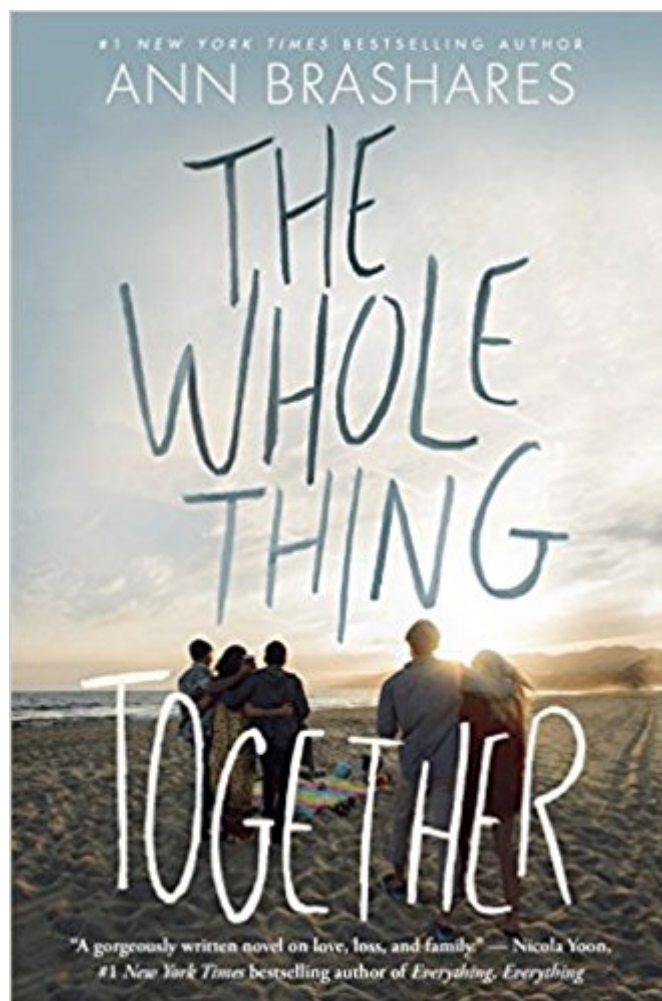


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The Whole Thing Together



Synopsis

A beautifully written novel about love, class differences, and betrayal playing out over the course of a fractured American family's Long Island summer from **#1** New York Times bestselling author Ann Brashares, author of the *Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants* series. "A gorgeously written novel on love, loss and family." •NICOLA YOON, **#1** New York Times bestselling author of *Everything, Everything* *Summer for Sasha and Ray* means the sprawling old house on Long Island. Since they were children, they've shared almost everything—reading the same books, running down the same sandy footpaths to the beach, eating peaches from the same market, laughing around the same sun-soaked dining table. Even sleeping in the same bed, on the very same worn cotton sheets. But they've never met. Sasha's dad was once married to Ray's mom, and together they had three daughters: Emma, the perfectionist; Mattie, the beauty; and Quinn, the favorite. But the marriage crumbled and the bitterness lingered. Now there are two new families—and neither one will give up the beach house that holds the memories, happy and sad, of summers past. The choices we make come back to haunt us; the effect on our destinies ripples out of our control . . . or does it? This summer, the lives of Sasha, Ray, and their siblings intersect in ways none of them ever dreamed, in a novel about family relationships, keeping secrets, and most of all, love. **Masterful.** •PW, Starred **A** continuous, consistently engrossing narrative . . . **A** deeply moving. •The Bulletin, **A** Starred **A** "A gorgeous exploration of family, secrets, and love." •Teen Vogue **A** "You absolutely must read it." •PopCrush **An** Best of the Month Selection

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Customer Reviews

“Both funny and tragic, this sharply observed drama recognizes the complexity of split families trying to heal and the ill effects of longstanding grudges. Brashares’ masterful orchestration of plot, multidimensional characters, and intriguing subplots will delight her fans and newcomers alike.” • Publishers Weekly, [Starred](#)

“Readers should have a few hankies at the ready for this deeply moving character-driven story.” • The Bulletin, [Starred](#) “At its heart, this is quintessential Brashares. Introspective questions of heritage are tied together, ultimately, by the bonds of family and the magic of summer.” • Booklist “A winning novel exploring complicated family relationships, love, grief, and forgiveness. . . . The author’s legions of fans will gravitate to this well-plotted work with mostly believable, thoroughly developed, and relatable characters.” • SLJ “Brashares delves successfully into the complexities of split and blended families in this novel. . . . The plot is engaging and the characters are well developed. . . . will appeal to new adults as well as high school readers.” • VOYA

Ann Brashares is the #1 New York Times bestselling author of the Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants series, *The Here and Now*, *3 Willows*, *The Last Summer (of You & Me)*, and *My Name Is Memory*. She lives in New York City with her family. Visit Ann online at AnnBrashares.com and follow @AnnBrashares on Twitter.

I didn't find enough character development in any of the characters, so I wasn't invested in anyone .
I would have preferred just dialogue from sasha and ray

Purchased for a high school library - I'm sure the kids will enjoy!

The story is gripping, yet somewhat predictable as it nears the end. I cared deeply for the characters and was deeply moved by their struggles.

I love every book she writes. The characters in this book are absolutely fantastic but I feel like the

ending was very rushed. I wish it had come to a better conclusion. My name is memory and the sisterhood books are definitely better but this was definitely enjoyable and as always very meaningful. Here were some quotes I loved. The first one made me laugh so hard. It's just so real in such a sad way. "Why did parents ever make their kids watch them get re-married? Ray imagined a coffee table book suited to a photographer like maybe Diane Arbus for publication around Halloween: Children Watching Their Parents Marry People Who Aren't Their Parents." And these ones are the reasons I love to read Ann's books: "Her cheap, stunted, nonmystical religion required that she offer up her happiness in return for a little less disappointment, a little less fear. Suffering was how you put money in the karmic bank. There were always more bills to be paid. No joy was allowed to come out of this. But Quinn had a different religion. A brave and expansive one. Don't be scared of the pain, she would have said. Don't avoid the ways you feel. Don't bargain away your happiness. Let joy come out of this." "So how about this for an idea: we are complimentary rather than opposing, my friend. As contrary forces, we don't cancel each other out, we give rise to each other."

Great book about family and love. Characters are fantastic. A good, quick read.

great beach read!

4.5 stars Ray and Sasha share the same 3 older sisters. They stay in the same room whenever they're in the family house in the Hamptons. But they never ever met! Ray's mom was married to Sasha's dad ages ago and they had three daughters and got divorced and not in a let-stay-friends way. That's why the two new kids never met. But this summer things are changing. Both are 17 now and their interests start to change. Now they don't care about the old shared Harry Potter books or their old collection of shells in their room anymore. But can there ever be something romantic between two kids with SO much family between them? And then there are the other family members with their own problems: Emma is trying to introduce her boyfriend to the family. Quinn is trying to figure out where she came from and where she belongs, and why. And Mattie is hoping for farm-boy Matt to fall in love with her. And she's also trying to de-secret the old secret surrounding her mom and surf-guy Jonathan! I really enjoyed this book. There are a LOT of people to get used to once you start reading it can be a bit confusing. It's best if you

memorize the family tree that *After the End* is posted in the beginning of the book. I think I would have loved it even more, if the story would have been told in only Ray and Sasha's POV. We hear so much from everyone of the kids, and it's just a bit too much. And also not enough. Because I also wanted to read all about everyone's problems. It would have been amazing if Ann would have made a trilogy out of the whole family-saga. There's just so much about everyone to tell. It's a story so full of family and love, but also of hate and confusion and secrets and mysteries and hopes and dreams! And in the case of Sasha and Ray it's a very sweet but also very confusing coming-of-age kind of love story. I loved it! I cried and felt with them all. It was a very moving and adorable and very poetic family tale. And I will definitely watch the movie *After the End* should there ever be one.

As the child of parents who divorced bitterly and acrimoniously when I was young and who have barely spoken since I could very much relate to the children in *After the End*. "The Whole Thing Together" I remember that speech that "we still love you and this will end up being better for all of us" speech that divorcing parents give their children and I feel the same way now that I did then. That things will be better for the parents, the kids? Too bad. "Why was it the people who had no beef suffered the most? Like all slow are terrible wars, it was fought and borne by those who had no grievance, the most innocent enduring the worst. Because we are the ones who want peace among the grown-ups, and they still want war." This novel is a combination of two storylines. One, a story of two teenagers Sasha and Ray who share half-sisters and a vacation home yet who have never met. Each has a vision of the other, and in that which they share, they form a completely unspoken relationship. The book starts with that being the strongest storyline and it was once that prompted me to choose the book but did not hold my interest. It was clearly trying to lead from a "what if two people so connected had never met" to a "what if two people who had never met fell in love" but there was far too much going on for me to keep track. With the two sides of a family sharing the same house, but at different times and with the characters not really finding clear, separate voices until much farther into the book I honestly

couldn't keep track of who was where and which sister was which. But gradually the book transitions to focus more on WHY Ray and Sasha haven't met (the hatred between the divorced parents) and the possibility that they might finally do so under the most extreme circumstances (the warring parents being in the same place again after decades of silence). "And what about their parents? Would they stand in the same room? Would they listen to each other's voices? Would they shake hands? Would the world allow for that?" I remember many years after the divorce sitting in the same room with my parents and feeling that same thing. That this was simply not possible these two people just couldn't be existing in the same place at the same time that my worlds were colliding. And in the end, the book becomes about love after all. About love, and regret and grief. About some small, miraculous joy that comes from heart wrenching sadness. About learning far too late the consequences of one's words and actions, but trying to find a way forward that makes those sacrifices worthwhile. "These were the days she would later be sorry not to have appreciated. She tried to induce appreciation, mentally getting it firing like an outboard motor. It was a hard thing to will. Was it even possible to see beauty in the present at it came at you? Or did it require a dose of time and loss and maybe a little pain?" "The Whole Thing Together" ended up being a very moving and very relatable book and the words and feelings of those children impacted by their parents' divorce will stay with me.

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