



# Beautiful Wreck

*Larissa Brown*

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*This is an alternate cover edition for B00I6SA40O*

In a bleak future built on virtual reality, Ginn is a romantic who yearns for something real. She designs environments for people who play at being Vikings. But when her project goes awry, she's stranded in the actual 10th century, on a storybook farm in Viking Iceland.

Heirik is the young leader of his family, honored by the men and women who live on his land. But he is feared and isolated because of a terrible curse. Ginn and Heirik are two people who never thought they would find a home in someone else's heart.

When forces rise against them to keep them apart, Ginn is called on to decide—will she give up the brutal and beautiful reality of the past? Or will she have the courage to traverse time and become more of a Viking than she ever imagined?

## Beautiful Wreck Details

Date : Published March 2016 by Cooperative Press (first published January 31st 2014)

ISBN :

Author : Larissa Brown

Format : Kindle Edition 460 pages

Genre : Science Fiction, Time Travel, Romance, Fantasy, Historical, Historical Fiction, Historical Romance, Fiction

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# From Reader Review Beautiful Wreck for online ebook

Anna (Bobs Her Hair) says

3.5 stars...Ja! I liked it. You'll probably like it too!

*Now in the 22nd century, everyone lived—to some degree—in a world that had happened before. We studied and debated and reanimated the words and fashions of a hundred yesterdays and adopted them as though we'd run out of original things to be. In the aughts and teens, being part of an anachronistic culture had been unusual. Now it was the norm. Everyone had a place and time they loved, and they lived in it every moment they could.*

Jen, a linguistic artist, lives in a stark future. People pay to submerge themselves in bygone eras, and Jen's part of a programming team that creates authentic virtual realities or 'sims.' Her area of expertise is 10th century Viking times. Touching ancient artifacts and reading an early diary about the Viking people lives fills her with wonder and longing. It's bliss escaping into a place where there's real green grass, a blue sky, an abundance of life, and real purposeful living. When Jen wakes up freezing cold on black sand beach after entering a Viking sim she can't 'tap out' of the program. She wakes on the black sand of Iceland's freezing coast. Then, she is saved by Heirik, a Viking chief and becomes truly immersed into the people, land, and the 'cursed' man. To find a way back to the 22nd century or find a way to reach the lonely, disfigured chief becomes Jen's dilemma.

I read this book based on my friend Jill's review. She loved it. She didn't love it. I was very curious. The price was right - \$2.99 at the time. I decided to try it. What the heck, right? I would put it down and move on if it was not my cup of tea. **I read this book until 2 o'clock in the morning ON MY iPHONE!!!** Waking up the next morning with a raging headache, I popped some tylenol and finished the last 6 % of the novel. This is why I'm rounding up the stars to 4.

*Beautiful Wreck* is compared to Diana Gabaldon's *Outlander*. There are similarities (time travel, heroine's first-person narrative, and love of panoramic setting or 'exposition') and notable differences, which I was hoping for and was relieved to find. Let's start with the differences. First, this story has a clear conflict and resolution – no plot-oriented tangents and no cliffhanger! Second, the focus stays on the hero and heroine (perhaps, a bit too much attention to the heroine). Jen/Ginn's friend Betta has page time, but she's part of the plot (and she's interesting too). Next, life is *mostly* peaceful in comparison to *Outlander*, which means no rapes, beatings or torture. Finally, *Wreck* is simply a love story – a love of Heirik, with an appreciation of nature and Iceland. There's isn't an over-achieving goal to alter history.

Heirik

What was so addictive about the book was that I couldn't get enough of Heirik. Born with a disfiguring birthmark over half his body doomed him as 'cursed.' Forbidden from taking a wife or feeling the touch

from one his clan members from birth he has learned to adapt and survive. He protects his people and has earned their fearful respect. His life is what it is. Overall, Heirik's loneliness was a tangible thing for me.

Jen/Ginn

Jen, who became known as 'Ginn,' was lonely too, but it was never explained to my satisfaction. She's a linguistics artist from the barren future (not sure why...it's not explained). She can't make connections to the people in her time...no backstory. Ginn travels through time...hazy.) And she reaches a time where she finds someone as lonely as her (and falls in love really fast). She finds a beautiful, lonely man who needs her as much as she's compelled to need and connect with him. There was so much longing in *Beautiful Wreck* that I felt almost afraid for a sad ending. Be at ease; there's a happy and clear ending.

There is beauty in the exposition. (There's also a bit too much repetition.) What this book is lacking is a focus on meaningful interactions with dialogue, as other reviewers have commented upon. The way 'untouchable' Heirik and Ginn tip-toe around each other is nearly frustrating - too much angst with Heirik that didn't seem quite in keeping to his character. There is so much build-up, but I could not stop reading!

I can live without graphic sex in my romances, but I do wish there would have been more detail in their lovemaking. **Intimacy!** I needed it because here is a man who hasn't been touched by a woman since his mother cared for him and...I was hoping for a variety of poignant scenes involving touch - the face, the body ...everything!

Anyway, I really enjoyed this book. The characters were compelling, the setting rich. The ending was satisfying. Although, I would have liked more happiness between the characters on the pages, I look forward to more of this author's work, and also considering that this is a debut novel I am impressed. She does leave this world open for future books, and I've been told there will be an upcoming novella.

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**Jill says**

**3.5 stars**

*James Alexander Malcolm MacKenzie Fraser* is still safe in his position as the *numero uno* hero in romantic fiction. But *Heirik*, the Viking gives him a run for his money.

**5-star** story with a **3.5-star** execution **but** still worth the read

This author has raw talent, and has it in her to be a writer possibly on a par with **Diana Gabaldon**, author of the *Outlander* series. There, I said it. She's *that* good.

Set initially in the future of the 22ndC, the heroine Ginn (her real name is Jen) is caught up in a simulation

which transports her back into 10thC Iceland. There she is found and rescued by a group of Vikings.

At only twenty-two, Heirik is the chief of his Viking clan. Honoured and respected, but feared because of his unfortunate and disfiguring birthmark across his face and upper body, Heirik is considered untouchable.

My re-reading of the ***Outlander*** series by Diana Gabaldon has given me a taste to time-travel back into the past for action, adventure and romance with a brave and brawny hero, and in my never-ending quest to find a book, series or author as good as ***Outlander*** and Diana Gabaldon.

I'm torn. On the one hand I think I may have stumbled on an author who has the potential to be another Diana Gabaldon. On the other, her debut novel, ***Beautiful Wreck*** is both a recommended read. And not.

### ***The Good:***

The developing romance, the spiralling sexual tension, the details and descriptions of everyday Viking life, the evident research. I would give **5 stars** for the amazing romance, the story, the emotions, the feels.

The setting in Iceland was a breath of fresh, glacial air. The era of the 10thC was depicted with vivid, stunning clarity. The prose was elegant. The characterisation of the hero, almost unbelievably realistic. His desperate loneliness, his longing for love and acceptance, his courage were written deftly and touchingly.

### ***The Not So Good:***

#### **1) The beginning**

It was clunky, difficult to follow and not engaging. Had I not seen the high average rating I would have stopped. I continued as I could see the potential in the story.

#### **2) The ending**

Rushed, with some things left unexplained.

#### **3) The setting in the future**

Light on details and descriptions.

#### **4) The time travel**

The explanation of the *mechanics* of time-travel were never clear or convincing.

#### **5) Repetition**

Some descriptions were repeated. Better editing would have solved this problem.

#### **6) Narrative v Dialogue**

The novel is heavy on the narrative. It drags down the story and flow. It needs much more dialogue to break up the often lengthy exposition.

#### **7) The heroine**

Seen through Ginn's eyes, we barely get to know the heroine. Where the hero is beautifully rendered in all his romantic fiction glory, I felt I hardly knew what Ginn's thoughts and feelings were, besides her love for Heirik.

#### **8) The cover**

First thing readers see. And often the only thing they judge a book on to decide to read it. Or not. I don't think this particular cover does the book any favours.

## 9) The price

\$7.99 for an e-book for an unknown author and debut novel, it's too pricey.

And yet despite these problems I was pretty much in awe of the story.

This is rating highly - 4.42 stars - and I'm glad because it will balance out my lower rating and somewhat negative review. With just a bit of tweaking and tightening this could have been a **5-star read**. The potential is there. Larissa Brown is **Talented**.

There are other authors with far less talent whose books I've rated higher. I don't want to discourage anyone from reading this book. **This author deserves to be read**. And encouraged to continue writing. Her talent is evident. But it needs to be honed. Weighing up the negatives though, (and there are a number) I would still love to see this author's book read.

So, for those who enjoy time-travel romances, romantic historical fiction or a budding Diana Gabaldon in-the-making, *Beautiful Wreck* may be worth the read.

**Steam:** 2.5

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## Heather says

Beautiful Wreck is a book so imbued with stark beauty and raw emotive power that as you read it, your internal topography is rearranged - it's the kind of book that shifts everything you knew, or thought you knew, about writing and love. The world just looks different when you're done.

The first thing you must understand when beginning this book is that it has a lot going on. Time travel. Vikings. A yearning so strong you can actually feel it. Love. Betrayal. There are even ponies and MMA fights. It is important, I feel, for one to read this book in a place with as few distractions as possible. Take a page out of The Neverending Story and find an abandoned attic in your local school, light some candles, and immerse yourself in one of the most powerful books you've ever read.

Ginn lives in a futuristic Iceland. She is part of a team creating the "tank," an ultra-immersive virtual reality device that makes one feel as though they are really IN another time and place. Her specialty is Old Norse/Old Icelandic language and culture, and has been creating an accurate historical portrayal of just such a time and place. Everything is perfect - the dress, the language, the buildings. Until somehow, things become too real and Ginn is transported back to Iceland, circa 920 AD.

She wakes on a black sand beach, disoriented and semi-conscious. She is found there by Vikings - honest to God Vikings - who take her back to their farm and create a place for her. One of those vikings is the clan chieftan, Heirik. Heirik is everything he should be: strong, beautiful, fierce... and cursed. Marked at birth by the "blood of the Gods," Heirik is destined never to touch or be touched - which is a problem, because Ginn wants very badly to touch.

What follows from there is possibly the most potent and powerful love stories I've ever read. The book is told from Ginn's perspective and Ginn's internal monologue is imbued with sparse but inspired language. One can really see the beauty of the landscape, one filled with color and texture, even though the words are

never flowery or overdone. In places it is as though she disappears as the narrator and the reader is left to "see" things first-hand. Ginn's voice is incredibly well done. As she begins to fall for Heirik, one cannot help but do the same.

In addition to the gorgeous scenery there are a handful of secondary characters brought to life by Brown's talented mind. Betta (the woman assigned to help Ginn acclimate) is particularly well-written. It is impossible not to like her, to hope that she, too, can find a way to secure her heart's desire. The effect is that of a multifaceted world one wants to return to again and again, to become a part of this vibrant and complicated family.

And finally, there is Heirik. Brown has created in Heirik a romance hero worthy of the title. Strong, compassionate, mercurial, flawed, powerful, loving, tragic, honorable, intelligent ... the list goes on. Rarely have I read such a dynamic character. In truth, I cannot think of another I've loved as much as he. Heirik is the reason I will be purchasing a hard copy of this book and will be reading it again and again.

In the end, I give this book my highest recommendation. The beginning does take a bit of work to understand - the future Iceland is a confusing and abrupt place. But in no time at all I was sucked into Brown's world, rooting for Ginn and Heirik to overcome all obstacles and to find a way to be together. I fell in love with a land and people more than a thousand years gone - and cannot wait to go back there again.

Disclaimer: I was given an ARC of this book in exchange for an honest review. This book far exceeded any and all expectations I had of it.

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## **Laura says**

The only reason this book is on my TBR list is because it was chosen by a member of my book club that assures us that despite it's terrible cover it is actually a wonderful read. I am going to have to take her word for it because as I've said before, I do judge books by their covers and this one is truly awful. If it weren't for book club there is no way I would have ever chosen to read this.

Ok read it. Here's why I've rated it 3 stars when I feel like this book has 5 star potential. First star gets deducted because of that awful terrible cover. Seriously. The sad part? The author has a Pinterest board with TWO covers that are waaaaay better suited. TWO DIFFERENT COVERS!!

The second star deduction is for the serious lack of editing. This book needs work. If my fellow book club member hadn't insisted it got better there is NO WAY I would have read beyond the first chapter. Not happening. In fact, here's what you need to know: Ginn lives in futuristic Iceland and works at some sort of real life role play immersion thing called the "tank" and is obsessed with the 10th century Vikings and is somehow transported to 920 Iceland to a Viking farm. There, now you can go read it starting on the second chapter.

Read it you should, because eventually you get used to the odd breaks and get so wholly sucked into the story you look past the editing flaws and are whisked away by the beautiful story. It really is. The way Ms. Brown describes the yearning to, well, not be lonely is something else.

For an \$8 ebook published by a publishing house I expect it to be flawless. If I had read this book as a beta reader I would have had nothing but praise for Ms. Brown and would have expected her editor to help her finish the job. Honestly? Between the terrible cover and horrendous editing I can't help but feel like Cooperative Press doesn't have Ms. Brown's back and that's sad because this book has so much potential.

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### **Ari Reavis says**

What an utter disappointment. The romance was stupid and annoying... 'I love you, you can't touch me, I'm cursed, I'll never love him again, I need him, marry my brother (WHAT?)" blah blah blah. So many descriptions of things that contributed nothing to the story and had me skimming. It got 1 more star tacked on at the end for having a HEA.

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### **Shannon Okey says**

The best novel I have read in years. Grabs you from the very first page and won't let you go -- everyone who's read the galleys hasn't been able to put it down. Beautiful Wreck has caused MANY (GOOD) sleepless nights!

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### **Penny Reid says**

3/24: I've slept on it. Here are my thoughts:

I don't know how to rate this book. If this were an indie book or a one of the big publishing houses, I would likely give it two stars (so, in other words, I wouldn't rate it on here at all). I'm sorry, I can't rate this book. I tried rating it at 2 stars for a few minutes, but didn't feel comfortable; therefore, I'm leaving it blank.

**The good:** The love story between the two main characters is beautiful and heart-wrenching. This writer can write (i.e. you feel like you're reading a book, not a high school after school special). The factual details are enthralling.

**The sad:** This book is a half-cut diamond. Meaning, someone cut part of the diamond, but didn't finish and certainly didn't polish.

#### A) LACK OF DIALOGUE

What can I say about this? Just... sad. Lots of telling and no showing. :-(

#### B) FORMATTING

There are no spelling errors (cut) or grammar issues (cut) but the formatting is-- by far-- the worst I've ever seen. It was so terrible, it made me raging angry and I almost didn't finish.

Every time I felt drawn into the story, the formatting yanked me out of it, like a crying baby on an airplane. Examples of bad formatting:

- 1) Scene breaks where the scene doesn't break
- 2) No scene breaks where the scene does break
- 3) No left indent at random times



- 4) Dialogue in the center of paragraphs
- 5) REALLY LONG PARAGRAPHS
- 6) Random italic text... maybe the text was supposed to be chapter headings? Not sure...
- 7) Inconsistent text used for chapter headings-- sometime it was capitalized, sometimes it was in the middle of a page with text above and below... I have no idea.
- 8) Also, table of contents was at the back of the book. That was amazingly unhelpful.
- 9) At the end of the book, there was no contact information for the author (or I couldn't find it). It's like the author was an after thought... sad.

#### C) CONTENT EDITING (PACING/FLOW)

The other issue (could have been fixed with a good content editor) is that the manuscript is repetitive. The author describes a scene (a field, meadow, the inside of the house, etc.); then, two pages later, the same field is described. This made me start skipping whole paragraphs (because I'd already read the description). Therefore, if new information had been present, I missed it.

Because of the formatting and the repetition, this book's pacing and flow suffered considerably.

#### D) MISC ISSUES

Also, when they came together in the end, it just ended. They didn't talk about anything!! I wanted to know what he thought of the oranges. I wanted to a sweet scene of TOUCHING. Maybe he wipes the juice of the orange off her lip. Let me be clear, I'm not interested in a sex scene. I wanted, while he's healing, a scene of them being together and how lovely and easy being together is once he accepts their destiny.

Also, something that drove me crazy was how the main character would describe a meadow then imagine doing something in the meadow for several pages. I don't know why the author did that. It slowed the story down, didn't add to character development, served no purpose. Yes, these sections were well written. However, why include these sections if they only slow everything down?

Also, the first part (when she's in future Iceland) I honestly was so lost, I thought about emailing the author and asking for directions. I had to ask other people who'd read it to explain what happened.

Also, (sorry, one more thing), even though this story was written from first person, I didn't know or really understand anything about Ginn other than she loved the hero. In fact, I felt I understood the hero's motivations, thoughts, and feelings better than Ginn's. :-\

**The ugly:** So... the cover, in my opinion, isn't ugly. It's just, in my opinion, a crime against humanity that it's being used for this book (or any book other than a 6th grade chapter book about Olga, the orphaned singing prodigy with a heart of gold). For shame.

**In summary (not that anyone cares at this point)** I can't recommend this book until it's cleaned up (formatted; edited for content, pacing, flow, and character development).

3/23: Finished on the plane. Maybe a review later...

2/27: I had a few minutes:

I'll redo it again after I read the book.

2/26: So... despite the horrific cover, I've been told this is an exceptional book. Therefore, I'm going to read it.

That stated, I am begging the author to reconsider the cover. I will design one for you for free!! As in, charge you no dollars. Please. Think about it. For the love of Hiddleston, just... think about it.

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### **Alex Tinsley says**

I am very much not a romance novel person, but if they were all as well-written, well-researched, and well-constructed as this one, I'd be tempted to change my mind ;-) Beautiful Wreck is engrossing, thrilling, frustrating, and heartbreaking. I devoured it in about three days (and spent a good portion of them in a legitimate mope because I was vicariously tormented by dark, sexy, tortured vikings- that's how you know a book is good, when your husband asks "What's wrong?" and you answer woefully, "The vikings are not doing what I want them to be doing!!")

I kind of also feel like I learned a lot about vikings (and reinvigorated my desire to visit Iceland.) You don't meet a lot of romance novels that are educational, haha. And though it plays a pretty small part in the book, I also want to give props for Larissa Brown's vision of the future- a cold, glassy world where everyone's wardrobe and social lives revolve around historical re-enactment. I love that. I would like to read a whole book in that setting, actually.

Also, major, major props for managing to write legitimately hot sex scenes without resorting to the awkward euphemisms standard to the genre. You will find no "throbbing manhoods" here, thank god. Be warned, though, that you WILL walk away from this book wanting to bang a viking, which is not a particularly useful or easily satisfied desire. Maybe you can find a stocky bearded guy...but you'll know in your heart that he probably can't handle a battleaxe. Sorry. Them's the breaks.

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### **Beverly says**

Disclaimer: I edited this novel.

Review: My close association with this novel no doubt colors my review, but I hope you'll trust me despite that.

This should be the first book you read in 2014. Larissa Brown creates setting, develops character, crafts plot in fresh, delightful ways. I grew to care deeply about even minor characters. The novel, set in a bleak future world and a lush 10th century Iceland will engross you. The book surprises and satisfies, avoiding romance and fantasy cliches, creating one of the richest examinations of identity and community that I've read in a long, long time. You will not regret the time you spend in the intriguing world Brown offers in the pages of Beautiful Wreck!

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### **Larissa Brown says**

Thank you for reading, queuing & reviewing Beautiful Wreck! I would give five stars to the amazing experience I had writing this book, but I feel odd putting stars on my own work. I hope you enjoy it.

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### **Rachael Herron says**

With a plot as exciting as it is bold, and with characters as real and important as family, Larissa Brown's BEAUTIFUL WRECK weaves an intensely gripping tale about the strength of women and the love they carry.

This is the story we've been waiting for.

I loved this book with all my heart. I can't wait for EVERYONE to fall in love with it (and them) the way I did.

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### **Giedre says**

Fantastic debut time travel romance (22nd century to early 10th century Viking Iceland) that captivated me from start to finish. Dreamlike writing, vivid world building, fascinating characters, epic slow-burn romance—*Beautiful Wreck* certainly has a lot going for it. The attention given to research of Viking Iceland is impressive. Though I wouldn't have minded spending a bit more time in the 22nd century, because I found it fascinating as well and wanted to know more. That, however, wasn't much of a flaw, as far as I'm concerned. The only flaw, if minor, I could personally find was the slightly rushed ending. Anyway, *Beautiful Wreck* is a beautiful slow read that impressed me very much indeed. Straight to my keeper shelf.

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### **ExlibrisLisa says**

Wenn ich könnte würde ich 1000000 Sterne vergeben, für mich ein absolutes Jahreshighlight!  
Die Geschichte um Ginn und Heirik in Island ist so wunderschön geschrieben, obwohl es ein leichter, historischer Jugendroman ist kam für mich auf keine der 668 Seiten Langeweile auf.  
Ich kann das Buch einfach absolut jedem empfehlen, ganz großes Kino!

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### **Amy says**

Every now and then you encounter a book that you know will be an amazing book from the very first page. This is such a book.

*A meadow would have been lovely. I'd come into the tank every day if I could feel lush, slippery grass between my toes, the gentle nudge of a breeze at my frothy hems. But the programmers couldn't accomplish the immense reach and power of outdoor scenes. Not yet.*

I keep trying to put my finger why I knew that this would be a 5-star book from the start, and I think that it's the lyrical, personal nature of the book. The author's writing is gorgeous and lush (to borrow from the quote). The settings of Future Iceland and Viking Iceland come alive in your mind as you read. Future Iceland is crowded, highly synthetic, and derives its pleasure from virtual reality. And this makes Viking Iceland, where Jen accidentally finds herself in the flesh rather than in a simulation, seem more real than the world from whence she came.

As another reviewer has said, I don't normally read romance novels, but if they were all as well-written and researched as this one, I'd give them much more consideration. The fact that Jen/Ginn and the Viking she loves can never be together or even touch creates an extreme form of romantic tension for the story. Even more, the author has created quite a conundrum of a character for Jen to love. He's fire and ice, water and sun. He smells intoxicatingly of fire, leather, furs, cinnamon. And he speaks with "[t]he sparsest poetry on his lips." "Gods," Jen says, "what would it feel like to kiss?" Indeed. I wanted to know and hoped Lofn would truly clear the way for impossible unions, for these two who want nothing more than to care for each other in small daily moments. "It is hard, Litla," he says to Jen. "To be so close, and stay away from you." Always "[n]othing made sense," she thought. "He wouldn't touch me, but he couldn't let me go. Even as he admitted his desire, he took it away." Ah, forbidden love, how you do sting.

Even the trees are sexy in this book: "a thousand wisps of papery bark curled to reveal blush and orange and copper under the trees' white skins." ...And the eyelashes: "[w]hen I lowered my eyelashes I felt every one as a miniature icicle, melting into dew around my eyes." ...And, of course, the thoughts: "I want forbidden things, thoughts with dark wings, bodies slick with sweat." Já.

I'm curious to see how male readers will react to this novel. At it's heart, it's a historical time travel novel in a gorgeous setting. It's not a heavy-breathing and constant quivering romance novel. After all, there's a universal pain to be felt in forbidden love. And there's plenty of sheep shearing and Vikings cutting off hands and such.

To start the year reading the best book I'll probably read all year ... maybe all decade ... means that I can't easily pick up the next book. It won't be rolling green or fluffy white Iceland. It won't be a gorgeously written book about forbidden love in an impossible past. It won't be this book.

Do yourself a favor and read this book when it come out in early February. Just one warning: when you do, you'll find yourself still up reading at 3 a.m. And for breathtaking visuals that will leave you wanting more, visit <http://www.pinterest.com/larissabrown...>

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## **Anniebananie says**

Hach war das ein schönes Wälzerchen! ? ich hatte zwar meine Probleme am Anfang reinzukommen, da mir die Beschreibungen der Zukunft doch etwas ungenau erschienen, aber als wir uns dann in der Vergangenheit befanden, wurde es toll! Der Schreibstil war angenehm und die Charaktere gut durchdacht und vielschichtig. Endlich mal ein Buch in dem die sich das Liebespaar vor ernsthaften und nachvollziehbaren Problemen wiederfindet. Und Ginn war eine reife Frau und kein nerviger, dramatischer Teenager mehr, was ich auch

nur gutheißen konnte ? Fazit: toller historischer Roman im Jugendbuchgenre! ??

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