



Diary of an Emotional Idiot

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Hello, my name is Zoe and this is my book. It is a document of Emotional Idiocy told in two parts. There is the "then" part, which explains how I got here, and there is the "now" part, which documents what I am doing here. At the moment, I am sitting at my desk naked but for some men's boxer shorts and many silver bracelets. I like to see myself in men's underwear. I like to see men in men's underwear. Men in women's underwear is also acceptable. Other women in men's underwear doesn't do so much for me. However, if someone were to bring a tribe of women clad only in men's underwear to my house, I might find it slightly exciting. I might not kick them out of my house. My house is not a bad house. It is a small hovel in a tenement building on East Sixth Street in New York City. I live there with few furnishings, many books, and a cat named Wimpy given to me by Jim, a talented but ornery painter I used to sleep with. Wimpy weighs twenty-two pounds and has a psychological disorder: If I leave him alone too long, he becomes convinced that he has fleas and scratches himself raw. This I am telling you because it is an apt metaphor for how I feel in my skin right now. I am digging at my hide, rubbing it raw because I've been rubbed raw by love gone wrong. Yes. This is another tale of love gone wrong. This is me turned idiot in the face of human interaction.

Diary of an Emotional Idiot Details

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Author : Maggie Estep

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Clifford says

I loved it. But I have always loved Maggie Estep and her perspective of the world. Now I have to find her other books.

Ian "Marvin" Graye says

Walking the Serrated Edges of Intimacy

*"I looked at the ceiling, as if its cracks would let in crevices of **some weird heaven.**"*

Zoe spends her twenties progressing from speed freak punk chick, via post-punk detox good looks, to psycho existentialist, while experimenting in emotionless fucking with anyone who has a perverted appeal:

"Sometimes the grotesque is incredibly erotic."

90's New York is like the 50's Morocco of William Burroughs and Paul Bowles where "Brilliant White Perverts" come *"to churn out books and fuck half the population."*

It's a literary, introspective and incestuous milieu: *"The poets were all fucking one another and writing about it,"* which describes Zoe's "diary" perfectly, although professionally her role is to punch out erotic "fuck books" for \$500 apiece.

She describes her fucks as "lovers", but it's clear that there's nothing more fulfilling than desire and lust going down. Not even friendship: *"He is my lover. He is not really a friend. I have friends for that."* And again: *"[we] used to be lovers and are still sexually attracted to and emotionally dependent on each other, but we refuse to love each other. We save that for people different from us."*

Zoe comes to realise that this is emotional idiocy. But how do you escape it? And when? Are we somehow perversely content to be emotional idiots now, maybe even just a little bit longer? Can we perpetuate this lifestyle through our thirties? Should we wait until our forties to get "serious"? What is the allure of the alternative? Is it worth it?

At times, the novel comes across as *post-punk chick lit* (with enough skill to place the emphasis on lit). Mostly, it's an hilarious catalogue of sexual adventures and misadventures, although when it deigns to get a little more reflective, it asks the right questions.

What do we all seek when we seek love? Do we crave a fairy tale, no matter how savvy and streetwise we think we are? Can lust and love be found in the one person? Can a friend be a lover? Can a lover be a friend? Can real life be fantastic? *Does familiarity breed discontent?*

"There's no suspension of disbelief. I know you too well. You know me. That makes it awkward. I can't project onto you. It won't work. Not now...In ten years...[maybe] we'll be tired of being Idiots. We'll fuck each other senseless and love each other, too. But not now."

This first novel is equally contemporary to the last three or four decades, but still speedy, fun and relevant.

Maggie Estep has a unique, indie, alternative-cultural voice. I can't wait to see how she's utilised and developed it since this first novel was published in 1997.

"He smoothed my hair and kissed the back of my head. In doing so, he let in Tenderness, and our Experiment in Emotionless Fucking had come to an end. There was a feeling between us."

SOUNDTRACK:

"Stay Away, Come Closer, Baby"

Maggie Estep - "Emotional Idiot" (on Def Jam Poetry)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CdxGvK...>

Maggie Estep - "Happy" (on Def Jam Poetry)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZUewhM...>

Maggie Estep - "Sex Goddess of the Western Hemisphere" (on MTV)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vd8seD...>

Romeo Void - "Never Say Never"

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JSWC3v...>

Romeo Void - "Never Say Never" [1982] [ReWorked]

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RWwx6W...>

Rebecca says

Stupid stupid stupid. I hate when crap masquerades as 'literature. Like oh, you have had such a hard life, so lets be all over dramatic about it. Nothing happens in books like these. Luckily, they are pretty short and quick to get through, so I think I wasted like a day on this. I don't know why I picked it up. I don't think it was on my list, but I think because it sort of had to do with NY, so I sparked my interest. Otherwise, no thank you.

Grade: D

Anina says

This is a re-read. It is an all time favorite and I recently bought myself a copy because it's going out of print.

It's really not for everyone. And it's really not that awesome. It's a cult classic, or at least, I am betting it is. There's a lot of shock for the sake of shock, which I usually am not a fan of. However, this book is sort of

canonical in a genre I can't really define. Something like the trashy hipster version of urban fiction.

Beth says

This book was very disturbing to me. I'm not sure why...I think that it reminded me in some ways of my life. I'm not sure how--I'm not a dope fiend. I don't know but it really disturbed me yet I couldn't put it down. Very quick read about a girl, her life, her parents, her drugs, and her boys.

Michelle says

I read this book a long time ago and loved it. Unfortunately I forgot the name and the author and have been looking for it for at least the past 10 years. I loved the writing style and loved the book and now that I finally found the title, I'm going to have to get another copy of this book. It's a fun fast read, and kind of a roller coaster ride. My suggestion is to find it and read, now, today!

Betsy says

Maggie Estep has a raw, intuitive writing style. She is not technically perfect, and it doesn't matter. This book first caught me at the perfect time in my personal development--like *Catcher in the Rye* or *Atlas Shrugged* or *The Handmaid's Tale*--and it is a perennial favorite.

Estep assails our senses with the rough and tumble history of her lovers, including a thinly veiled Mike Doughty as "Bev" from the band "Lotus Crew". It should be essential reading to all Soul Coughing fans, really, because of the insight into Maggie and Mike's relationship.

Plus, when I met her, she called me "radiant". How could I not adore her?

Dea says

DNF at p. 31. Racist, ableist, and I don't care to read about the sexual exploits of twelve-year-olds. Weird, huh?

Meg says

Super fun. I wish I had read this as a teenager. It's like Bukowski except:

- early 90s NY punk setting
- hilarious
- feminist
- better

Christopher says

Eh. (Insightful, I know.)

AJ says

I have a fondness for this book - I read it while going through a difficult breakup and Maggie's words kept me less lonely.

It's raw, bare, and written exactly in the right voice. It's a book that throws things in your face and doesn't apologize for it and it still comes off as honest. And the main character's insecurities make the reflecton somehow bearable.

Natalie says

I'm re-reading "Outlaw Bible of American Literature", which contains an excerpt from this book. It was outrageously funny. I like Maggie's spoken word, as well, so I intend to hunt down this one.

3/15: Finished this a couple of days ago. It's entertaining enough, though the endless hook-ups/break-ups/Gen-X emotional turmoil gets a bit irritating; the narrator lets the reader know up front, however, and in the title even that she is an "emotional idiot", so I tried keeping that in mind. The peripheral characters are interesting, and I like how everyone has a nickname in the main character Zoe's mind - it also speaks to her putative emotional detachment from everyone. Former lovers, friends, and acquaintances become Satan, Long-Dicked Dave, Nicholas the Horse Thief, Chris the Philosopher, the Reader, Eye Guy, and Daisy the Fading Stripper.

Also, Maggie Estep has great friends. She name-checks M. Doughty from Soul Coughing and John S. Hall from King Missile in the acknowledgements.

Esther says

I must have read this book at least 4 consecutive times during my teen years. Its racy, witty, fast, "raw", and touches on all things forbidden. It explores the psyche of an emotional idiot, thus the title, that is a young woman who lets her self be carried by corrupt forces and hurts herself in the process. Interestingly, there is a great sense of detachment between the situations that she experiences and the narrative she shares. It is written as somewhat of a diary so the narrative is frank and self evaluative, which is part of its appeal for the reader who is detached and self evaluative him/herself. This book also allows you to live out your fantasies of self destruction. Judgmental and well adjusted people need-not read it. It speaks more to those of us who are not quite right in the head.

LadyReezy says

This book came out when I was sixteen. I should've read it then. It's delightful, in a mid-90s guilty-pleasure sort of way. Estep is obsessed with using the words "maw" and "paw" for "mouth" and "hand," respectively. Also, she drops \$5 words every chance she gets, as if to remind us that she should be taken seriously, despite writing this book. Wow, was that harsh? Therapy has ruined carefree novels about junkies and sex addicts for me, perhaps.

Jordan says

“We’re getting close to the end. The end of the blueprint for my emotional idiocy. Do you see now? Is it all clear? Can you begin to fathom how it is that I am sitting in my ex-boyfriend’s closet with a bicycle chain in my lap? Do you understand that I know this is ridiculous but I cannot, and do not, want to help it? This is my reality, kids. Read it and weep till your eyeballs pop out and bounce down the crooked steps of my soul.”

Maggie Estep writes from the point of view of Zoe as she navigates her relationships with pain, love & lust. the story follows Zoe from her teenage years into her late twenties, from city to city, from drug to drug, from lover to lover.

Diary of an Emotional Idiot had been in my tbr list of years! @booksandquills had talked about it in a video once upon a time & i immediately wanted to read it. it was a good story & an easy read filled with lovely humor, but nothing too special, just short of five stars for me. 4/5 ?
