



Miss Understanding

Stephanie Lessing

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Zoe Rose never quite fit in.

As the only kid in kindergarten with an enormous red afro, Zoe was taunted by the other little girls for refusing to share her "Annie" wig, even when she swore it was her own hair (it was).

In second grade, after seeing her best friend ridiculed for wearing a dirty, pink, polka-dot party dress to school every day, she became obsessed with understanding what makes *normal* girls tick and why they're so cruel to the girls who never seem to "get it."

And so Zoe begins a lifelong study of girl behavior, and by thirty, finds herself editor of *Issues* magazine. Determined to raid the locker room of the female psyche and rip open the frilly façade of femininity once and for all, she sets out to reform an entire nation of women, beginning with the readers of the most notorious magazine on Madison Avenue.

It's the feminist vs. the fashionistas.

Can Zoe stop girls from behaving badly toward other girls, and turn them into a strong, united force that can succeed in our male-dominated world? Or will her spectacularly warped sense of humor, pathetic wardrobe, and plethora of psychosomatic illnesses get her eaten alive?

Zoe's willing to risk losing it all, including her mind, but she'll walk away with something she never dreamed she wanted: the little girl hiding inside of her.

Miss Understanding Details

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From Reader Review Miss Understanding for online ebook

Ashley says

I'm scrolling down looking at the ratings for this book and I'm shocked at how many people dislike it. And they're all alike but somehow I failed to see what was being talked about. A lot of people said they felt like they were missing something. I didn't get that.

I like the book. I loved Zoe's sense of humor and her outlook on things. I'll admit, she was a bit weird with her germaphobia and stuff but she made a lot of sense. Each character was unique and I loved how they all came together in the story somehow. There was nothing about the book that was hard for me to understand and I followed along with every page. I even laughed out loud a few times.

I was hooked from the first chapter to the last. No disappointment.=]

Margaux says

If I could give this book negative stars, I probably would. This was probably the worst book I've ever read, including my high school Algebra text books.

I was so angry at the lack of plot and character development, I continued to read it, in the hopes that the ending would blow me away and make up for the time I wasted reading it.

Instead I was let down with the anticlimactic ending and the last chapters that rush to ensure each character has a happy ending. From the ridiculously unbelievable main character Zoe, a tiny red head, big boomed, loud mouthed, obnoxious feminist who gives "normal" girls a bad name, to the stuck-up closet lesbian mother in law, the only time I laughed during this book was when I was finished and realized the author had the gaul to litter the chick-lit genre with this waste of paper.

If you want to maintain brain cells, do not read this book.

Erica Glass says

I started out hating this book but I was on an airplane so I kept going with it. A while into it I started to really appreciate the message, if not the main character so much. I think it had interesting points about the way women interact with each other as well as family dynamics.

Laura says

Now I'm scared after reading the reviews, but I often end up liking the underdogs. I guess I can't expect much for my \$5 B&N finds.

I'm not too far in, but I have to comment. No, this isn't the greatest book ever. But it's holding my interest. Normally I'll read books and think things like "wow, I've done that, I've thought that, I totally know what you

are talking about." Not the case with this book. Zoe is nuts to me. She's 4'7" (ok, I get the short thing, though I'm that short), she's got HUGE boobs (totally not something I know about), she's a hypochondriac and a germophobe. She wears clothes because she has to, and has an exaggerated non-fashion sense. I sense that this will change throughout the book. Anyway, I'm amused at how odd she is, and that's keeping me entertained.

Ok, just in case there was any wonder, Zoe's fashion sense was never reformed that I can tell.

I kept going with this because I did want to know what happened, but this really wasn't a great book. The characters were not well developed, and were basically good or bad. They were all interchangeable within those categories. There were a couple of things that made me chuckle, but frankly the ending just set me over the edge and is forcing me to call this book dumb.

bookczuk says

Made it about 100 pages in, but ultimately didn't care about any of the characters or the situations. And Zoe's big fashion faux pas in the beginning could have been avoided if she'd applied a safety pin to her bra as well. What 36DD woman goes out in public, to a business meeting, bra-less? I don't care if you don't care or know style. It just wouldn't happen, unless your breasts figured prominently in your career.

Heather says

I did enjoy the book. It was humorous and I found myself laughing out loud. It seemed rushed at some points. Months passed without any mention and that made the ending feel a little rushed to me.

Tina says

Okay, so I love chick lit, and judging from the blurb on the back of the book, it appeared that this book was chick lit. It may have been, but it didn't fit the formula. Which isn't necessarily a bad thing. What was bad was the constant confusion I had over what was going on. First person narrative only works if you can understand what the narrator is thinking (and doing). Maybe that was the point, but the entire time, I'm thinking, what is going on here? You can tell that something is going on that maybe the narrator is missing, so the author gives you enough to know something is going on but not enough for you to figure it out. She won't give you enough to get a clear picture of the narrator's reality, which is really annoying. I really didn't like this book, and most chick lit is harmless enough to tolerate, but this was awful.

Dawn Michelle says

YUCK! YUCK! YUCK!

Look, I am ALL about chick-lit. Totally. I read Nora Roberts for heaven's sake. But this bored me from the first paragraph (WITH the notable exception of when she goes to her first meeting with her large breast hanging OUT of her shirt)!! I so didn't enjoy it and I am SO not going to pretend I did. It had the same tone

and cattiness of "Jane Austen book Club" (which I ALSO disliked greatly) and to be honest, I remember very little about this book. I really cannot believe I wasted an afternoon reading this. YUCK!!!

~language

Emily says

I tried to ignore the reviews on this one but even for a bargain book I was a little bored and disappointed. It was a little hard to follow who was talking when and the timeline was a little crazy. Don't recommend.

Jess says

I believe in the possibility of good chicklit with a strong feminist sensibility. This book has not realised that possibility for me.

The plot was a rambling mess, as was the structure - three chapters are devoted to Zoe's first day, laden with superfluous detail. The characters are awful and even the most feminist of them engage in negative female competitiveness. This may have been Lessing's attempt at the kind of satire and irony Zoe purported to offer the magazine, but I was not buying it.

Brenna Sluiter says

This book. This goddamn book. The only reason I kept the copy I rescued from a pile of secondhand books is that I have grand plans to go back through and mock it because, oh man. The main character is the most unlikable character OF ALL TIME (Humbert Humbert included), and barely competent as a human, let alone as a functioning adult and somehow managing editor or whatever of a major publication? She natters on about how women need to escape their social conditioning to be in constant competition with one another while simultaneously referring to every other female character as a "girl" and denouncing them as sluts or bimbos. I screamed a lot while I was reading this book. I threw it across the room a couple of times. I only finished it out of a sense of obligation. If this book was a person I would walk up to them and punch them in the face.

Lori says

Okay, so this book has some language and can be a bit crude, but I have not laughed that hard from reading a book in a very long time. The author does a great job of capturing how ridiculous women can be with each other. I read it on a plane ride once and was laughing out loud. Maybe it was because I was coming home from a very difficult trip involving the loss of a loved one, but I really enjoyed this book.

Kristen Beverly says

This book was an easy read, but the writing is horrible. I was very intrigued by the summary on the back of the book and the concept is good, but the writing is just terrible. When she's talking as if she's in kindergarten, she uses grown up words and sentences. Nothing that a little girl in kindergarten would ever say. It should at least be believable.

Varbra Hines says

I totally got this book! I found every type of woman that I ever met. I felt the pain that we women can inflict on one another. It was an excellent read!

Rose says

It really wasn't my cup of tea, and I'm not apt to recommend it to many people. I'm usually fair about giving books a fair shot, even if they're from genres that I don't normally read. I don't know if I absolutely hated it, but I definitely don't rank it as a good read. At least it was very easy to digest (I read it in about a day).

The story focuses on a rather flawed and seemingly quirky magazine editor who has a lot going on in her life, and she seems to speak in a dialect that's meant to be quirky and fun, but I found more often than not that it was quite cliched. I didn't like the polarizations of the other characters here either - they would have been far more interesting if it wasn't just a matter of dealing with "good" versus "bad" characters, and there are so many threads that are dangled in this book with respect to feminism and depression and other issues that just don't work themselves out by the book's end. It's so eccentric that it loses itself in those eccentricities is the best way to put it.
