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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

“I read **I ALWAYS CRY AT WEDDINGS** in one big gulp. It’s engaging and funny but also sad and a little scary. Fine writing!”

—Jill McCorkle, author of *Life After Life*

“Sara Goff writes with wit, heart, and courage all her own.”

—Ian Frazier, bestselling author of *Travels in Siberia*

“Sara Goff’s debut novel manages to be gripping, edgy and soulful at the same time.”

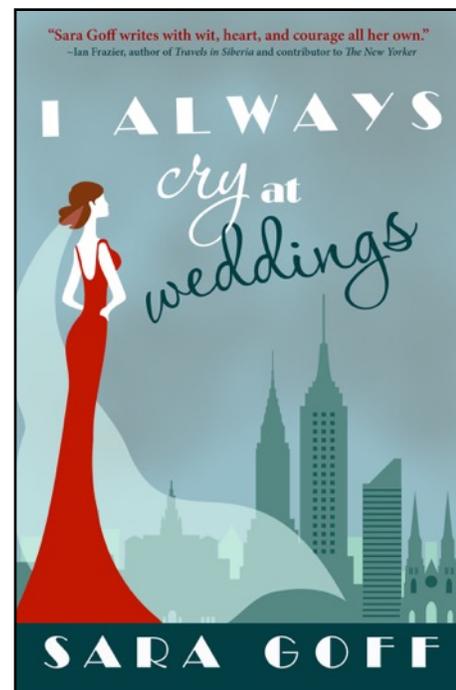
—Susan Shapiro, author of *Speed Shrinking* and *Overexposed*

“Here’s an adorable, cautionary tale for the marriage bound or the marriage averse, and that s almost everybody. Sara Goff’s witty fable will do well.”

—Diane Johnson, author of *Le Mariage*

I ALWAYS CRY AT WEDDINGS *By Sara Goff*

Ava Larson is the envy of brides everywhere. She has a glamorous career as a handbag buyer at Bergdorf Goodman in New York City; Josh, her wealthy, New York socialite fiancé; and a lavish wedding on the horizon, to be planned and paid for by her adoring mother-in-law-to-be. But things go terribly wrong for Ava when her friends spontaneously decide to get married at City Hall,



and Ava is reduced to tears by the obvious signs of true love exhibited by the newlyweds. Their raw emotion makes her question her own relationship and she wonders whether Josh really and truly loves her.

After an embarrassing attempt to re-ignite sparks in her love life, debut author Sara Goff's delightful novel **I ALWAYS CRY AT WEDDINGS** (*WhiteFire Publishing; October 2015; \$14.99*) really takes a spin as Ava throws her impending future with Josh away, cancels the wedding, and flees to her tiny, dingy studio apartment on the West Side of Manhattan. Here in her cocoon she finds comfort in the smiling face of Chris, a homeless man who lives under her front stoop.

In a move as daring as a red satin dress, Ava makes a vow to remain a virgin until marriage, hopefully in order to find true, enduring love. At the same time she comes to terms with her personal crises, word from home tells her that her mom may be succumbing to the ravages of cancer; she gets sacked by Bergdorf's; her former mother-in-law-to-be decides to move in; and her financial status leaves her in jeopardy of eviction and bankruptcy.

Still the only bright spot in her day is Chris, who soon proves to have secrets of his own. When her plans to remain a virgin are challenged by a charismatic new NYPD officer boyfriend and, to everyone's horror, she takes a job as a "red-dress" at a sketchy cabaret club, she leans on her friendship with Chris even more. But could she really be falling for the nice guy from under the stoop?

With her life balanced on the head of a pin, Ava is brought to tears over a lot more than weddings. In **I ALWAYS CRY AT WEDDINGS** she will need to decide how she wants to live her life and what in the world love really means.

I ALWAYS CRY AT WEDDINGS

By Sara Goff

WhiteFire Publishing

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ABOUT SARA GOFF, AUTHOR OF *I Always Cry at Weddings*

Sara Goff is a former New York City fashion designer and merchandiser who, after seven years in the industry, left her career to follow her dreams of making a difference in the world. In 2010, Goff founded the global education charity Lift the Lid, Inc., which supports underprivileged schools and encourages young people to exercise their creative expression through writing.



Philanthropy has always been part of Goff's lifestyle. While living in Manhattan, Goff especially loved being a writing instructor for Holy Apostles Soup Kitchen Writers Workshop, which was founded by Ian Frazier, author of *Travels in Siberia*. Goff has also participated as a writing instructor for The National Arts Club's creative writing program for students. She has spoken at the Soup Kitchen, several inner-city schools, and Saint Francis College in Brooklyn about the writing process and the power of the written word. Ever the world-traveler, Goff was also accepted into Sewanee Writers' Conference and received two fellowships to Summer Literary Seminars in St. Petersburg, Russia and Nairobi, Kenya.

Goff recently moved back to New York City with her husband of 14 years, their two children, and a Yorkie named Pia after living in London and Sweden. **I ALWAYS CRY AT WEDDINGS** is her first novel, and part of the proceeds of the book will go towards Lift the Lid, a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt not-for-profit organization. Visit www.lift-the-lid.org for more information on the charity.

A CONVERSATION WITH SARA GOFF, AUTHOR OF *I Always Cry at Weddings*

How did the title come to be, and do you always cry at weddings?

The title followed me around for a number of years, even before I wrote the book. My husband Jonas and I were taking a break from Manhattan in the south of Thailand when we happened to see a sunset beach wedding with the bride in tears. "Some people always cry at weddings," Jonas said. Was she scared and having second thoughts, or so in love all she could do was cry? I'll never know the answer, but that moment sparked the idea that became Ava's story.

People love to ask me if I cry at weddings. It might be odd that the answer is no. I didn't even cry at my own wedding, a small family affair in Sweden. Aren't you supposed to cry at weddings, for one reason or another? My little sister is getting married in Manhattan this fall. (Way to go, Karen and Dario!) When I stand up and speak about her big brown eyes as a baby, losing our father, and her new life with a man we all love and admire... we'll see what happens then.

***I Always Cry at Weddings* is about Ava Larson, a handbag buyer at Bergdorf's who cancels her dream wedding and leaves her job in order to find love. How much of the book is based on your own experiences?**

I've pushed myself to try new experiences in order to understand Ava's life. One example of this is the Rockettes scene. I didn't feel I could write it without trying out for their teams. So that's what I did, while taking notes. I didn't make the cuts, but I learned the dance routine, and I felt what it was like to vie for one of their coveted spots.

In an attempt to pursue her love of dance, Ava takes a job singing on top of a grand piano in a cabaret. That, I'll admit, I didn't research beyond watching *The Fabulous Baker Boys*, starring Michelle Pfeiffer. Ava's interactions with the male clientele are original, but in order to make the conversations feel real, I drew from my experiences working in a gentleman's club. So, is the book based on my own life? No, that would be a different story, but *I Always Cry at Weddings* comes from me and tells a story about love I very much want to share.

Ava has some bad luck with men in NYC: she almost marries Josh, a man who has no real passion, and she goes out with a drug-addicted police officer. How many of the characters in the book are based on people you've met or known?

Two of the hardest aspects of writing for me are choosing names and coming up with original characters. In choosing names I muddle through lists of baby names and inevitably change my selection two or three times throughout writing the book. Creating memorable characters is more complicated. I like to keep one list of personality quirks and another of physical features collected from people I know or have seen. From my two lists, I more or less puzzle together my characters to fit the story.

If you happen to recognize your "regal nose" or "blue eyes, almost purple," or your habit of showing up without calling first, thank you for the inspiration and please know that I'm not pinning you to the character.

Phoebe, Josh's mother, is the one character actually inspired by someone I know. (My ex-boyfriend's mother was someone I admired.) While Phoebe's character is more sheltered and scheming, I'm playing out a fantasy keeping Josh's mother in Ava's life.

***Sex and the City* is the most popular embodiment of the "finding love in NYC" culture. How is your story about finding love in the city different?**

One significant difference between *I Always Cry at Weddings* and *Sex and the City* is that Ava doesn't have a personal stylist. That, and she doesn't have sex in the book. Ava realizes in the opening chapter that she jumped into bed with Josh before she really knew (or cared about) him, and that the convenience of sex, along with the hope of marriage, was to blame for why she couldn't see (or ignored) their disconnect.

It's shocking that something as intimate as sex could mask true feelings, but that's what happens to Ava. Still, she learns through trial and error that "no sex" isn't a guarantee, either. Love isn't about the facts. She discovers after finally taking a leap of faith that love is about trust, acceptance, and friendship. *I Always Cry at Weddings* has that gritty feel of working through hardships, and it looks shame and disappointment in the face.

Besides writing, you are also a philanthropist. Tell us more about the charity you founded, Lift the Lid. How did Lift the Lid come to fruition?

I had a personal connection with a nonprofit that was building a girls' high school in Kitale, an agricultural town in western Kenya, and with a family that was starting a primary school under a tree in a town south of Nairobi. In the Philippines, a close friend's family runs a charity that meets the needs of street children and encourages them to stay in school. These exceptional people making a difference in hundreds of lives turned to me for financial help and prayers, and I felt helpless. There was so little that I could do alone. In the dark of winter in Stockholm, I had a revelation: start a charity with the purpose of having a long-term, meaningful impact on children's education. That moment I started to research how to set up a nonprofit and never looked back.

In 2010, Lift the Lid, Inc. was born. Now a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit, Lift the Lid has raised over \$28,000 for the four schools we sponsor to date. For every donation of \$20 or more, a student writes a poem or personal essay, which is scanned and published on our website at lift-the-lid.org. The students feel proud to see their work published, and when a donor leaves a positive comment, they feel even more connected to the world and motivated to work harder. Reading their essays, I feel the same way: proud, connected, and motivated to work harder.

Do you have any upcoming writing projects?

Yes, I have another book underway about a teenage girl with an undiagnosed mental disorder. I won't talk about it in detail until it's finished, but I'm more than halfway there!