



Essence of Time

Liz Crowe

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For years, Rob Frietag has resisted anything resembling a true emotional connection, preferring instead to explore life, and his own desires, without committing to anyone for very long. The reason remains known only to a few, among them Jack Gordon, his college cohort in female conquests, and life-long friend. At thirty-seven, while he is close to achieving his career goal, head chef at a five-star restaurant in Chicago, he is still very much alone.

After an intensely emotional relationship with Suzanne Baxter in Ann Arbor, Blake's heart is left shattered. Completely broken by what he believes was his one true love, he arrives at a Chicago food and beer festival, prepared to drink his sorrow away. When the two men meet, their lives change forever. But time is of the essence. When Rob acknowledges his true feelings, he will stop at nothing to keep them together, including finding a surrogate mother for the child Blake so desperately wants.

Lila Warren is recovering from a nasty divorce, needs cash and believes carrying their baby will fulfill her in ways marriage never did. None of them could suspect that the connection they share would provide the final emotional key to their life-long puzzle.

When Rob's secret is revealed, time becomes the one luxury they don't have, setting in motion a chain of events that destroys the fragile illusion of happiness for them, and everyone who loves them.

Essence of Time Details

Date : Published June 23rd 2012 by Tri Destiny Publishing

ISBN :

Author : Liz Crowe

Format : ebook 332 pages

Genre : Adult Fiction, Erotica, Romance, M M Romance, Contemporary Romance, Contemporary

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From Reader Review Essence of Time for online ebook

Beth says

3.75 stars

This long story took a long time to get the characters together. This is my first of the Stewart Realty Book so maybe that's the way they all are. You really get to know their backstory when they finally meet.

Rob and Jack meet in college. They are womanizing, drunk roomies. As they go their separate ways they keep in touch and stay in the same circle of friends even living on different continents. They each find love in their own way and it is so intertwined they could have been from a Tennessee trailer park.

Deb says

OMG! Talk about being blown away!... Get ready for one of the biggest emotional roller coaster rides ever!! ... This is not a genre I choose when buying books, but it was given to me in exchange for an honest review... I had previously read the first 3 short stories in this series & I recommend you read them first before this book 4 ... They were very good reads, but this is way above & beyond the others & my favorite Liz Crowe book so far! ...

At first, I was skeptical as to whether I would like this long story, but Ms. Crowe now has me hooked on her writing style!... The words & details are so gripping that I felt like I was pulled into the story with the characters :o ... So many ups & downs, good times & sad would leave me emotionally drained each time I read!... As much as I wanted to keep turning the pages after quite a few chapters, I would have to step away, shake my head, look around and remind myself that I was reading fiction, not living in it!! ... Then towards the end of this book, there will be twists & turns you will never see coming that almost made me mad at the Author :o lol ... So yes, I highly recommend this 5 STAR MUST READ to all fiction lovers of any genre! ... I can't wait to get the rest of the books in this Stewart Realty series :)

Casey says

Review originally posted at Ramblings From This Chick

Essence of Time is the fourth book in the Stewart Realty series by Liz Crowe. I had not read any of the other books in the series before reading this book and I read this one easily as a standalone. I will say that because of that I really had no idea what to expect with this book and I didn't have a clue the emotional wringer that this book would run me through. This book was really good don't get me wrong, but it was absolutely heartbreaking at times. Prepare yourself ahead of time and have the tissues on hand with this one.

Rob Freitag has lived his life making no commitments, and making as few emotional connections as possible. He tends to run when things get close to that, and there are very few people who know the reason behind that. His best friend Jack Gordon is one of the few that knows everything, and they spent their college years enjoying life to the fullest. Rob throws everything into making a successful career as a chef and is

finally realizing his dream in his late thirties. Blake Thornton is trying to drown his sorrows after the end of his emotional relationship with Suzanne Baxter when he attends a beer festival in Chicago when he meets Rob. Rob helps take care of him after he ends up drunk and alone. Rob and Blake instantly hit it off and find a connection with one another that they both didn't expect or want. Through their ups and downs Blake and Rob finally accept everything between them and are ready to spend their lives together. Rob will stop at nothing to make Blake happy, and will do everything he can to find a way to give Blake the one thing he can't. When they talk to Blake's sister Sara, she tells them of a single mother looking to make some money after a terrible divorce. Lila Warren has a young daughter and will get pregnant for them in order to care for her child. But when Lila doesn't get pregnant right away, they all begin to realize that they are growing attached to each other. Lila finds a relationship with Blake and Rob to be everything that she has been missing and they grow to love her as much as they love each other. But with Rob's secret hanging over their heads, time quickly becomes the one thing they don't have.

I really loved Rob and Blake. They were both so great in completely different ways. But their relationship worked so well because they were the perfect compliment to one another. Their road wasn't easy, but it showed just how strong their connection was once they finally came together. Rob and Blake were able to share their passion for cooking and brewing together, and I loved that they opened up a place together. I liked seeing them share so much passion outside of the bedroom as well as inside. They were so hot together and had off the charts chemistry. But the beauty of their relationship was in the emotional bond that they shared. I will admit that I didn't like Lila right off. I honestly didn't want anyone to come in between the guys, and at first she did. I thought that she was not needed in their relationship and that they could have found someone else to give them what they wanted without causing problems between them. But she did grow on me, and I saw that they were both falling for her as she was for them. It was a struggle at times to merge their relationship from being two to being three, especially with her daughter involved as well. But I think it was worth it and that it was what was right for all of them in the end. It was great that they had such a support system and that they all had one another to lean on.

I knew this book was going to break my heart from the moment I found out what Rob's secret was. I honestly didn't know exactly how things would go, but I knew something had to happen and it wasn't going to be good. I can honestly say I was surprised with what happened, and yes it broke my heart but not in the way I had expected. I am still heartbroken about what happened, and I think that this is one of those that will always stay with me because I absolutely loved these characters so much. It was so hard to get through this one at times, especially the last 30% or so. It was so worth the read, but it was just emotionally draining to say the least. I will say that the reason this book is a 4 star for me rather than a 5 star is because of how this book was done. It was divided into portions based on the characters, and that felt disjointed and choppy to me. It took me a really long time to get into this book because I felt like it was slow to get to the relationship. Yes we got a lot of back-story, and it was great to see what each of the guys had been through, but I just struggled with the format. I have to say that this book was still a really great read though, and it made me want to instantly go back and read all the rest of the books in the series. I highly recommend this story, and I think that it was beautiful even as it was breaking my heart. I can't wait to read the rest in this series, and I look forward to reading more from Liz Crowe in the future. Next time I will be better prepared and have tissues at the ready though.

Review Copy Provided by Book Enthusiast Promotions

Ashley says

EOT left me completely heartbroken to say the least. I'm a huge Liz fan and really enjoyed this story except for the ending. Although it encounters twists and turns near the end I still felt ripped apart. The story itself

was good. I enjoyed learning about Rob and Jack ad college students and the experiences they faced that turned them into the men we love. The story of Rob and Blakes relationship was beautiful. I couldn't give half ratings but EOT is 4.5 stars!! Great job Liz!

Shirley Wilson says

This book was quite different from,other books that I have read. There are multiple characters the book tells the story off. All the characters have fascinating events that happen in their lives. All the characters intertwine in some way or another. Either from chance meetings or from growing up together. I think my favorite characters were Blake and Suzanne. I really enjoyed their relationship. If you do not really care for M/M or M/M/F relations then this is definately not a book you want to read. It is not my favorite part of the story and honestly I just skimmed over those parts. But OMG at about 77% I did MOT see that twist in the story and it had me crying!!!! Well done Liz Crowe. Well done. I love it when an author can shock me like that in a book!

Anna says

I'm not sure I should be reviewing this book right now. My mind was just blown to smithereens, my libido is off the richter scale and my heart is broken.

I'll go ahead and confess that I've read book 1 in the Stewart Realty series because I got it for \$.99. I went to grab the second in the series, because who doesn't love a manwhore? I I didn't buy any more because \$3.99 for less than 200 pages is a bit steep in my opinion.

Last week I see this book is \$.99 so I buy it thinking it's going to be like the other book...all hot steamy and angsty....ha, not so much. This is truly a sleeper! Liz Crowe is a genius. To write across decades with a group of friends, intertwining their lives and hearts (and other body parts) made for a spectacular read!

Regardless of the cost, I'm going back to get all of this series! Well played, Liz, with your "I'll hook them with a couple at \$.99" ploy! This book was such a bargain, I don't care what the others cost.

L N says

Refreshing... but also absolutely heartwrenching

I am always looking for a good mmf romance and they are few and far between. This felt more like a life story than a romance though. Every step of Rob's life had a weight hanging over it and I was right there with him.

The characters are well developed and the sex seems to complement the story rather than being a kink and the main purpose of the book.

That being said, this book WILL rip your heart out and destroy your day. I look forward to reading more of

this series.

Denise - Shh Mom's Reading® says

You can find our review at
Shh Mom's Reading
www.shhmomsreading.com
and join the conversation at
[@shhmomsreading](http://www.facebook.com/ShhMomsReading)

The Essence of Time by Liz Crowe is 4th book in her Realtors Series; it arguably the best of the 4.

Liz does an amazing job creating backstory for characters from Floor Time, Sweat Equity and Closing Costs. It provides true prospective into many of the decisions they make and made in the prior books; decisions that on the surface were beyond frustrating but with the backstory make so much sense.

Liz's ability to develop more than just two main characters provides the Essence of Time with so many layers. You will enjoy watching them all interact as their story develops. This story has wonderful and very sexy love scenes that intertwine with the raw emotions associated with building and maintaining a long-term relationship.

This book is engaging; a true can't put me down read.

Liz's writing compels you to become engaged with her characters; you will find yourself truly vested in their relationships and well being.

It is the kind of book that sits with you after you are done; sitting and wanting more.

I highly recommend this book and the other three in the series; prior to reading Fifty Shades a few months ago I had not read in years (everyone knows the busy life drill); I then started to read all the time; tried a few books but nothing special until I found Liz's The Realtors Series, it is truly captivating! I think I am more obsessed with these characters than I was with Christian. Liz's character developing is great; and her female characters are strong and relatable to most women. Her male characters strong, vulnerable, and driven to show they women in their lives how much they need to love them.

Liz pleased keep up the wonderful story telling!

DawnMarie Carpintero says

5 Grand Stars 10 if I were able

I was given this book for my honest review.

Please before you get down to reading this one of a kind legend get the following supplies, boxes of tissues, favorite ice-cream, blanket, get into your comfy chair, put the lock on the door with the DO NOT DISTURB SIGN, tell the family it's pizza hut night and TURN OFF THE CELL PHONE.

Jack-hunky, cute, scared

Rob-hot and closed off but sexy as heck

Sara-scared, pretty

Blake-young, hot and confused

This is Rob's journey to finding himself with in the universe. He is a man of little words and when he does speak he speaks volumes above the rest. Rob has been on a quest to finding the things that are unattainable to what he really wants. He can be hard at times and come off as crass and heartless but this is because of the turmoil and the strength that his childhood provided. This man is heck bent of keeping his heart closed from love. Does this man find love?

The close circle of friends that has become Rob's safe haven is special in itself. He keeps his secret that he has been dealing with all of his life close to his heart and rarely lets anyone close to it for fear that the secret that he keeps may ultimately be his end. Is keeping said secret the way to for him to live his life with a constant fear of the unknown happening? If the unknown happens to come around again will he be able to deal with it or just give in? This is the one fear that keeps him from letting love into his heart.

Blake is a young stud that has been hurt by the best of women. He wears his heart on his sleeve though with that comes hurt by all around. Leaving life up to chance has always been fine till one night he gets so off the wall blitzed that he can't remember getting to where he is at. A strange feeling of serenity comes about him not knowing why or how he got to this point he fears that when waking up and staring into a man's eyes his stud goes on full alert in a very good way but frightening to. Is Blake now attracted to the opposite sex? Can he admit to himself that the man with the sparkling eyes can see into his soul? Can he let said man into his soul? This is different in so many ways for him but at the same time feels right.

Blake and Rob's journey together is so phenomenal is so many ways though Rob has been around the world and has experienced life with women and men he feels that this one connection to Blake hits his soul completely but with fear of the unknown that lurks with every breath he takes. Can Rob and Blake make it together? Can Rob show Blake that that being with a man is just as satisfying as being with a woman but with more of a connection that neither has felt before? Can Rob let go and tell Blake of his secret that he fears may be the end for them? This is their story.

What about Jack? Does Jack find his true happiness? Did Sara find her happiness with in also?

To the author this was one absolute amazing read that had me from page 1 and tugged at my heartstrings till the very end. There is no doubt from this reviewer that you are one amazing talented writer and you definitely know how to keep your readers surprised at every turn. I wish I was able to give you more than the 5 stars because of this out of this world read that kept surprising me till the very last page.

Did I forget to mention that the sex is way way hot hot and more hot?

Happy Reading

Lucinda Claire says

Essence of Time is book four in the Stewart Realty series by Liz Crowe. This is the amazing and breathtaking story of Rob and Blake, and it is BY FAR my favorite book of the four. Jack and Sara's story (books 1, 2 and 3) was thoroughly enjoyable, and utterly erotic. Rob and Blake's story, however, an unparalleled story of love, with all its many complexities.

Blake Thornton is Sara's brother. We meet him in the first three installments of this series, but Essence of Time gives us the backstory of Blake's relationship first with Suzanne, and then with Rob Frietag, Jack's long-time friend and former co-participant in the carnal experiences of college life. Author Liz Crowe fills in the missing pieces that are merely hinted at in in the first books of the series, but Essence of Time invites the reader to experience the deep commitment and unwavering devotion that is Blake and Rob's love story.

I was thoroughly captivated by the events in this book. It held me spellbound and kept me voraciously turning pages from the very beginning. Blake and Rob's relationship is intense. They are head-strong men with pasts that still haunt them both to some degree. But despite their differences, Blake and Rob love powerfully – emotionally, as well as physically. Ms. Crowe writes some of the most potently erotic scenes I've ever read. Theirs is not just a physical connection, however; it's emotional and passionate and intensely arousing.

To say anything too specific about the plot of the story would be doing Ms. Crowe (and potential readers) a disservice. Suffice it to say that the story took turns (several of them) that rendered me breathless, with my heart in my throat. Just one word of warning: Do Not, I repeat, DO NOT read this book in public, unless, of course, you are willing to explain to perfect strangers why you are crying inconsolably. "Shredded" is the only word that accurately describes what this book did to me, and the proof is in the evidence that it's taken me three weeks to muster up the nerve to re-visit the story in my head long enough to write a review. Bravo, Liz Crowe. Essence of Time is masterful storytelling!

Five+ intense, emotional, beautifully-written stars!

Adria (Musings and Reviews) says

Originally posted on Breath of Life Reviews

Essence of Time is officially tied with Paradise Hops as my favorite Liz Crowe book. It definitely has Liz's signature writing style, emotional turmoil, erotic sex scenes and plenty of time with characters old and new. The thing about the Stewart Realty series is that characters from previous books never completely leave the spotlight. They're all connected somehow and each character is crucial to another's development. I enjoy the connections because that's the way real life is. Not to sound cheesy but we are all connected and one person can affect many people's lives with their choices, good or bad.

I didn't expect to enjoy a story that was not solely centered on Jack Gordon and Sara Thorton so imagine my surprise when I not only enjoyed it, I fell in love with Rob and Blake. Anyone who knows me knows that I am a total sucker for wounded male characters, especially the emotionally wounded kind so when I first started reading the Stewart Realty series, I truly felt like Liz Crowe was writing these men for ME. Silly I know but I just love it when characters have these virtually impossible obstacles to overcome, some of which carry on for years or may not truly be overcome. You never know with Liz Crowe, her books are anything BUT predictable.

Essence of Time, while longer than its predecessors, doesn't drag on with unnecessary information and is

still, by my definition, a short but amazing book. It's become extremely difficult for me to talk about these books without giving anything away, and this particular book is the hardest. There is so much going on and some surprising revelations by some of the characters that kept me reading well into the night and crying at the ending in the morning. Essence of Time affected me so much emotionally, I had a difficult time formulating articulate sentences for this review. I kept replaying scenes over and over in my head and reliving the last 80 or so pages.

As bittersweet as the ending was, I couldn't imagine Rob and Blake's relationship going any other way. Nor could I imagine a better companion than Lila. She's a fighter, a survivor and caregiver all in one. Lila's not as much of a hard ass as Sara or as tragic as Suzanne but that doesn't mean she's a push over. She has this quiet, understated will of steel that enables her to continue fighting whatever life throws her way.

I am experiencing a lot of "firsts" with Liz Crowe's books and one big one is that the Stewart Realty series is my first time reading a m/m relationship (mostly due to mental scarring from a previous experience). Rob and Blake's relationship is at times tempestuous but overall romantic, heartwarming & heartbreaking.

There's one thing I want to say to Liz Crowe concerning Essence of Time, bravo on the ending. Seriously, thank you for not taking a cheap way out and turning Blake or Rob into a villain so that the ending would be "easier" for readers. I don't see how this book could have ended any better, so thank you.

The bottom line is that Essence of Time is emotionally gripping, hard to put down and even harder to let go of. My favorite book of the series hands down

Pam says

Liz Crowe has done it again with her book Essence Of Time. It is an amazing and wonderful story of Rob and Blake, two entirely different young men with similar emotional needs. I have absolutely loved every book that Liz Crowe has written but when I started reading this book, I found myself not wanting to like these two men. HOWEVER, that was not to be. Liz's awesome genius spun a separate storyline for each character making it impossible not to fall head-over-heels for them. She gives a detailed background of each one that explains where they are physically and emotionally. Then she brings them together in their own story. I was hooked and absolutely fell in love with Rob and Blake. Liz then introduces us to a third character named Lila who adds a whole new perspective to their relationship. I am not going to even hint at any details except to say that the intensity of their relationship is so emotionally gripping that you will not be disappointed. Liz Crowe...I will say it again, you are a genius. I didn't think that any book would get to me the way that Closing Costs did but I was so wrong. I wept like a baby reading the last few chapters. You have a gift of taking the reader through every emotion possible. Thank you for an awesome book and a truly wonderful ride.

Rachel's Willful Thoughts says

It takes a special gift to put words together in such a way that it causes people to laugh or cry, sometimes within the context of one chapter. Author Liz Crowe demonstrates that not only is she a master at weaving a storyline featuring believable characters, but she delivers an exceptional reading experience.

Although Essence of Time contains elements of ménage and bisexual relationships that may be uncomfortable for some readers, it is first and foremost a love story. This particular book focuses on Rob,

Blake and Lila, with the whole Stewart Realty team featured. After reading Essence of Time, I am eager to read more about the characters. The author has made a name for herself with the WHA (What Happens After), which means readers don't have to say goodbye to beloved characters.

Not only is the writing impressive, but the author provides some rather unexpected plot twists that definitely captured my attention. I would classify this as an "intense" read with scorching love scenes and some mind blowing angst.

Stephanie says

Where do I start? This book left me in shambles....and I had to let several days pass before I could write a review. I loved this book!! The story was emotionally gripping, full of drama, hot sex and couldn't have been better written. Liz gives us several story lines to follow, Rob, Blake and Lila, which merge together so seamlessly throughout the book. I loved the relationship between Rob and Blake! It was a truly beautiful love they shared. I will admit that this book left me utterly heart-broken and took a plot twist that I swear I never saw coming and had me crying ugly tears! Liz Crowe does it once again!

Kristin says

I was not sure of this book at the start after finishing the others in this series...Man am I glad I finished. I am not one to write reviews, but this one deserves one! I can't tell you the last time a book tugged at my heart strings. Big fat tears here, I totally did not see that coming. Great Book!
