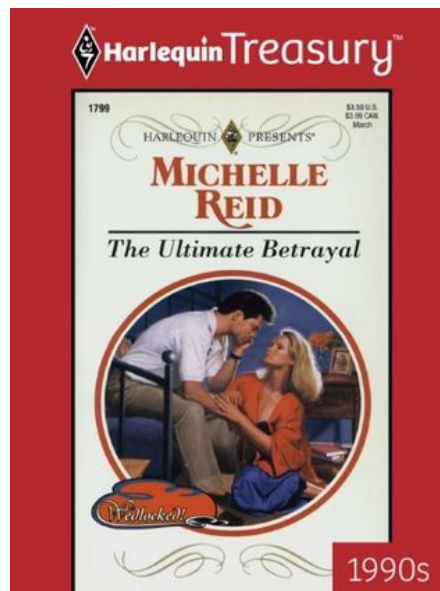




The Ultimate Betrayal

Michelle Reid

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The Ultimate Betrayal Michelle Reid

A marriage in crisis. . .

"I never meant to do it...she was just there when I needed someone..."

Rachel and Daniel had three adorable children and a strong marriage-or so Rachel had always believed.

But her happy life was shattered when she was told that Daniel had been having an affair. Then she realized that they'd been growing apart for years.

Rachel wanted so much to save her marriage--but was it too late? Could she ever forgive Daniel, if he had committed the ultimate betrayal?

The Ultimate Betrayal Details

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From Reader Review The Ultimate Betrayal for online ebook

Val Shameless ?? Steamy Reads ?? says

I had no business reading this, but I did anyway.
Because IDIOT.
So for that reason, it wouldn't be fair to rate it.

Roksana says

Updating my review from 2013, Rating stays the same!

I had a hard time rating this book/ from one hand the reader is emotionally and mentally shattered and at the same time demands the reader to face those emotions and suck you right there in the battle like you have witnessed it on your own skin which for that deserves 4 stars, hence on the other hand it wants you to hate the book and all that you have been forced to read to leave you with a bad taste and unfulfilled satisfaction.

I think the heroin was really strong by keeping the hero in the dark with their marriage uncertainty. She did however, disappointed me at few occasions by not being strong enough in a confrontation with the hero by addressing some very vital issues that was not dealt with both and the hero just got away with it and I was really frustrated by the knowledge of it. Basically, he did not admit to anyone in his workplace that he was married and have 3 children which for my standards is unforgivable! there was no need to hide that, so was he not wearing his marriage ring???? I felt like the heroin was cheated and his children all together and I had so much dislike for the hero and I liked the idea of the author turning the tables on him and let him see for himself how it is like to be cheated by the one you love the most. Here the heroine met the hero's friend, the one who also though she was not his wife and admitted he had an affair with the OW. He kissed the heroine in his car outside her house and the hero witness it. I was glad it happened because the hero could not accuse his wife of infidelity because he did it himself. For the actual fact the heroine did not want to get involved, she did not want to be kissed and did not kiss back, but I understand why she allowed this situation. It was the ultimate betrayal by her husband that pushed her to so much emotional strain. She felt unattractive, unwanted, betrayed and lied by her husband and wanted to be the one with control and that she is still desirable. He was shaking after that incident and it was very powerful scene and ease a bit my pain I felt for his crimes to his family. I think the author did it deliberately to show the hero the other side, how it feels to be confronted with such destructive emotions and betrayal, although the heroin did nothing and the hero was really the guilty one.

I don't know if I would go back to him, probably not, because it was not just the fact that he has been seeing the OW, but the very fact that he was doing it in the open where his and his wife's friends could see it and ultimately he did not care in what position he was putting his wife and his children if ever some of these friends could see her, and actually it did happened when it was reviled that he was seen with the OW and his wife was told by his friend who did not know she was his wife!!!! That to me is gross!!!! His wife could not have orgasms and suffered every time when being in intimate contact with the hero and I don't know if I would ever touch him with the knowledge that HE WAS TOUCHING INTIMATELY ANOTHER WOMEN WHICH SHOULD BE EXCLUSIVE TO HIS WIFE!!! The are no excuses for him wanting to be with other women because under stress, his wife was under a lot of stress but did to cheated on him!!!!

But I have to confess, the soul wrenching pain and forced emotions I felt has thought me a lot by this book and it made me realise how destructive infidelity can be not just for yourself and your partner, but for the

whole family children if involved and the knowledge of this kind of damage caused by it is the reason I give 4 stars! I will remember this book for the rest of my life!

Sharon ∞ is an emotional book junkie ∞ says

4 ★'s

Okay, I had two reasons that piqued my interest in this book. First...it's from the 1990's and I was curious as to how it would hold up compared to today's romance novels and secondly, betrayal = a whole lotta angst! 'Nuff said! ;)

What was intriguing about this book is that it starts with Rachel just finding out from her best friend that her husband, Daniel, has been having an affair. Rachel's barely been able to keep her head above water with three small children so while she's noticed the signs, they just didn't really register. Well, they sure do now.

Her husband, Daniel, is devastated when Rachel finds out and he literally tries to get her to talk and work things out. But Rachel has to figure things out on her own first. They've been together since she was seventeen and she really hasn't had much time for herself since then.

This leads to some interesting scenes and a bit of a situation with another guy. Again, Rachel has to grow and learn from this experience.

So as far as the angst goes, I really enjoyed it. M.R. gets front and center with all the *feels* and the processes people go through even though I was a little frustrated that it took forever for them to talk!

Regarding the writing differences from 20+ years ago, I didn't really see much. The author is British so there were a lot of British terms that may have made that harder to specify. However, the sex scenes are fade to black but that may just be the author's style as well.

The story does end well even though I was upset with finding out the actual dynamics of what occurred with Daniel...it was a bit of a cop-out IMO and I wished the actual wining and dining was discussed.

Favorite quote:

♥ "You were the rose-garden in the middle of the vile jungle I fought in."

Megzy says

Any way you look at it, cheating is a fast track to ruin a relationship. Trust is a very fragile thing and once broken, it can never regain the same credibility and value as it once held.

In the post Clinton/ Lewinsky era, even physical cheating has found different categories. As a reader when I see the excuse that it never got that far, I question how far the physical infidelity got. When the front of the

husband's shirt and even his hair reeks of another woman's perfume, I say it got too far. When he decides to go to another woman's apartment with the full intention of cheating on his wife and children (when there are children involved, in my book, the adultery is not only against the partner but cheating on their children because their lives are going to suffer as much if not more and the psychological trauma is as bad) he/she has severed the trust line. When he didn't complete the act because he was too drunk to perform, I say the intentions were all there. The way I look at it, in this story he physically and emotionally cheated on his family.

When there is a long term emotional cheating as it was in this case, the destruction is beyond imaginable and the author did a fantastic job portraying the effect on the mother in law, the children, and the wife. The excuse that we read is the most popular excuse being used in real life, I was not the top priority anymore, and it made the book more realistic. He enjoyed the company of another woman over his exhausted wife and his sick children. I mean who wants to come home to children suffering from measles and a wife who has had a hard pregnancy and is now taking care of 3 sick children while wearing no make up and the same t shirt she put on first when she got up when he can wine and dine and go dancing or to the theater every night with a top female corporate attorney with not a strand of hair out of place and no other care, someone he enjoys talking to and spending every spare of time with. Which is worse?

I love how the person who broke the news of his infidelity was blamed instead of the real guilty party. Isn't that usually the case and the reason many people close their eyes to their acquaintances unfaithfulness?

What made me like this book is that he had to watch another man wanting his wife and kissing her. For few months, every time he tried to be intimate with his wife, his infidelity and the other woman's image stopped his wife cold in his arms and he had to live with no real sexual fulfillment.

Do I believe the lead female character made the right choice? Personally I don't - I would take the 3 kids and walk away with half of his company after I would utterly destroy his reputation, but she wanted to be a mother and have someone to take care of every other aspect of her life. She had no life, no friends outside her cozy home. She had no intrigue or ambition outside the walls she built around herself and her family. Her 6 years old daughter had more courage then she ever did. She didn't care if he ever allowed her to be part of his life outside their home as long as he came home and played the daddy part and made love to her every now and then and took her to the neighborhood restaurant when she didn't have to get dressed up. She wanted certain easy comforts in her life. She was basically the little girl who plays house. It made it realistic because most women who stay in a marriage after infidelity do it for the very same reasons. It is about security of having a certain life style and not losing the dream they had as a little girl, a cozy house, beautiful kids and a husband.

I believe this book was really about how a woman's personality affects her reaction to cheating.

Tina says

Rachel and Daniel have been married for 7 years and have 3 wonderful children when Rachel's 'Best Friend' tells her that Daniel has been sleeping around with another woman.

When confronted, Daniel doesn't deny it and Rachel is devastated. Daniel insists that it is over and wants to make the marriage work. Rachel feels very vulnerable and unattractive and feels almost as if she has been kept in a prison for seven years.

Rachel tries to move out the previous suffocation confines of her marriage, while Daniel attempts to reconcile with his wife.

This is a case where I fully believe the constraints of the format really made the story suffer.

First, even though Rachel has been married to Daniel for 7 years and has 3 kids, she still comes off like a stereotypical, young naive harlequin virgin. And she's too nice. What woman in her right mind will consider a person her best friend who routinely and with serious disdain refer to your kids as 'brats'? Her relationship with her so-called best friend was as dysfunctional as her relationship with her husband.

I also don't see how it is at all realistic that a man of Daniel's stature in business could have (or would have) kept the fact that he is married a secret. He has never invited Rachel to a business dinner? Had colleagues over? Had never had her act as hostess for anything? Never went out in public with the family? Weird.

I actually really like Michelle Reid's early stuff for HP, but I could have given this book a pass.

Jenny says

I don't even know how to rate this. As I finished this the Ashley Madison hack is making headlines. I just can not understand the fascination with unfaithful heroes. Are there unfaithful heroines in the category romance world? Whenever I read these stories I marvel at the underlying sexism and double standards involved. A woman who behaves the way these so called "heroes" behave are the awful evil other women. I think the men who behave this way should get the same treatment.

Rachel, the heroine, didn't have much backbone although once in a while she showed promise. However because of the category restrictions she's not allowed to really grow the way she should.

It makes absolutely no sense that Daniel owns this firm and nobody knows he's married with three children. Photography was invented when this story was written. He had none of his family? Why? Keeping work and private life separate is the most idiotic reasoning.

Rachel is just foolish. Yes, she married much too young and was sheltered all her life but still. She never walked out of the house without the family?

Her feelings of betrayal were done well. I like that she's infuriated and that she gets some digs in herself but what really changes from the beginning to end? Yes, another guy kisses her but again, keeping with the double standard, she's forced in to it, she can't actually initiate it or even enjoy it.

Oh, yes, his office now knows he's been hiding a wife and kids for years and they weren't even insane, at least Mr. Rochester had an excuse for his secrecy.

I also can't understand the latent misogyny in blaming a pregnant sick woman who is raising twins for not being there for a grown man 7 (8?) years her senior. Never mind she was 17 when she got pregnant with said twins. He could go to jail for statutory rape in certain states in the US.

This is just a very strange story. There are moments where I felt that it was really going to go somewhere but I knew it was a HP so it couldn't. I wonder, outside the constraints of the publishing restrictions, what could be done with this?

I think she should have left him and maybe do something with her artistic talent and perhaps gone to therapy to address her self esteem issues. Sadly the story did not respect her enough for anything like this to be a remote possibility.

boogenhagen says

Re The Ulimatte Betrayal - Michelle Reid takes on that ubiquitous myth of the "Seven Year Itch".

It isn't only a movie with Marilyn Monroe. It is also a sort of urban legend that says the seventh year of marriage or thereabouts, after people have settled into the 'rut' of the familiarity and routine of marriage, one or the other spouse might stray.

In last century, that was commonly thought to be the male partner of the marriage, as the wives were usually busy with motherhood and house running.

This h, Rachel, is the 24 yr old housewife mum in this situation. The book opens when her last remaining school friend, a London career woman herself, calls her up in the midst of evening kidlet feed and bedtime rituals to let her know her 31 yr old entrepreneur Captain of Industry husband, Daniel, is having an affair.

Rachel is in shock, she met Daniel when she snuck a night out at 17 and fell head over heels in love at first sight. Daniel was 24 and had a solid plan to become a Master of the Business Universe, but his fierce attraction to Rachel kinda threw a wrench in the plans.

It is strongly hinted that Daniel had planned to dump Rachel, mostly because he thought his career goals should be met before he took up a family and marriage, but Rachel's surprise pregnancy with twins put an end to that line of thinking. Daniel and Rachel get married, with Daniel shielding the sheltered Rachel as much as he could, just like her parents did, as he moves on and moves up in the business world.

So Rachel's neat, cozy little world is shattered when Daniel comes home that night and by the look on his face, she knows what her friend said was true. Daniel has been seeing another woman. Daniel tries to explain that Rachel was dealing with sick twins and a fractious new baby, she was feeling ill herself and Daniel was fighting a takeover of his company.

Rachel responds to that in a VERY negative manner, she takes him to task for being a cheater when she was trying to keep the house and home going and Daniel swears it was a mistake and will never happen again. Rachel doesn't care, her trust is shattered and she wants a divorce.

Daniel doesn't leave and there is angry sex that ultimately Rachel can't respond to and more verbal fights and the overriding need to keep this huge chasm of doom from enveloping the kids. Rachel also realizes that while everyone else has been growing and changing, she has stagnated.

Daniel has obviously moved into a more sophisticated world and Rachel wants to stay in their cozy, older, but small house and just be a mum. Rachel figures Daniel never brings business associates home because their lifestyle definitely doesn't reflect his CEO status and she both regrets and resents that Daniel hides them from half of his life.

So it is with a serious sense of resolve that Rachel decides to take herself in hand and get some interests outside her home and family. Part of it is that Daniel doesn't communicate about his life outside their home and Rachel believes that he feels ashamed that he got trapped by a teenager and that he is ashamed of her.

The other part of it is that Rachel gave up the potential for an art career to marry Daniel, she doesn't regret it, cause she really, really loves Daniel and motherhood is her avocation, but she also never got to develop her own inner self and now she feels it is hindering her from making a break from or resolving things with Daniel.

Rachel knows that in order to have any sort of resolution one way or the other, SHE has to grow as person. While Rachel doesn't hold herself responsible for Daniel's affair, she does see how her naivety and blinders might have contributed to the other problems in her marriage.

There is also Rachel's very deep need to make Daniel hurt as much as she does and she flat out tells him she wants to see him bleed. So Rachel cuts her hair, buys a new wardrobe and get a much more updated image,

(It was a funny moment for Rachel, she is doing an image-in-the-mirror inventory and decides she needs a new look. I was highly entertained by her thoughts of dumping the baby in Daniel's arms in his big time office while she took the day off to pamper herself. Sadly, Daniel's very nice mother came to watch the baby.)

Daniel comes home to the change and he does the usual HP inscrutable male act. It is clear that he thinks Rachel's new look is round two in their ongoing war and he offers to take her out. So with her daughter's full fledged six year old encouragement, Rachel dons a daring red dress and sallies forth to battle.

(Daniel also gets a huge lecture from his mother, who is very proud of her single parenting of her successful son. But his mother also makes it clear that she really loves and likes Rachel a lot and that Daniel needs to be very careful cause if Rachel decides to dump his hiney, he will probably be in a world of hurt.)

Daniel gets all dressed up himself to take Rachel out and it isn't to the local Italian family bistro either. He takes her to a very upscale London place and Rachel gets to see the other side of Daniel's life for the first time. She doesn't like it much, especially when they keep meeting people who clearly know about Daniel's ex-girlfriend and assume that Rachel and Daniel are newlyweds.

There is one man in particular that is really flirty with Rachel and Daniel gets super jealous. Rachel thinks it serves him right, he has hidden her and their kids for all this time and she isn't happy about it.

(Tho I kinda got Daniel's reticence about his family. I was married for years before my co-workers figured it out, to their great and everlasting shock. I just always felt that what was personal in my life had no place at work, nor did I want to deal with the gossip that went around like it did with some of my co-workers.)

Daniel tries to explain that he keeps his private life just that, private, but Rachel is humiliated all over again and feeling even more alienated from Daniel. Things go from bad to worse when her school friend shows up while Rachel and Daniel are dancing.

The woman accuses Daniel of cheating on Rachel again and then makes disparaging comments about Rachel herself, all the while making it clear that she resents Daniel for turning her buffet offer down. So we learn that Rachel's friend wasn't really being a friend when she called Rachel, she wanted Daniel for herself and was stirring the pot.

The woman can't see Rachel's face, so she has no idea until Rachel turns around that she just spilled the beans on her whole campaign. Rachel stares her down and the woman fades into the HP mists, but Rachel has some hard questions for Daniel about why he never said anything and he only says he did not want to hurt her feelings.

Rachel is a confused mess still, but she and Daniel do manage a breakthrough on the Purple Passion

moments. Rachel isn't feeling as fulfilled as she used to, so she has to wonder if she is ever going to get that back and Daniel takes off again for business.

Rachel resents that he is trying to force her to trust him when she isn't sure, so she decides to take an art class. The teacher happens to be the potential OM she met during their dinner in London. He quickly makes it clear that he isn't adverse to being her partner in a revenge affair and when Daniel sees the OM one night after he gives Rachel a ride home and kisses her, (Rachel pulls away,) he soon learns that turn about is a skillet whack to the head.

Daniel becomes very uncommunicative and probably thinks Rachel is having her own affair. She is not, but the kids start acting up and the atmosphere is hostile. Rachel starts feeling sick and Daniel gets angry because she doesn't call him to come home. But Rachel never has called Daniel at work, not once in seven years.

(MR uses that to highlight the very separate spheres that Daniel and Rachel have fallen into, it is a very stereotypical role assignment. Rachel deals with all the home front stuff and Daniel goes out to hunt for dinner.

Daniel's reaction is meant to show that he does want to participate in the running the homestead, just as his taking her to dinner at a place he is well known at in London can be interpreted as him letting her into his other world, but Rachel can't quite see that yet.)

Rachel keeps going to her class, even in the face of Daniel's disapproval and another big blow up happens when the frustrated wanna be OM gets rejected and throws it in Rachel's face that Daniel's former fling is a hot shot lawyer and Rachel is totally inadequate in the eyes of the world as Daniel's other half.

Daniel freaks out when Rachel gets home and Rachel is so furious she lets him think what she wants. Daniel is very intense when he declares that he only wants Rachel and he demands her trust, but Rachel isn't sure she is ever going to trust him again.

Then Daniel's fling calls the house and Rachel is hurt and furious and so is Daniel. Things are looking decidedly grim and it is almost Christmas and their house is too small for all the visitors and Rachel doesn't want live in help and everything is a huge mess.

There is still boudoir bouncing moments, but even tho Daniel begs for forgiveness, Rachel can't seem to find it in her and she knows she is holding back on the intimacy because she still can't stare into Daniel's eyes during intimate events.

Then Rachel starts worrying that the boudoir bouncing isn't up to Daniel's standards anymore, she had to rearrange a bunch of rooms to get everyone to fit into the house and Daniel flips out. He is apparently EXCEEDINGLY wealthy and he wants to move to a bigger house that reflects that. He is also irked because he and Rachel are going to have to give up their bedroom to her parent's for two nights.

The fight clears the air a little, and Christmas goes well. But Rachel is still worried about how unsatisfactory their formerly spectacular love life is going and she knows that Daniel can now be tempted. She is also still doing lots of sketches and drawings and for some reason, even tho she did not go back to the classes, the sight of her sketch pad makes Daniel very upset.

MR gives us the only POV of Daniel in the story when he mother calls work one day cause Rachel is having a huge crying jag. Daniel rushes home and he thinks maybe the OM did something horrible to to her and he is going to break his face.

(He still believes that Rachel is having an affair with the OM as she hasn't chosen to enlighten him, mainly cause she is irked that he thinks she would stoop to his level. I was really impressed that here is a man who is still determined to hang on to his wife, even if he thinks she is cheating on him.)

Then Rachel announces it is all his fault cause she is preggers and as usual, he failed just like the first two times to 'take care of things,' and Daniel is overjoyed.

(It was a very funny scene. Rachel has a bad reaction to the pill, so every time they have a baby it is Daniel's fault cause he offers to be the one to take care of the birth control and he fails. Rachel tells him he may be able to run a million companies, but he is useless and she will be dead by the time she is thirty at this rate.)

This means they have to move, Rachel has to accept the staff that comes with the house and Daniel is finally getting the material things he wants. Rachel is now determined that they will stay married. She has three kids, soon to be four, Daniel is a good father and she figures if he only strays once every seven years or so, she can tolerate it.

Daniel isn't so accepting tho, he throws down an ultimatum that she either accepts him as he is and starts looking at him in bed or they won't be in bed together anymore.

(Daniel is probably feeling irked because Rachel does no drawings of him and only has one caricature of him as a devil in her sketchbook.)

Rachel feels like Daniel doesn't belong to her or really love her anymore and with that ultimatum that Daniel throws out, she doesn't know what to do.

Then the twins run away after a fraught morning of Rachel trying to pack up a house and the kids making messes trying to help and Rachel is very preggers and she yells at them. Rachel is frantic and then Daniel's secretary calls, the twin's called a taxi to take them to Daniel's office and Rachel rushes over there in leggings, messy hair and an old shirt of Daniels.

When she gets there, she passes out in Daniel's office in sheer relief, while his whole company looks on in surprised wonder that Daniel has such a young and pretty wife with passel of kids to boot and is very solicitous of them, it is quite a change from his usual formidable man in charge demeanor.

When Rachel comes to from her faint, the twins are contrite and Daniel wants to seriously talk. Daniel explains that yes, he was going to break up with Rachel all those years ago. But only because he was obsessed with her, she had a great chance at a good career and he really believed that he was wrong to tie her down and confine her at 17. Then she got pregnant and he was really, really happy cause she had to stay with him and he got to keep her.

(This also probably explains his 100% percent failure on the birth control front, Daniel keeps impregnating her to make her stay with him.)

He also feels guilty cause he took some big risks to build his conglomerate and he also deliberately kept Rachel and his kids out of the business side of life because he wanted them cloistered like they were his seekrit garden retreat.

Then another company tried to take over his firm and Rachel and the kids were ill and he went off the rails when Rachel couldn't be as supportive when he would come home to her and he just went nuts. His fling consisted of taking the woman out around London, but NOT sleeping with her, and then he got drunk one night an ended up at her flat, but he was too drunk to do anything.

(Tho he really did not know that until the OW called the house to stir things up and told him nothing happened while she was hurtling insults at him.)

Daniel explains that the takeover attempt scared him, then Rachel found out about his very bad behavior and even tho he thought she might leave him, he had to hang on for grim life because he loves her beyond reason.

Rachel tells him that nothing more than the kiss Daniel saw ever happened with the OM and she also asks Daniel how does she know he won't go off the rails again. Daniel tells her it did not work the first time and he has a healthy respect for her abilities now.

Rachel lets him know that he needs to ask her what she wants out of life, not assume things, because while she liked art and she thought about a career as a teenager, she really enjoys being a wife and mother and domestic engineering is the career of choice for her.

So while Daniel tells her he mourns the infatuated teenager she used to be, he is also very happy with the strong woman she has grown into. There is also the realization that both of them need to communicate and both of them need to be able to lean on each other, even if it that means stepping into the other's usual sphere to get through tough times, instead of Daniel doing all the protecting and Rachel doing all the home running.

Rachel has never stopped loving him, even when she hated his guts, so she tells him just that. Daniel's sincerity and his re-avowal of love convinces her that they can go on together, happy in love and building a life a on much firmer foundation for the big HEA.

This one is very intense and very, very well done. It is a very good exploration of what can go wrong when two people marry relatively young and don't communicate or share large parts of their lives with each other.

MR also makes it clear that while Daniel did not physically cheat, he still committed a HUGE betrayal. The time Rachel took to recover from that was realistic, as was the transformation of Rachel's character when she took steps to establish her own identity outside of the traditional wife and mother roles.

This is on the HP required reading list. Not only it is a classic angstfest of cultic proportions, it is also a very realistic look at what might occur after the newly wedded HP bliss wears off. Life isn't always little white cottages and roses, even in HPlandia and this book is an excellent, emotional exploration of how a couple can find their HEA once again.

Dinjolina says

[did not sleep with the other woman (hide spoiler)]

Glire says

Las historias que involucran infidelidad siempre son difíciles de calificar para mí. Basada, por supuesto, en mis propias creencias e incapacidad para el perdón.

Puedo entender que alguien que está en una relación se enamoró de otro, por el motivo que sea. Si la historia se desarrolla desde esa premisa —como sucede con Thoughtless—no tengo problema. Desarrolla esa trama de manera sensible y ya me ganaste. Love is love.

Pero, ¿perdonar una infidelidad? **Jamás.** Me resulta inconcebible y estúpido. ¿Por qué volverle a entregar tu corazón y tu confianza a alguien que no lo valoró la primera vez? No, no y simplemente no. No lo entiendo. No lo acepto.

Esto último es la base de la trama de este libro. Y debería odiarlo, pero me encantó. Michelle Reid logra una ejecución perfecta en un tema tan delicado. Y lo hace adictivo además; no pude parar de leer hasta que no llegué a la última página.

Seguro entonces se preguntarán porque solo tres estrellas. Y siento que la respuesta no sea muy satisfactoria: Amé la historia, pero detesto/aborrezco/odio las acciones de los personajes. Tres estrellas es, entonces, el resultado de la lucha interna de mis emociones.

KarenH says

I've read many books where the hero has cheated in the past and the story begins several years later (present day), but this is the first book where the affair is "fresh" so to speak. Daniel & Rachel have been married for 7 years and have 3 small children. While Rachel is home totally content with her role as loving wife and mother, Daniel, a corporate whiz kid, is rapidly rising to the top of the food chain. However, buying and selling businesses is a nerve-wracking, cut-throat profession. So, when his business is on the brink of being destroyed by a fraudulent takeover, the twins have the measles, the baby is colicky and Rachel is too tired for him, Daniel strays.

Rachel's "best friend" informs her of Daniel's affair in the first 2 pages of the book. The affair has just ended at this point so the story is based on 1) Rachel's struggle to understand *why*, bringing forth feelings of inadequacy, naivety, mistrust, fear, loneliness, and most of all heartbreak, 2) Daniel's battle with extreme remorse, self-loathing and the fear of losing what he loves most in life, and 3) the most important question of whether the marriage will be able to withstand the devastation and endure or has been irrevocably destroyed.

With my heart aching from the very first page, I was totally prepared not to read much past the first chapter. I mean seriously, I read romance for enjoyment and relaxation, not to be on the verge of tears with my blood pressure up, nerves frayed and my heart wrung out. But just like a car accident you come upon, knowing you shouldn't look but you always do, I flew past the first chapter and didn't stop until the end. I became so invested in this couple. Was Rachel an idiot for not picking up on the signs? No, because she loved her husband immensely and trusted him completely. Afterwards, was her confusion with sex realistic? Totally. Normally uninhibited, Rachel could only have sex with Daniel if the lights were out and she closed her eyes. Even then, she couldn't climax because the faceless ghost of the "other woman" always came to mind. (That seemed so real to me). Did I hate Daniel? Surprisingly no, the pain he was in from hurting Rachel was palpable. Of course there is no excuse for what he did, however, I truly believe he suffered as much from remorse as Rachel did from heartache.

Only in an extreme case would I possibly consider adultery as justifiable and this isn't one of them. But the author does an excellent job of laying feelings bare...we do not have to question any motives and therefore can understand how both Daniel and Rachel react and progress.*** I'll give you a hint of a spoiler: the truth of what really happened runs along the same lines as what happened in *The Sweet Gum Tree* by Katherine Allred. So if you have read TSGT, let that be your small measure of comfort if you read *The Ultimate Betrayal*.

I gave this book 4.75*** because it was such a touching, emotional read for me and every once in a while I guess I need the jolt of awareness. If you're on the fence about this type of story, besides being a remarkably

in-depth study of a relationship, I can also say there is a satisfying, believable HEA; however, if you hate the idea of having a lump in your throat for a few hours and you really don't think you can handle a "cheating hero" premise, then you should probably steer clear of this one.

Paige Bookdragon says

cue Sam Smith's I'm Not The Only One in the background

Okay, before I proceed to the proper review, let me just say that Sam Smith's song is not *really* the proper song for this book. The only thing the song and the book has in common was the "guy cheating at his wife" part. Though the story behind the lyrics is different than the story in the book, it still made my cry.

What will you do if your partner cheated on you?

I rarely read books with married couples because I know something fucked up will happen in the story. Either one cheats, one dies or there is a big misunderstanding leading to divorce..things like that would surely happen.

The Ultimate Betrayal is a story about how a wife deals with the fact that her husband (Daniel) has cheated on her. Granted, it didn't last long, but cheating is cheating.

When Daniel said this at Rachel:

"I never meant to do it...she was just there when I needed someone..."

I was livid. Because hello? Are you sleeping when you take her out to dinner? When she's all over you, were you doped? No. You are perfectly aware of that.

Rachel was devastated when she found out that her husband of seven years cheated on her. Who wouldn't? Like everyone in this earth who was cheated, she asked herself the same questions.

Did she do something wrong? Did she failed as a wife to him? Was it because she's not as pretty as the woman he cheated on her? Was it because she's "just" a simple housewife?

Insecurities and self-blame is the first thing that she felt and it was shitty but it's what usually people who were cheated feel at first. Daniel begged for forgiveness of course. Blaming that he was pressured on his work, she was tired all the time because of the new baby and he was worried for her and blah blah blah. He said that he loves her and the woman he cheated on her was nothing and he already ended it before she found out. But honestly, I think the real question Rachel (and all who were cheated) wants to know is/was:

There's a lot more to the story that I wouldn't spoil but the thing that really made me give this book a five star is the realness the story was portrayed. People change after this kind of ordeal and Rachel and Daniel changed too. It's always a question whether the love between two people is strong enough to overcome this problem and I think Rachel and Daniel's love was tested when shit hits the fan.

Not to spoil the ending but if you have watched the music video of I'm Not The Only One, then I can tell you that it was really different from the story's ending. :)

Jess the Romanceaholic says

Holy cannoli was this a good book!

It's a bit dated (obviously set in the 90's as the fashions will attest lol), but other than that, wow.

I don't normally intentionally read books involving infidelity, but I'm so glad I picked this one up.

It's very realistic -- all the bitterness and anger and hurt and resentment are illustrated beautifully -- from Rachel being angry with herself for letting them grow apart to her inability to climax during sex because whenever she gets close, she remembers/thinks about The Other Woman.

I won't give any real spoilers, because that would, well, spoil things *snerk* so I'll just say that it was a tough book, with tons of angst, a **lot** of self-realization, and an absolutely lovely ending.

5 Stars.

Nikki ? Navareus says

*****THREE AND A HALF STARS*****

StMargarets says

I was afraid to read this because of the cheating allegations that blow their marriage wide-open. It was painful to read the heroine's reaction, but MR kept the action moving along so it wasn't all navel gazing and recriminations. The heroine's focus on her own needs made sense and pointed the way to a believable HEA. A challenging read rather than warm fuzziness.

KatieV says

Michelle Reid is one of my favorite HP authors. She knows how to bring some genuine emotion even when

working with very common tropes, but this story was different in that it was less tropey and more realistic in scope. There was no private island, no amnesia, no blackmail, etc.

This story isn't my usual taste. I waffled on reading it and tbqh it won't be a re-read for me simply because it's not my cuppa and not a "fun" sort of angst. But, I have to give credit to Reid for her ability to bring the angst in a way that feels real and had to rate it accordingly.

I've never been through what the heroine went through, but I could see myself reacting in many of the same ways. I particularly identified with one part, because I had to turn the page to get to it and it was so crazy that I was thinking the EXACT same thing the h was thinking.

She'd just struck out angrily and bitterly at her cheating H in a way that she was ashamed of and, while understandable given how utterly devastated she was, it didn't put her in the greatest light.

I was thinking 'damn girl! Why'd you have to go there?! You had him where you wanted him!' I turned the page to find that her thoughts were:

She felt ashamed of herself, and angry, too, because in lashing out at Daniel like that she had given him the right to attack her when, until that moment, she'd had everything stacked her way.

Petty, huh? But that's exactly how I'd have felt. Like her, I wanted her behavior to remain above reproach so that he felt even worse about what he'd done.

Problem is, there were children involved. It wasn't just about the heroine scoring points off the hero. They had twin 6-year-olds and a 6 mo old. The book also dealt with how children are affected by this sort of adult drama. Both the H/h tried to hide their problems from the kids, but the 6-year-olds were more attuned than they expected. That part was painful, because it's hard to enjoy any point scoring (no matter how well deserved) that ultimately hurts innocent children.

So, not an easy read, but effective for what she was trying to accomplish.

A few spoilery observations:

(view spoiler)