

A Time for Love

Sabra Brown Steinsiek

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A Time for Love is memorable for its genuine depiction of young and lasting love.

Sabra Brown Steinsiek's *A Time for Love* defies tropes and carves out a sweet niche in the vast romance genre. The fifth book in the Taylor's Girls series, this is a detailed meditation on what happens when two people are truly meant for each other.

The story focuses on a twentysomething theater actress, Annie, and a graduate student and aspiring novelist, Kit. Amid dangerous muggings, tumultuous job offerings, and first times, Annie and Kit are refreshing romance characters who shift from acquaintances to best friends to lovers.

The underlying love story helps string their relationship along, but not without the complexities found in any modern couple. Annie goes from being a Broadway actress to a screen star, and Kit graduates from a struggling writer to someone with a finished manuscript and an agent. This character development keeps the story interesting and unique and contributes to a romance that is at once contemporary and timeless.

Eloquence is evident in both grand, romantic gestures and little moments, like when Annie finally receives "rave" reviews for her work, but feels that "without Kit to share them with, they were just a bunch of meaningless words." The dialogue between the two is rich and authentic, with hospital bedside declarations of love and the kind of difficult arguments that come with relationships meant to stand the test of time.

A lot goes into making the book realistic, especially with the specificity given to its settings, from New York to New Mexico. Between the Upper East Side's Serendipity 3 and the Owl Café in Albuquerque, Steinsiek combines her own experiences with the fictional lives of her beloved characters.

The setting is just background, however; the main characters are the stars of the show. The story unfolds with ease and grapples with the realistic hurdles of people trying to come into their own both personally and professionally.

Annie and Kit are written as driven people who are deeply invested in their own careers and lives, which allows them to realistically attend to relationships both romantic and platonic with equal care. Their intense personal backgrounds make their interactions truly dynamic, even before any romance occurs. Some of the supporting figures fall flat in comparison, including Kit's and Annie's exes, but they provide compelling fodder for the overall shape of the story.

Steinsiek understands how to play with the unresolved sexual tension felt between the two characters without compromising the romance of the situation, resulting in a balanced and innovative love story, if one with a predictable ending.

A Time for Love is memorable for its genuine depiction of young and lasting love between Annie and Kit. It is a narrative as hopeful as it is devastating.

LILLIAN BROWN (April 26, 2017)

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