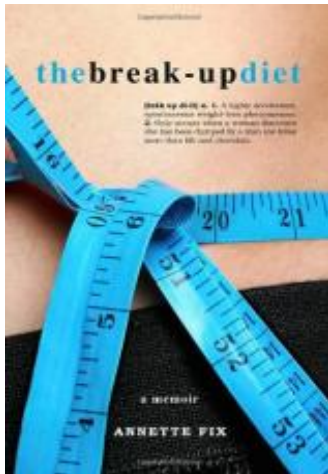

The Break-Up Diet: A Memoir

by Annette Fix



About the Book

A candid and intimate narrative told by a debut author whose quirky voice provides a true alternative to chick-lit fiction as she shares the humor and pathos that accompanies heartbreak and seeking the road to happiness?

Annette Fix always believed in happily-ever-after and was busy working her Five-Year Plan: marry her golf-pro boyfriend, homeschool her preteen son, become a famous writer, and retire to Fiji. When her live-in boyfriend calls it quits, Annette finds herself on The Break-Up Diet, consuming vast amounts of chocolate and exercising by diving blindly into the shallow end of the dating pool.

Working as an exotic dancer to bankroll her aspiring writing career and support her son alone, Annette uses her blue-collar instinct to survive in the plastic jungle of The OC.

Annette's adventures take her on a wild ride as she attempts find the perfect balance between her dreams and her day-to-day life as Supermom.

Discussion Guide

1. In the beginning of the book, Annette says she felt like Kevin was "The other half of Aristophanes divided whole." --- A reference to the philosophy that there is a perfect match for each person which "completes" them. Do you believe in soul mates?
2. Throughout the narrative, Annette continually searches for "happily-ever-after." Do you think she has a Cinderella Complex (fear of independence and a desire to be rescued)? Or do you think that she believes the fairytale of a charming husband and happy life together can be a practical reality? Does happily-ever-after exist?

- 3.** For six years, Annette worked as a topless dancer. Why do you think she called it "an unfortunate necessity"? Do you think working as an exotic dancer is degrading or empowering for women? Did your perception of Annette's character change as the story progressed? If so, how?
- 4.** Annette decided to homeschool Josh. Do you think it was a reasonable decision? Are disorders like A.D.D. and A.D.H.D. on the rise in school age children? Or has it become a too-convenient diagnosis for children with different learning styles? Would you have made the choice to homeschool?
- 5.** Annette taught Josh how to cook, do his own laundry, and even how to fight. Do you think a single mother can successfully fulfill both parental roles for her children?
- 6.** In a conversation with her son, Annette said, "You're only thirteen. Don't be in such a hurry to grow up. You only have seventeen years to be a kid. You'll have more than seventy years to be an adult." Are academic and parental pressures robbing children of their childhood? Or do you think it is better to prepare children early to give them a competitive edge?
- 7.** Annette found a woman's phone number on her ex's cell phone bill from calls he had made while they were still together. How would you have reacted?
- 8.** After her break-up with Kevin, Annette created a Five-Year Plan for her life. Do you think it's better to plan your future or go along for the ride and see where life takes you?
- 9.** Annette paints a comically unflattering picture of Fontana where she grew up, but she doesn't feel like she fits in Orange County either. Why do you think she feels like an outsider?
- 10.** Valerie's character tells Annette, "You have to be realistic. A relationship is really about the benefits each person can get from being with the other." Do you believe this statement?
- 11.** When Annette saw Ryan's grandparents together, she thought, "Enduring love. That's what life is all about. That's what we all want." Annette broke off the relationship with Ryan when she knew she would never be in-love with him. Do you think a woman can settle into a relationship without love and be happy?
- 12.** In reflection, when thinking about her life, Annette felt "it had been a delicate balance of my responsibilities as a mother and my needs as a woman. Both were equally strong and equally important." Can they be equal? Or must one be sacrificed for the other?
- 13.** Annette dumped her "basket of issues" into Steven's lap on their second date. Is full disclosure dating a good idea or a bad idea?

14. By the end of the book, Annette no longer remained friends with women she had known for over a decade. Do you think friends can outgrow a relationship with each other?

15. Annette felt "Perhaps it was serendipity. Fate. Destiny. Faith. Chance. Karma." that brought her and Steven together. Do you believe a universal phenomenon like this exists? Has anything in your life come to you in this way?

Author Bio

Annette Fix was a single mom and sole support of her son for 15 years. She is a spoken-word storyteller and debut author, living the fairytale in Orange County, California with her Danish Prince Charming, aspiring photographer son, and two rescued dogs.

Critical Praise

"**The Break-Up Diet** is delicious. Heartbreaking and humorous...any woman can relate."

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Publication Date: February 14, 2008

Paperback: 285 pages

Publisher: Orange Curtain Publishing

ISBN-10: 1934518395

ISBN-13: 9781934518397