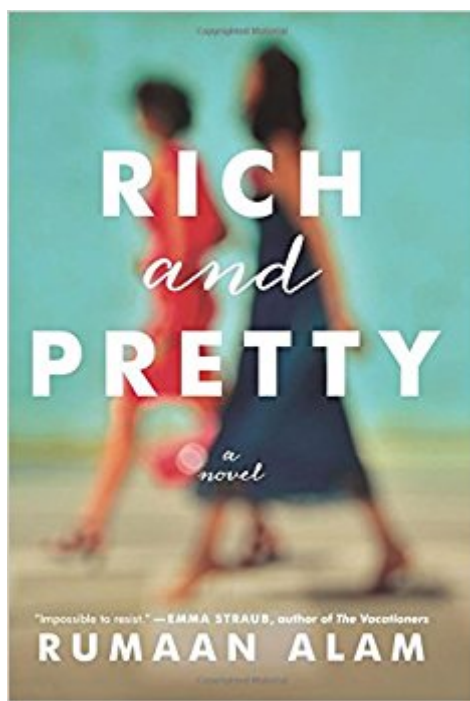


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Rich And Pretty: A Novel



Synopsis

This irresistible debut, set in contemporary New York, provides a sharp, insightful look into how the relationship between two best friends changes when they are no longer coming of age but learning how to live adult lives. One of *Bustle*'s 17 Of 2016's Most Anticipated Books To Put On Your Wishlist Immediately One of the *Wall Street Journal*'s Ten Titles to Watch in Summer Fiction An *Editors' Pick* Beach Reads pick One of *Newsday*'s Best Summer Books 2016 One of *PopSugar*'s 31 Books You MUST Put in your Beach Bag A *Miami Herald* summer reads pick

As close as sisters for twenty years, Sarah and Lauren have been together through high school and college, first jobs and first loves, the uncertainties of their twenties and the realities of their thirties. Sarah, the only child of a prominent intellectual and a socialite, works at a charity and is methodically planning her wedding. Lauren "beautiful, independent, and unpredictable" is single and working in publishing, deflecting her parents' worries and questions about her life and future by trying not to think about it herself. Each woman envies "and is horrified by" particular aspects of the other's life, topics of conversation they avoid with masterful linguistic pirouettes. Once, Sarah and Lauren were inseparable; for a long a time now, they've been apart. Can two women who rarely see one other, selectively share secrets, and lead different lives still call themselves best friends? Is it their abiding connection "or just force of habit" that keeps them together? With impeccable style, biting humor, and a keen sense of detail, Rumaan Alam deftly explores how the attachments we form in childhood shift as we adapt to our adult lives "and how the bonds of friendship endure, even when our paths diverge.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Rumaan Alam Talks With Cynthia D'Aprix Sweeney Cynthia D'Aprix Sweeney (CS): From the opening scene to the last scene, the dialogue between the two main characters, Sarah and Lauren, is absolutely pitch-perfect. Does dialogue come as easily to you as it seems? And if it does, please tell me your trick. Rumaan Alam (RA): It's great to hear you find it engaging, because there certainly is a lot of dialogue in the book. This is mostly because I think talking is the foundation of Sarah and Lauren's intimacy. They meet when they're 11, and talking is what kids, pre-teens, teens, even young adults, do, mostly because they have so little power to do anything else. There's this hackneyed but still effective advice that you should read aloud when you're revising; I definitely did that, and found it incredibly helpful. But then I sort of internalized that and found that when I was writing, I basically performed this dialogue; I said it aloud as I wrote, nixing certain words and phrases if they felt wrong coming out of my mouth. I found this an effective way to work, as well as an effective way to demonstrate to my husband that I am, in fact, insane. CS: We both came to novel writing after doing different kinds of writing and I'm wondering what is your favorite â and least favorite â thing about writing fiction? RA: Certainly for me the greatest thing about writing a book is that I have not been required, at any point, to have a conference call. I rather like being alone, and working at my own pace, and knocking off early to make lasagna for dinner, and not having to honor some old-fashioned notion that the workday is 9-5. It's a great job, a dream job. The writing of fiction can be a lonely business. One of the real challenges for me is that when I become preoccupied with some problem in my work, some snag in the plot or some complication with a character, it often has this specificity that makes it impossible to discuss with anyone. Complaining about imaginary people and scenarios sounds crazy! I sometimes half-discuss these things with my husband even so. I guess that shows that writing fiction is just a job like any other; it's part of a spouse's job to listen to you vent, even if they don't totally understand why you're frustrated. CS: This book is about the course of friendship and the challenges that arise when lives start to diverge. Marriage and parenting are often catalysts for this kind of emotional inventory-taking, wondering if we're sustaining a relationship out of habit or obligation or if there is a real love worth nurturing. I'm wondering how and if marriage and parenthood has affected the friendships in your life. RA: Sure: getting married and having kids has of necessity seen my social life get less active. But it's always something! You get serious about your career, you have to care for an unwell family member, you discover a passion for something like travel or making art that takes up your time, and you find that many things â friends you thought quite dear, the desire to go out

to dinner every Friday night—falling away. It's ok, it's mostly natural, and because a friendship ends or changes doesn't mean it was meaningless or insignificant. The work of writing is very solitary, but the business of publishing isn't—one of the delights of publishing this book has been meeting other writers, as well as so many editors, agents, and other people in the book game. You actually never know when you'll meet someone whose friendship may really matter in your life.

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