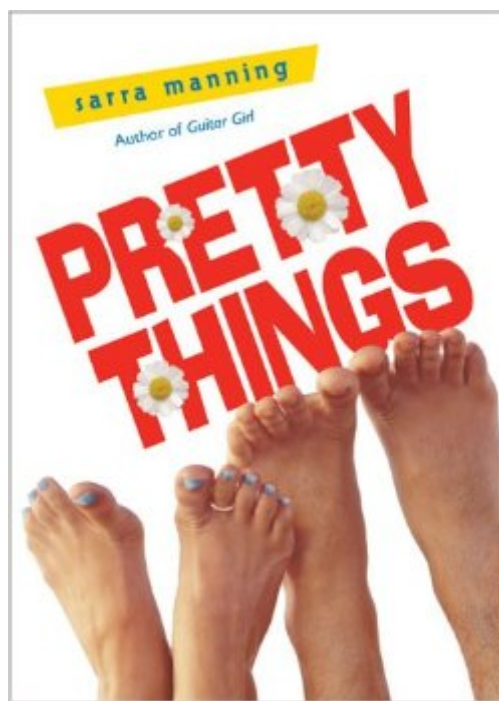


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# Pretty Things



## Synopsis

Brie is in love with Lancôme Juicy Tubes, Louis Vuitton accessories, and her gay best friend Charlie, who is in love with 1960s pop art, 1980s teen movies, and serial heartbreaker Walker, who has ever only been in love with his VW Bug, until he meets Daisy . . . who is too busy hating everyone to know what love is. Set in London, this girl-loves-boy-loves-boy-lovesgirl romp is set against a theatrical production of *The Taming of the Shrew*, and features enough on- and off-stage drama to satisfy teens looking for a beach read or a read all year round.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Brie, Charlie, Walker, and Daisy are four London teens trapped in a love rectangle. All are involved in a local summer theater production of *"The Taming of the Shrew,"* but little do they know that their lives will become equally as dramatic as a Shakespearean play. Brie can't live without designer labels, lip gloss, and her best friend Charlie. She's often hungry because she's always on a diet. Brie's mother constantly tells her daughter that she'd better work at her appearance or else nobody will be attracted to her. "The minute Mum heard me open the fridge she'd be peering over my shoulder to make sure that I was going to get an apple because if I put even the smallest crumb of chocolate in my mouth, she reckons I'd bloat up twenty-five pounds and never get a boyfriend." As a result, Brie obsesses and stresses about every detail of her life. The thing she wishes for the most, though, is for Charlie to be straight, and not gay. If he were straight, he could be her boyfriend. Charlie already has seen her at her worst. He always stood by her side. He loved her, flaws and

all. But unfortunately for Brie, Charlie isn't straight. He's gay. And he's in love with Walker, the womanizer. Charlie is a self-described "indie/emo hybrid." Unlike Brie's designer labels, Charlie likes his Converse All Star low-tops and his homemade T-shirt with the word "Gayer" written on it. Though he was comfortable being gay --- when he came out to his Mum she said, "That's okay, babes. I kind of already knew" --- Charlie was not into "scene queens." He just wanted to date a normal guy. And the guy who Charlie had set his eyes on was Walker. Walker doesn't have a good track record with girls. His reputation follows him around town with his given nickname "Shagger." Walker claims, "I can resist anything but girls who can resist me." And the girl who resists Walker the most is Daisy, a strong-willed lesbian. Daisy has a lot of hate. She's hated Walker for years. Because she's known him and his reputation since elementary school, she's not thrilled to see him in the summer theater. Daisy also hates Brie, who is the opposite of Daisy's looks and beliefs. Sarra Manning's *PRETTY THINGS* is told in four alternating voices. Each voice reveals a deeper layer to the characters, and the reader soon sees that things are not always how they appear. North London-based Manning --- who has written for many teen magazines including *J17* and *ELLEgirl UK* --- showcases yet again her stellar ability to write for the teen scene. She has created four distinct characters and put them into a whirlwind story filled with some of the doubts and questions that many teens face today. --- Reviewed by Kristi Olson

This is a book for people who don't read books like *The Princess Diaries* because they are too unrealistic. This book shows how messy it is to be an almost-adult (the characters in the book are around eighteen or nineteen): relationships, making new friends, weird feelings for your best friends, weird feelings for people you supposedly hate, and never quite being sure in your sexuality. I didn't have any problem with the book, but some parents might. It's got some mature content: lots of drinking, a few sex scenes (nothing graphic) and quite a bit of language that could be referred to as "questionable." I'd probably peg it as a sixteen and up book. It held my interest to the end, which wasn't one of those "fix all deus ex machina every ends up happy and with a significant other" endings that a lot of teen books have. Not that it's without its flaws: the book is told from the four main characters' perspectives, and the only way I could differentiate between the perspectives sometimes was the way the person talked about the other three people. They are four very different people with different tastes, so I figured their speaking styles would've been different. They were, but not enough. Anyway, good summer reading: nothing too fancy, nothing too deep, but deeper than most teenage books.

"Pretty Things" is a fantastic book. Period. It deals with many different adolescent problems (a main one being fancying your best friend). Brie's best friend is Charlie. Brie is a straight "footballer's wife" type girl. Charlie is a gay rocker boy who cuts his hair with nail-scissors and listens to The White Stripes. They both decide to go to a theatre group, where Charlie meets Walker, a straight, womanising guy who has now fallen in love with none other than Charlie's friend Daisy, a self-proclaimed lesbian. Could things get any more complicated? Actually no. The book is very easy to get into and the story-line is easy to follow. All in all, a very enjoyable read.

This book was more like a crazed bunch of events than a deep book. If you're looking for romantic stories that are complicated and intertwined, or deep questionings about sexuality and the meanings of love, don't read this book. It's crazy and fun, almost too realistic, but at the same time surreal and make-believe. It leaves more questions than answers, but *Pretty Things* is a fun book to pick up and enjoy just because it's so deranged.

*Pretty Things* sounds like a great book to read in the summer, and that's why I picked it up. We follow four teens: Charlie, Brie, Daisy, and Walker, who come together over the summer for a theater group. I enjoyed that it was told in alternating perspectives. That really helped make the point that we all think we have people pegged. We even think we have ourselves pegged sometimes. But people are fluid, ever changing, ever growing. People surprise us. We surprise ourselves. That's really what *Pretty Things* is about in the end. Great summer read? Yes, it was quite funny and enjoyable. But it is also a book that you take something away from.\*And as a lovely bonus, each chapter has a quote from a song lyric at the top (the credits to which are in the end) so if you like listening to music while you read, you've got yourself a soundtrack for each chapter.

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