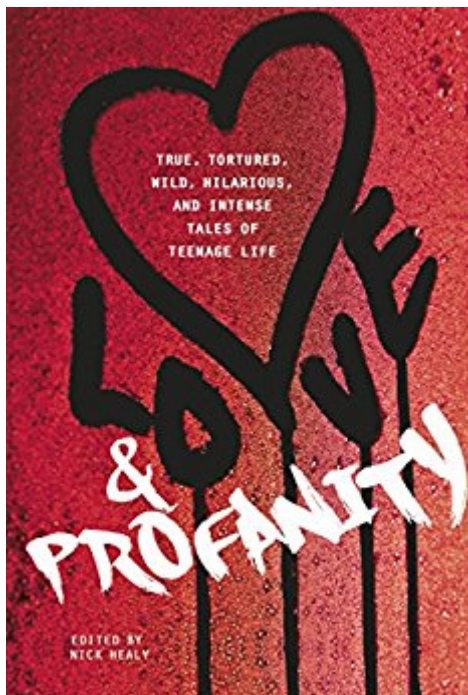


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# Love & Profanity



## Synopsis

Here are forty short, brilliant, and unforgettable true stories from writers famous and on-the-rise. Here is the intensity of daily life. Here are transformative moments arising from the mundane. Here are strange and surprising tales that tap into universal truths. Here are teenagers in full splendor and horror. Here they are, bursting with love and profanity.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

A great collection of stories and voices from a wide range of up and coming writers. I think everyone can find at least a few stories in here that they can relate to or that will feel terrifyingly familiar to them. Definitely worth picking up!

I thought that LOVE & PROFANITY would be like the Chicken Soup for the Soul series, filled with true banal stories with cute twists and funny endings. I thought the stories would be about teens who were older than me (at 16, I still have a lot to learn about the trials of teenage life), and that I wouldn't relate to them. I was wrong --- the stories struck me as honest and relevant. Unfortunately, I didn't come to appreciate this until I was a quarter into the book

because the introduction was a bit misleading --- it highlighted a few of the stories, but it didn't explain why they were all placed together in the same book. I suppose it was my job to solve the case. The table of contents split the stories up into four groups: Love and Profanity, Love and Physics, Love and Madness, and Love and Apologies. Honestly, I could have placed any of the stories into any of these very broad categories. I would have preferred that the editor split them according to the age of the writer, or if they had just been divided into parts one through four. I received the uncorrected proof of the book, which didn't include writers' bios or an index. This was troubling at first, but once I got about half of the way through, I was glad I could read the stories without being influenced by the authors' backgrounds. Happily, I loved most of the stories and I did figure out why they all fit into one book: they did not tell you what teenage life should be like, but they showed you what it is like. None of the authors begged the reader to learn from their mistakes. Rather, they shared a bit about themselves in hopes that you would listen. From the title and cover I did not know that this book would be one of the sweetest and most terrifyingly authentic things I've read. None of the stories were groundbreaking or shocking; they were simply beautiful and honest. For example, "Confession" by Anika Fajardo highlighted the butterflies of a first crush. She wonderfully described feelings that we have all felt before, explaining "[t]he thought of saying his name out loud even in the dark, even to my best friend made me feel like I was standing in my underwear in homeroom." On a more serious note, "A Most Dangerous Game" by Alexis Wiggins showed me that girls don't know that the world is a game more dangerous than they think, and they are more naive than they know. After she recalls her childhood of hoping boys would like her, wearing dresses with a stuffed bra and high heels, she tells us about the time she was almost raped, and how the world had ill-prepared her for this. She writes, "and you felt lighter-fluid flames of anger rise in you at the teacher who taught the wrong lesson. Or at the girl in the back row, in her cheap dress and scuffed heels, drawing hearts around boys' names, hoping." This story (confusingly categorized in Love and Physics) sent chills down my spine. I would love if a future edition updated the introduction and table of contents, so readers don't feel confused and assume mediocrity. Because really, these are undeniably genuine and heartfelt stories --- teen readers, give them a try!

Reviewed by Maya B.

Love & Profanity edited by Nick Healy (2.84 rounded to) 3 stars This is another short story analogy/essay collection that had the potential to be great but fell flat. Love & Profanity revolves around

author essays on true events in their lives. I haven't read any essay anthologies before this, but I know that several out there, like *Bully*, exist and are highly acclaimed in hopes that young readers will pick them up seeing high profile authors' names on the covers. It's a good marketing skill, but I don't think I know almost any of these authors. Almost all of them are names I've never heard of before and I think that lessened my connection. I have a theory that if I know what an author writes like and follow them on social media then I'll be more likely to enjoy reading snippets of their teen lives and experiences. Since I knew almost none of these authors, I'm putting stock into that theory for this anthology (I'll test that theory with *Bully* later on). This collection is huge- 84 stories- if I counted correctly and most of the essays are brief. I think the longest one was ten or twelve pages so it's hard to judge writing style completely for every story, but I had my trusty notebook and pink pen handy while reading and was able to chronicle all my thoughts while reading. (It's a good thing I did that since I read this collection literally one year ago.) My formatting will be the essay, rating, brief thoughts, and then some research I compiled on the author.

*Three Stories About Water & Vomiting* by Adam Rex- 1 star I personally wasn't impressed by this story. I considered it to be lame and irrelevant and probably the worst way to start a collection of essays. The first story should be good enough to make me want to keep going, no lackluster enough to make me question continuing with the collection because it makes me question how good the rest will be.

*After Teen Years*- Besides having a dinosaur last name, Adam doesn't focus his genre writings to dinosaurs, but illustrious characters such as vampires and Frankenstein. His most famous novel is *The True Meaning of Smekday*, which is MG science fiction. He also wrote *Fat Vampire*, which is the only story I ever heard of.

*Breathless* by Heather Sellers- 2 stars Apparently this essay touches on all the things that I consider to be very unsafe.

*After Teen Years*- Sellers is predominately a writer of short stories and creative writing non-fiction. Her most famous piece of work is a memoir focusing on her neurological condition that prevents her from remembering people's faces.

*Girl Fight* by Joey Franklin- 3 stars Interesting perspective on what a young man thought about the label of "fat" and dating a fat girl.

*After Teen Years*- Franklin made his debut in 2015 with a collection of essays surrounding what it's like to be a middle-aged white man with balding hair.

*Power Drift* by Jon Scieszka- 1 star What an idiot.

*After Teen Years*- This man writes a lot of essays, and children's stories. He has over 144 distinct works on GR- impressive.

*Polypropylene* by Ali Catt- 4 stars Pretty sad that this captures how a lot of teen girls treat each other.

*After Teen Years*- Only featured in *Love & Profanity* and I can't find anything about her.

*Elusive*.

*Why Is It Wet Here?* By Carrie Mesrobian- 3 stars A pretty funny story about a

party and a party failure. After Teen Years- She's the writer of Sex & Violence (which I'm excited to read) and that story from last year that everyone hated called Cut Both Ways. M-E-L-I-S-S-A by Melissa Brandt- 3.5 stars Essay about a girl who is very unattached from her father. After Teen Years- Debut author of a novel called Chased by Fame. I Don't Believe You by Clint Edwards- 2.5 stars An embarrassing story about Edwards crapping his pants in high school. Poor soul. After Teen Years- Debut author of a collection humorous nonfiction piece on parenting and marriage. Vietnam, Minnesota by Pete Hautman- 2 stars A story about him befriending a Vietnam vet and going way too fast in a speeding car. After Teen Years- This guy has written a lot of novels in the YA and MG genre. I checked out his novel Sweetblood once at the library during my vampire phase and never read it. Island Girls by Kasandra Duthie- 2 stars The story focuses on Duthie's teen years on two islands. After Teen Years- She's featured in this anthology. The Ranks of a Million Guys by Kwame Alexander- 1 star Focuses on Alexander's experience on becoming the number one tennis player in hopes of impressing the girl he likes. After Teen Years- A writer of poems, children's books, and YA fiction in free verse form. This guy won a Newbery! Confession by Anika Fajardo- 2 stars She confesses her crush to her best friend and then ends the essay with a sentence about dying at the dance? After Teen Years- She's a nonfiction writer. First Gear by Melodie Heide- 3.5 stars After recently losing her mother, Heide finds solace in a guy who kind of likes her back. After Teen Years- According to , her work has appeared in numerous publications. She writes about transient life. The First Time I Had Sex, My Mouth Was Numb by Kyra Anderson- 4.5 stars One of the most awkward and truthful representations of first time sex plus it has a killer title. After Teen Years- She's a mother of an autistic child and collaborated on a project about what it's like. Ambushed by Andrew Gottlieb- 2.5 stars The story focuses on Gottlieb's experiences working on a painting team during the summer as a teenager. After Teen Years- He's a writer of reviews, poems, essays, and memoirs. A Ghost in the Mall by Natalie Singer -4 stars A reflection of Singer going to the mall after school and not being able to buy anything due to her poor family life and being blessed with an okay-face; a very touching story. After Teen Years- Her author profile is so funny to not just copy and paste: "Natalie Singer was born and half-raised in Montreal, Canada, before being uprooted and moved at age 16 to the mythical, ice-cream-colored land of California, where she had to finish raising herself. There, she discovered burritos, tried to become cool on the streets of San Francisco, and made out with lots of frogs before she finally found a prince. She's now a writer in Seattle." A Most Dangerous Game by Alexis Wiggins- 5 stars My favorite essay of the collection! Essay focusing on the perils of being a young woman and has a

chilling scene where her co-worker says that someday he'll rape someone and it could be Wiggins. It wasn't men who were hunted. After Teen Years- She's been writing since she was little, but has yet to publish a novel. I think this is her first time being published in a book! The Causeway by Margaret MacInnis- 3 stars Focuses on when Margaret is eight-years-old and sees her father not being able to do the things he used to because of age. After Teen Years- She has a lot of essays published in review publications and that's cool. Orchard by Kim Lozano- 2.5 stars Essay about the time she offers a place to stay for a young lady who seems to be on the run. After Teen Years- She's an editor of a literary magazine and teaches creative writing. Her poetry has been published. Weightless by Steve Brezenoff- 2 stars Brezenoff was a wallflower who attended a party. After Teen Years- This is the only author who I knew by name for sure because I used to want to read his book The Absolute Value of-1. After the Party by Geoff Herbach- 1 star I honestly have no clue what even happened in this essay. After Teen Years- He has a lot of published YA novels and his most popular is the title Stupid Fast. On the Third Day by Tom Moran- 2.5 stars Dirty fighting! After Teen Years- Has a humorous novel called Dinosaurs and Prime Numbers. How to Succeed by Actually Trying by Dayna Evans- 3 stars Discusses Evans meeting full potential as an already smart student and pushing herself. After Teen Years- She's been published in two essay collections. Ten Years Ago by Sarah Beth Childers- 3.5 stars A deep essay focuses on ten years ago from Childers' perspective and then twenty years as time goes by. After Teen Years- Write short stories and has been featured in two YA ones and her own essay collection. End of the Half by Patrick Hueller- 1 star Focuses on Hueller's coach getting mad at his failure of a basketball team. After Teen Years- He has a few published indie works. Suspended by Kyle Minor- 1.5 stars When Minor finally got rid of one bully he gets cornered by his brother. After Teen Years- He has several short stories and novellas published into personal collections. Girl/Thing by Anna Vodicka- 3.5 stars The story focuses on Vodicka's experience as a babysitter and being taken advantage of by the father. After Teen Years- It says in her profile she doesn't miss babysitting. It's funny, but it's not because of the incident she went through. Saying Goodbye to Anna by Jackie Buckle- 5 stars I just realized the author above the before story is named Anna; did they do that on purpose? Another absolute favorite about Anna or anorexia and it was absolutely harrowing and beautiful. After Teen Years- She wrote something called Half My Facebook Friends are Ferrets and lol. The Catch by Melissa Cistaro- 1.5 stars The mother finds beauty in fish guts? My notes are so weird. LOL After Teen Years- Cistaro is the writer of Pieces of My Mother: A Memoir. The World is in a Stump by Will Weaver- 2 stars Weaver's experiences hunting by

himself for the first time. After Teen Years- He has a lot of books published and his prominent is Memory Boy. Mosquito Man by Da Chen- 2.5 stars Chronicles Chen's love for the blind man's stories in his village and how he became his own storyteller. After Teen Years- He has several published works and his most popular novel is Color of the Mountain. Confessions of a Pretend Boyfriend by Aaron Brown- 3 stars As a freshman Brown was invited to prom only to be replaced by an army buff once he arrived. After Teen Years- Brown has many published works and his most well-known is The Poker Face of Wall Street. Dating Magic by Laurie Edwards- 3.5 stars A cute story about Edwards trying to get a date for friends and coincidentally ended up meeting a cute guy herself. After Teen Years- She is a nonfiction author who focuses on mental illnesses. Smiling Joe by Joseph Bruchac- 3 stars Joe smiles throughout everything; even when breaking a tooth. After Teen Years- He has multiple published works, and I mean multiple as in 177! Warrior by Trisha Speed Shaskan- 2.5 stars Essay focuses on her skater girl years. After Teen Years- She teaches creative writing to both children and adults. Solo by Esther Porter- 2.5 stars Essay focuses on Porter overcoming her fear of her solo choir performance in high school. After Teen Years- She's the author of multiple children's books. Singing Along by Kara Balcerzak- 3 stars Two unlikely girls build a friendship over a band and experience seeing them live. After Teen Years- The author of children's books and essays. Hard to Swallow by Jenna Scarbroguh- 2.5 stars In her freshman year of college, Jenna finds a lump in her breast that could be cancerous. I just couldn't connect to this one. After Teen Years- She is currently attending college and I think that this is a very recent diagnosis. Best Friends by Rachel Hanel- 4 stars Representation of how one friend symbolizes the good part of life no matter how little time is spent together. After Teen Years- She's the writer of several interactive history novels and that sounds really cool! Big Red by Jessica Gunderson- 3 stars Story focuses on what it's like to take the ACT test the morning after being drugged at a party. After Teen Years- She writes children's fiction predominately focusing on black people in history. The Later Days of Jean by Rebecca Stranborough- 3 stars A brief look into what dealing with a grandma who has passed away is like. After Teen Years- She writes novels focuses on the world's greatest architectural sites. All Treasures by Patti Kim- 2 stars Kim lies about her life throughout high school because she is ashamed her low financial background. After Teen Years- She has two published works. Letter to My Sixteen-Year-Old Self by Alison McGhee- 5 stars Emotional letter about being free when you are older and I just really connected to this. After Teen Years- She's a NYT #1 Bestselling Author! There were some good ones in here, but also some duds. If you are interested in picking this up I definitely recommend checking it out from the library. Cover Thoughts: This book has three different covers.

The one I was accepted for on NG. The one that popped up on my galley copy and then the rereleased cover. I like the newest one best. Thank you, Netgalley and Switch Press for allowing me the opportunity to read this book in exchange for an honest review.

Love & Profanity is a fascinating collection of short stories about love, life, and growing up as seen through the eyes of a teenager. The selected authors tell stories from their respective teenage years and allow for the reader to relate to at least one if not more of the experiences told. Although my high school years are behind me, I found myself able to relate to the stories of lost friendships and peer pressure. The feeling of being the only person in a room full of people. Love & Profanity is written for the young adult audience, but I believe it is a must read for people of all ages. It helps you look back on those formative years and allows you to realize that you survived and that not everything was as awful as it seemed. It may even provide some closure for some readers. I know I found myself relating to the story of a girl who lost her best friend to the "popular" clique. A common occurrence for many a teenager and a story that shows how it can be a haunting loss for some time, even when you believe you've moved on. This is a well written collection of stories and, as I stated, it is a book for readers of all demographics. It is a book of how we all grow up and face life and whatever it may throw at us. <http://novelideareviews.blogspot.com/2015/10/love-profanity-by-various-authors.html>

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