



It Started with Brian

Dan Kincaid , Adam Phillips

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Sam searches for love and acceptance as he deals with the pressures of student life, a troubled family and his emerging confusion over his sexuality as he finds himself falling in love with his best friend.

'It Started with Brian' is Dan Kincaid's auto-biography (Sam in the story). He passed before he was able to able to finish it and a friend (Adam Phillips) continued it in his honor.

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From Reader Review It Started with Brian for online ebook

Edina Rose says

Why did I start reading this book? It is a true story, dark and painful. And it is heartbreaking. It is about the love between two friends over two decades. One is bi, one is straight. Ever wondered if Straight-For-You really exists? Brian is the proof that a completely straight guy can fall in love with a man. It makes you see that at the end of the day, love is about the person, and not the gender.

The love Brian (straight) felt for Sam (gay) was so deep and strong, it went over best-friendship. It's like it started as friendship and just kept growing until it went over simple friendship. It became a need to connect the Sam in a total way, which meant a need to be as physically close to Sam as he was emotionally close to him. From the book, you can see that Brian's love for Sam is not the same as Sam's love for Brian. Sam's love is more sexual while Brian's love is more emotional. Sam gets out of control when he can't express his love physically to Brian. while Brian gets out of control when he loses his emotional connection to Sam. It is very clear in the book when Brian said to Sam that the most important for him was their best-friendship, this intense connection they had, and it is when he loses that that he falls out of the wagon. For his part, Sam cannot continue the emotional connection, the best-friendship and keep his hands off Brian, and decides to put some distance between them.

The two loves are strong, but not equally strong. I ended the book and realised that Sam loved many people, men and women, while Brian only loved Sam. Brian's love for Sam was exclusive and total. Sam's love for Brian was not. He was always loving two people at the same time. Even at the end when Brian tells him he loves him and wants to build a life together, Sam puts him on hold and falls deeply in love with another man, and tells Brian off. Sam planned to build a life with this other man when the man dumped him and he went back to Brian. He builds a life with Brian, but tells Brian he is still in love with the other man and misses him, that it is still painful. I can't believe how hard it must have been for Brian to hear that. But Brian's love was strong, their love was stronger than that pain and that is what counts.

Sam died before the end of the story. I hope he rests in peace.

This story told me that you can have the strength to live and be happy and successful even when people have tried to destroy you since your childhood. You may have been abused, mistreated, abandoned by your parents, raped physically and emotionally, and still be happy, and still be strong like Sam was. He really was an amazing man. It is strange how in this story, Sam who was terribly abused since childhood ends up loving many people, building a good career and a relatively good life. He did this while Brian, who came from a loving and supportive family and had never been abused, ended up drinking his life away and having no career and no love life. Logically, Brian should have been the one to "build" more. I think that is the thing that touched me the most in the story: Sam's strength, love of life, love of people, determination to succeed, courage, incredible resilience. He was a life's hero.

Thanks Sam for this book. In spite of all its darkness, it celebrates life, love, positivism. It makes me think of La Fontaine's fable "Death and the Woodcutter": a woodcutter has a very miserable life, all the bad that could happen in a life happens to him. So he calls for Death. Death appears, but the woodcutter decides that he wants to live after all. The moral of the poems is that although death makes all the pains go away, it is better to suffer than to die, and that is engrained in human beings. I wish everybody finds a way to reach this positive part of their humanity that tells them it is worth living when the life gets too tough.

I wish all the best to Brian and Chris (Sam's child that Brian adopted). And I wish for him to love deeply again, to live and love and let himself be loved this time, if not for him, then for Sam and Chris.

Alastair Patton says

One of the most important stories I have ever read

Wyvernbride says

Shit! Just finished. Crying like a baby. I think I will write a review on this one soon. It's just too much right now. All I can say is, that I'm so so sorry that Sam and Brian didn't have more time. They both would have deserved it so much.

Maggie Simms says

This was a very emotional read. This is Dan Kincaid's auto-biography. He passed before he was able to able to finish it and a friend had to continue it in his honor. Throughout the story my heart went out to Dan (Sam in the story) and John (Brian in the story).

They had to go through so much hurt, pain, fear, sadness, misplaced guilt and loyalty to realize their unconditional love for each other. This is a heartbreaking story. Needless to say this is an absolute tear-jerker. but I am so glad that I read it. So generous of Dan and his family to share his story...can't help but wish 'forever' would have lasted a little longer for them.

Sadonna says

Honestly, I'm too much of a wreck right now to write a review. Powerful. Heartbreaking. Beautiful. Will try to write something more coherent later.

Major English (Laura) says

How on Earth is this rated four stars? I tried so hard to stick with this because I so badly wanted the GFY and friends to lovers bit to happen. (but due to the ridiculous way that Sam selfishly ignored his best friend, Brian for the past two years, i dont even care about the best friends to lovers bit, because they arent even best friends anymore. Even though i really liked Brian, Sam was a complete and utter mess.) And at the end of chapter 16 I had to give up. I mean the ridiculous "explanations" and "excuses" and "rationalizations" that Sam, the narrator has are just ludicrous and make me angry at this point. This excerpt at the end of chapter 16 was the final straw:

"In the immediate aftermath [of her sister's death, my pregant wife Erica] ended up in the hospital on suicide watch. Twice. I understood her despair personally, from my own past, but I didn't have the power to do anything to help her.

Gradually, Erica sank into a depression so dark, there was no reaching her. I tried so hard, but whatever we had together wasn't enough to bring her back. At this point she would have had to get happier to find the energy to kill herself.

All I could do was hang on to my work and my sanity, for the sake of my wife and my unborn child. I left for work every day, wondering if she'd be there when I got home. I tried over and over again to get help for her, but she refused to stay in the hospital, and I didn't want to commit her against her will."

My thoughts: Really? Your pregnant, ex-drug addict wife is on suicide watch and you can't do anything to help her? Even though you are a crisis counsellor who has many resources to help her. Sam, you are a therapist!!! And you don't want to commit her "against her will" even though she tried to kill herself twice, is pregnant, is incredibly depressed and is like 20 years old just like you. And meanwhile, you go off to work every day and your psychotic ex-boyfriend who nearly killed you literally stalks you and you think that Brian and his parents and siblings, the people who have always loved and supported you, are disgusted by you, even though they never have said or done anything to show that and instead show their unconditional love and support to you.... No! No more reading this! Too much! Too infuriating. Last straw. I wish I never even started this. It looked so promising and started off great, but just got SO bad!

Nellablue says

This is one of the most touching and heartbreaking stories that I've read in a long time. I am amazed by Sam's strength. I just can not believe how much he and Brian have been through. And I'm angry that fate was so unfair to them.

I wish happiness to Brian and Chris.

I'm also grateful that Mr. Adam Phillips was able to complete this book, because, in my opinion, it's a must read. I'll never forget this story.

Holly says

A very special book. Heart-breaking. I can't get it out of my mind and it will be with me always.

Nile Princess says

This book was an emotional rollercoaster, but once I started reading I couldn't put it down. I was up till 4am reading it, and then got up again at 7:30 to finish. It is 34 chapters long with a postscript as Chapter 35.

It is the story of a bi high school student Samuel, who falls in love with his best friend Brian, but even though the book is called It Started With Brian, I felt that it more accurately started with Brian's sister who Sammy dated, and fell in love with, first. The story follows all the twists and turns in Sammy's life and the partners and relationships that he has before he finally embraces true love.

Before you read this book, it helps to know the following things so you can decide how 'heavy' of a read you're in the mood for right now. These really make the story resonate and kick you in the chest:

1) (view spoiler)

and

2) (view spoiler)

As far as the writing itself goes, the first 13 chapters have a very simplistic style. It follows the author through high school and were 'ok' but nothing there really grabbed me. I could have taken the story or left it for the first 13 chapters, to be honest.

Then we get to Chapter 14 and sh*t gets real. You can almost tell the exact chapter that Adam starts co-writing with the author and a beta is introduced. The style smooths out and the story flows much better.

At Chapter 19, the opening paragraph really brings things home to you and things get serious. But you still have 16 chapters to go.

Note: If you just want a happy ending, stop at Chapter 34. The postscript is from the real life Brian and addresses the two spoilers I referenced above. Again, it makes things very 'real'.

This is not an easy story to read. It is always witty, at times fun and happy, but often heartwrenching and sad. You will, possibly, lose patience with Sammy for his choices at times. But, for me, I could empathize because he was dealing with so much and was clearly emotionally 'broken'. Plus, he was only in his twenties! How many people are still making effed up decisions in their thirties or forties even?? His love for his son and the people around him resonates throughout the story and that is what stood out for me.

This is definitely a story I recommend. It is the penultimate 'gay for you' story, and proves that true love transcends gender or sexual orientation.

And now, a rant that you should only read if you've read the above spoilers and don't mind being further spoiled. I just have to say that (view spoiler)

I really think this book should be published. I think Adam should revamp the first 13 chapters and shop it to a publisher. I would definitely buy a copy.

Kathleen says

This book made me cry and laugh and be amazed by turns. I don't know if it is because I knew it was an autobiography that it seemed so much more real than many things I have read recently. This story tells the story of the tragic and beautiful love of two friends over close to two decades as they work out their own issues and how to trust each other. It is not a book I will be re-reading very often because it was so emotionally raking but it is a book that will stay with me for a very long time. I highly recommend it.

Ewelina says

One of those books where you finish it and spend 20 minutes lying on the floor digesting it, feeling utterly drained of all energy.
Powerful and meaningful.

Billy says

Thank you Dan for writing this wonderful book about your life. This was the second time I read this book and it still struck a chord straight to my heart. I'm still sitting here taking it all in. It must have been so hard for him to be so honest with his life. I feel like in so doing so it helped him deal with all that happened in his life.

As I was reading, I couldn't help but once again relate to the situations and events that happened to Dan and reflect it on own life and what happened to me when I was growing up. Like Dan, I had also been sexually molested when I was a kid and I struggled with depression and being gay even until this day. There was also a point in my life, just like Dan when I felt completely and utterly alone and tried to commit suicide. Some things that like you just can never get over and like Dan you just put it in a shelf in the back of your mind and don't let it come out to bother you.

But... I learned a great deal from living life and from this book. I truly did. Everything happens for a reason and I learned that when you love someone. YOU SHOULD JUST TELL THEM because in Dan's case, life is short and you never what life throws at you but you gotta hold the people you love closer and kiss the ones you love a little harder.

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Bethany says

Wow, this book put me through the ringer. What an emotional rollercoaster ride, I laughed, I cried, I felt anger, but most importantly I felt the love Sam and Brian shared from the very begining. Knowing its a true story makes my heart break even more for all involved. I got all the way to chapter 29 before I put it down for the night only to wake up at 3 and finish it then not being able to go back to sleep cause my thoughts were all over the place.

If there is ever a doubt that a GFY story is real, this book proves its possible. A great BIG thanks to Adam for finishing this story.

Emma Sea says

[the author is dead from cancer, and had to have it finished by a friend (hide spoiler)]

Mel says

This story chronicles the real-life experiences of Dan Kincaid (Sam in the book) as a young bi-sexual man who struggles with a troubled past and coming to terms with his sexuality. These struggles are compounded as he finds himself falling in love with his straight best friend, Brian. The story follows Sam and Brian from their initial meeting in high school until a few months before the diagnosis of cancer which ultimately claimed Sam's life. There is no denying that this book is an extremely emotional read...you will be totally "wrung out" by the time you finish it. Some may be critical of Sam and his choices. Undeniably Sam made some misguided decisions in his life...who among us has not. But I believe those choices have to be viewed

within the context of his life experiences, many of which were beyond his control. He had a lot of baggage to deal with. And inarguably the good things in life seem that much sweeter when viewed through the prism of tragedy. I never saw Sam as a “glass half empty” kind of guy. Even through all his trials and tribulations, I saw a man who was loving and loyal to his friends and family...and ultimately hopeful. It is a very touching story that stays with you long after you finish the book.

This is an online publication that can be accessed by clicking on the URL on the product page.
