierce passion but also Emily fell head over heels for him and her feelings have never changed.

This is a story about secrets, yes, but it is also a story about unbelievable love. It is a story that tugs at all the right heart - strings and makes you wonder. It's thought - provoking and a little controversial, written in a beautiful, emotional way, examining family dynamics and relationships. It shows the power of love. There are some twists and turns in the novel, with the biggest one at the end. One that I haven't seen coming. I might have had some inclinations to guess the truth but THE revelation didn't cross my mind. It is a very cleverly designed and organised plot, and suddenly everything seems to make sense and all the puzzle elements fall into their places. There are some shocking revelations but altogether the whole tone is calm and down - to - earth. You actually have to wait almost till the end to see why Emily was estranged from her family and why there were such strong feelings about this what's happened, and really, when you get to this point everything will become so clear.

I have actually read "Together" in one day. It was unputdownable, it swept me up, and guys, I am sure you're going to have such mixed feelings about this whole situation! But it is a good thing, and I love when I finish a book with my head buzzing with thoughts, wondering and examining, looking into. It was a powerful, moving read, a real must - read this summer! Highly recommended!

Copy provided by the publisher in return for an honest review.

Saskia says

Lang geleden dat ik een review over een boek geschreven heb maar bij dit boek moet dat gewoon...om iedereen aan te raden ook dit boek te gaan lezen want werkelijk waar wat een prachtig verhaal is dit! Het boek wordt andersom verteld, we gaan terug in de tijd zeg maar. Al vrij snel wordt er verteld dat Emily en Robbie een groot geheim met zich meedragen en pas op het allerlaatst wordt echt duidelijk wat er nu eigenlijk speelt...en ik kan je vertellen dat zie je niet aankomen...althans ik niet. Heel knap van de schrijfster om het verhaal achterstevoren te vertellen zonder in het begin al iets prijs te geven. Lezen mensen!!

Dale Harcombe says

Having read and enjoyed Dear Thing by Julie Cohen, I was looking forward to reading this new one, especially with such a gorgeous cover and having read some positive reviews. It started well and I was thinking this would be a great love story about Robbie and Emily. From the moment Robbie walks out the door, leaving Emily a letter and a rose, the story spools backwards. This interesting technique didn't work for me. The longer it moved backwards filling in the gaps of this couple's story, the less interested I became. I never liked Robbie at any point and I liked him even less as the story went back. This was supposed to be a great love but I was never convinced about that love at all. It seemed to me the person Robbie loved most was himself and getting what he wanted.

As the story spiralled backwards toward the secret that shaped their lives, I had a sneaking suspicion I knew where it was heading. Surely not! It would be so hackneyed and a plot already done to death in books and

TV soaps. I read on hoping I was wrong. Sadly, I wasn't.

This is a story about two people, who ended up getting their life together and in the process hurting a lot of other people. I was extremely disappointed. I know I am going to be going against popular opinion here, as a lot of other people have seemed to like this book. But I wasn't one of them. My one star is for the gorgeous cover. I expected so much more.

Rhoda Baxter says

Robbie and Emily have been together for a long time. They clearly love each other very much. But what is the secret they are keeping? What was so bad that they've lost contact with friends and family over it?

I'm not totally sure how to review this. As a writer, I loved it. The book is written backwards - given the story, it was probably the only way you could tell the story. At a technical level, it's fascinating. You start with the day Robbie dies and go back in steps, each section revealing a part of the story, but raising more questions than were there before. There is a twist at the end that makes everything fall into place. The writing is beautiful (as always).

As a reader, I found it difficult to engage with the characters. Both Robbie and Emily are nice enough, but it took me a long time to get into it. I found I didn't care as much about the why of their relationship as I'd expected to. In general, the start of the story (end of the book) was more interesting than the end (start of the book). For me, Julie Cohen's books tend to be the sort where I burn the supper because I can't bear to put them down and try to read and cook at the same time, so I'm a bit puzzled by this. Perhaps it's the fact that you know where they end up.

In general, this book is unusual (both in structure and in subject matter) and a very thought provoking read. I'm still thinking about it.

My thanks to the publishers and Netgalley for sending me a review copy. I know Julie, but I was a fan of her books well before I met her.

Deborah says

Eighty-year old Robbie Brandon, the lead character of Julie Cohen's *Together*, seems to have suffered a far quicker decline. But it takes us the whole book to understand why its full impact would be even more devastating for him, his beloved Emily and their family.

As is probably obvious from the blurb, this book works backwards.

It starts with something devastating and I was in messy tears within pages. My own family's experience with my father's dementia (his inability to remember anything new and slow erosion of his long term memory) remains fresh enough that – for a while – I wasn't sure I could continue reading.

I should mention however – for those similarly affected (by dementia / alzheimers etc) – the book is not about Robbie's decline, so after the first few chapters we are on safer ground.

Cohen reintroduces us to Emily and Robbie at key moments in time. In the 1990s when we learn more about

the complications around Robbie's relationship with oldest son William; then the 1970s around the time of the arrival of their youngest son Adam and when Robbie and Emily's life together begins. And then back to the 1960s when their paths first cross.

This book is well written and brilliantly paced. We're offered complex and interesting characters via Robbie and Emily, but – unusually (for me, anyway) – the strength of this novel is in its telling. Cohen really nails the pivotal points in the Brandons' lives and offers up a very balanced and blunt account of each.

It reminded me a little of the TV show *This is Us*, which moves about in time, showing us how (and why) family members became the people they are. And like that show, in this book we 'see' the results before we learn about their origins.

4.5 stars

Read the full review of this book on my site: <https://www.debbish.com/books-literat...>

sue says

Love stories are not usually my thing. But I did enjoy this one as I do like this authors books.

Robbie and Emily have been married for several years. Two sons and grandchildren have blessed them in their latter years.

Robbie was a boat builder and Emily and daughter did love to spend his hard earned money. Emily was an obstetrician to both well paid jobs.

An OK life, a good life, or so it seemed.

Age has now kicked in and Robbie has developed dementia. I thought then it was going to be based on that and his deterioration however I was wrong.

There is a huge secret they both share that if it comes out will change all their lives.

This is written in a kind of reverse order, it made a good change and kept me on my toes.

I need to thank Orion Publishing group for providing my copy via Net Galley.

Zoe Hall says

As far as I'm aware, this is my first encounter of Julie Cohen's work. This was a lovely book with interesting characters. I found it faltered a little half way though, but picked up pace and piqued my interest again at the three quarters mark. I'd recommend this book for a sweet read, one where you can drink a nice mug of tea and lose yourself in the story.

Michelle Ryles says

I received a copy of Together along with an envelope stating that it should only be opened when instructed. Needless to say, with such an intriguing package, Together didn't have long to wait on my TBR pile before curiosity got the better of me. Once I opened the book, I became lost in Emily and Robbie's story and would have raced through it at the speed of light even without the added intrigue of the mysterious envelope.

The story of Emily and Robbie is told in reverse from 2016 to 1962. Now anyone who knows me would think that I would struggle with this back to front timeline, but Julie Cohen's writing is so flawless that the story flows so effortlessly and it feels completely right to start at the end. In 2016, Emily and Robbie have been together for 54 years, although they aren't married. Robbie wakes up one morning and makes a difficult decision that will break Emily's heart, and left me wide eyed with shock. You find out early on in the book that the pair are hiding a secret, although you have no idea what it could be, and I wondered if Robbie's decision had something to do with this. I couldn't have been more wrong.

As time flips backwards, we go back through 1990 when we find out that Emily is estranged from her family, through 1975-77 when Emily and Robbie adopt their son Adam, through 1972 when they are both married to other people and back to 1962 when their eyes meet for the first time across a crowded train platform. Then finally, it was time to open the envelope containing the final few missing pages that I read in stunned silence as tears welled in my eyes.

I feel privileged to have shared such intimate moments with Emily and Robbie. They haven't had a smooth ride in their life as they drove down several rocky roads but what they did have was each other. When reading Together, we are asked whether we think this is a great love story or a story about great love. I can't choose one over the other so in my opinion, it is both.

Together is completely mesmerizing and totally unique in its telling of this beautiful love story. I urge you to read this book, even if it's not your usual genre. A beautiful captivating story of love against the odds. It's certainly not your traditional love story of moonlight and roses, more warts and all under the microscope on the front page of the newspaper. With shocks at the beginning and the end, read it and weep; I certainly did.

I chose to read an ARC and this is my honest and unbiased opinion.
