

Miscellaneous Reviews

"Pardon the pun, but *Conversations with the Fat Girl* is far from lightweight. Its message about self image and the power of attitude in making positive change is delivered in a snappy fashion. In a word: genuine."

-- Herald Sun

"Engaging and poignant and heartbreakingly real, Liza Palmer's tale of best friends, true love and just what size happily ever after wears is a winning conversation."

-- Jennifer Weiner, best-selling author of *GOOD IN BED*, *IN HER SHOES*, and *LITTLE EARTHQUAKES*

"Liza Palmer's first novel has all the qualities of the ideal best friend: it is reflective yet riotous, sardonic yet compassionate. This is the story about two best friends, boundary issues and the unraveling of a shared history. Palmer puts her finger delicately, yet forcefully, on the crucial moment in every failing friendship, the one where we must choose either to untangle and extricate ourselves or become erased by our own compliance. An accomplished and wonderful debut."

-- Amanda Stern (author of *The Long Haul*)

"This is the one you've been waiting for. *CONVERSATIONS WITH THE FAT GIRL* is smart, funny, and heartbreakingly honest. I couldn't put it down. Liza Palmer infuses her novel with humor, candor, and lots of heart. This is one conversation I never wanted to end!"

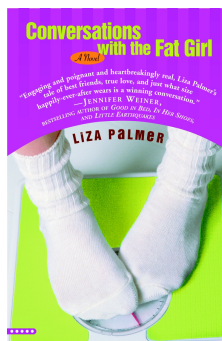
-- Johanna Edwards, National Best-selling Author of *THE NEXT BIG THING*

"*CONVERSATIONS WITH THE FAT GIRL* is a wry, dry, and ultimately winning novel featuring a saucy heroine to whom all girls (fat and thin) will relate: Maggie starts out looking for excuses, but ends up finding herself."

-- Wendy Shanker *THE FAT GIRL'S GUIDE TO LIFE* Paperback in stores March 2005

"I got completely wrapped up in *Conversations with the Fat Girl*...it was touching, funny, and oh, so human. Every character is quirky and well drawn. It's a conversation I felt lucky to be part of!"

-- Caren Lissner, author of *Carrie Pilby*



Pele Publications - Review

Reviewed by: Catherine Kitcho

This is a witty contemporary story about women's friendships as they encounter life's passages. Any woman who has battled those pounds over the years, whether 10 pounds or 100, will identify with Maggie, the heroine of this tale. Maggie's best childhood friend Olivia was also a girl of size, but underwent gastric bypass surgery and then crafted a new social life, leaving Maggie behind to wrestle with her own body image. As Olivia's impending wedding to a doctor nears, and with Maggie as the maid of honor, Maggie feels the need to out her friend about their shared past. The two women must decide what is most important: friendship or truth? You'll enjoy this funny page-turner, and it's a great book group selection, especially for women.

Nights and Weekends.com – reviewed by Kristin Dreyer Kramer

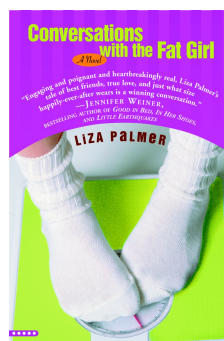
It all starts with a note from Maggie's landlord, announcing that Maggie's little home is about to be bulldozed and turned into a pool—and she has 48 hours to move out. The timing couldn't be worse for Maggie, who's preparing to be the maid of honor when her best friend, Olivia, marries a handsome surgeon in a matter of weeks. But the note somehow sparks a chain reaction of change in Maggie's life.

All her life, Maggie's been clinging to things that she should have put behind her. She's been clinging to her little house with the hideous landlord. She's been clinging to her friendship with Olivia, a gastric-bypassed former fat girl who's moved across the country to escape her past. She's been clinging to her fantasies of the perfect man—who will never exist. She's been clinging to her job at a café—while she dreams of finally using her Master's and getting a job restoring sculptures in a museum. And she's been clinging to her role as the Poor Little Fat Girl.

With her move to her cute new cottage, Maggie begins to face the changes and take charge of her life. That means calling about that internship at the museum, working with a personal trainer, and finally doing something about her crush on Domenic, the dishwasher at the café, who might just be interested in her, too. It also means facing the fact that her Best Friend Forever might not be the best of friends anymore.

Conversations with the Fat Girl is one of those books that you won't want to put down—and you'll eventually give in, like I did, and read until you finish it. Palmer's style is relaxed and easy-going—just like a chat with a good friend. Her voice is witty and honest—and, at times, cynical and just plain sad. Maggie is such a loveable and realistic character that you'll instantly get caught up in her story—and you'll be able to relate, no matter what your size. You'll laugh with her, you'll commiserate with her, and you'll cheer her on from the first page to the last.

The story may not be entirely original or unpredictable, but it's so truthful and well-written that none of that matters. It's a powerful novel that will make you laugh while challenging you to take a look at your own life, too. It'll inspire you and entertain you—and I'm sure you'll enjoy it just as much as I did.



Publishers Weekly

Palmer debuts with the latest sprightly entry in the ever-expanding category of light romantic comedies starring plus-sized heroines. Maggie has been best friends with fellow fat girl Olivia since they were 12. Following gastric bypass surgery at 22, however, Olivia grows increasingly unrecognizable. Now 27, she's engaged to Adam, a fat-phobic Ken doll, and although Maggie is to be the maid of honor, she feels less and less a part of Olivia's skinny new life. After Olivia disappoints her old friend again and again, Maggie sets in motion a long-overdue and explosive confrontation and walks into the arms of the colleague—busboy to her barista—whom she's had a crush on for ages. By that time, in true chick-lit style, Maggie is both earnestly at work improving herself and being loved for her true, unimproved self. And though Palmer doesn't moralize, it's when Maggie starts to make her own, more realistic wishes come true—by taking a better job and signing up with a trainer instead of a surgeon—that she sees her love required. It turns out her instincts were good—as are Palmer's. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Booklist

Palmer's lighthearted debut traverses territory familiar to chick-lit fans—a young woman lets self-doubt undermine an opportunity for romance. A lifelong battle with her weight, a disastrous dating life, and a going-nowhere job have taken their toll on Maggie's self-esteem. To make matters worse, her best friend, Olivia—once a fellow plus-size shopper—has a new svelte body thanks to gastric bypass surgery and a handsome surgeon fiancé to boot. A great boyfriend and the perfect job are within Maggie's reach, but first she has to feel like she deserves them. Palmer's likable characters and snappy dialogue make this novel stand out from the crowd, and it's sure to attract fans of Jennifer Weiner and other authors who offer slightly imperfect heroines. Palmer manages to infuse a message of self-acceptance that isn't heavy-handed or cloying. This quick-witted author is sure to develop a following. Aleksandra Kostovski

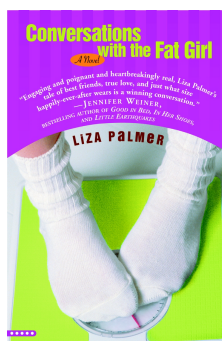
MyShelf.com

"Buried inside every woman with a poor self-image lays a mistress of her own fate, and never before has the unearthing been as engaging!

Maggie has fought and lost the battle of the bulge more times than she cares to count. Comparing herself to others has done a number on her self-esteem. However, she refuses to submit to gastric bypass, as her best friend Olivia has. She just needs to take control of her life. A piece of cake? More like a vat of Ben and Jerry's just waiting for her resolve to melt.

She has a master's degree in art and she works in a coffee house. When the opportunity to acquire her dream job arises, will she hesitate too long and miss the brass ring? She has the hots for a shy guy and memories of a string of failed romances. Will history prevent her from taking a chance on love? She has a handful of friends, but the only one who really knows her is re-writing their history and taking their friendship for granted—big time! Will Maggie let Olivia continue to treat her like a doormat?

Liza Palmer's debut novel belongs on the bestsellers lists. The author's exploration of her character's relationships, values and misperceptions will strike a personal chord in most readers. Ms. Palmer's fresh, bold voice doesn't allow readers to sit at a table sipping espresso. Through excellent characterization, the author fosters the ultimate relationship and blurs the line between protagonist and reader. You might want to reach through the pages and shake some sense into Maggie or throttle Olivia and her new friends. However, have no fear. Maggie wises up in her own way, in her own time. Don't miss the ending. It's priceless!"



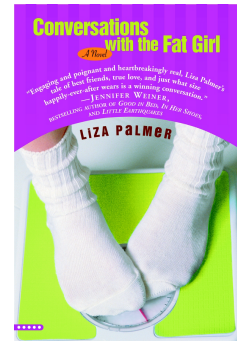
Romance Reviews Today – 09.20.2005 issue

Maggie can't remember a time when she wasn't fat. She is always planning to start a new diet and exercise regimen, but somehow the time never arrives. Her weight rules her world. At twenty-seven years old, she is going to be maid of honor at her best friend Olivia's wedding, and hopes to look slim and trim in her beautiful dress, so dieting is a must. She usually wears long sweaters to cover her bulk, and is always uncomfortable with herself. Olivia, who used to be fat, had gastric-bypass surgery, and is now thin, blond, and marrying a local physician. Maggie and Olivia's relationship is changing. Is Olivia pretending to be somebody other than who she is, or just becoming a different person?

Although Maggie has a degree in art history and museum preservation, she has been working at a local coffee shop and is interested in the bus boy, Dominic. She has never had a boyfriend, and although she would desperately like to have a relationship, she is afraid of rejection. Her sister gives her information about a job for a Getty Museum internship, but will Maggie pursue this ideal job? Or will she let her low self-esteem keep her dispensing coffee?

Funny and poignant, CONVERSATIONS WITH THE FAT GIRL is a story that many of us can relate to in our size 2 Twiggy world. Maggie agonizes over every pound and feels totally inadequate. She lives in her glorious daydreams. Written in first person, the story is funny, but sad at the same time. Any relationships Maggie has had only led to rejection and humiliation. The secondary characters enhance the story. Olivia is changing in personality as well as body, not wanting to remember anything about having been fat; Dominic is a good friend and maybe something more; and Maggie's family is very supportive.

A debut imprint for Warner Books and the author, CONVERSATIONS WITH THE FAT GIRL is a terrific beginning. It is a story of friendship, love, and self-discovery. The writing is very good, with snappy dialogue that will make readers laugh as they commiserate with Maggie and cheer her on. Kudos to 5 SPOT and Liza Palmer. This is a book that readers won't want to miss.



Entertainment Weekly - September 9, 2005 Issue

Marilyn Heyman • Overall Grade - B

CONVERSATIONS WITH THE FAT GIRL Liza Palmer (5 Spot, \$ 12.95) Overweight Maggie and Olivia are best friends...until Olivia gets gastric bypass surgery and embarks on a size 2 life.

Source of Angst: Olivia asks Maggie to be maid of honor at her wedding, forcing Maggie to hang out with Olivia's insufferable new friends.

Career Move: Sick of her dead end job, Maggie applies for an internship at the Getty Museum.

Lowdown: The story takes a more interesting turn once Maggie stops wallowing. And the descriptions of Olivia's catty pals are priceless.

From Gothic Revue – reviewed by Sue Shackles

This is a book all women should read.

Conversations with the Fat Girl is right up there with Bridget Jones' Diary in the author's ability to take her protagonists and have them turn the mirror on the reader. Who hasn't been on one side of this equation or another at some point in their life?

As a character, Maggie is at once endearing and hilariously self-deprecating, while at the same time making you want to envelop her in a big hug and feed her low carb cookies with no trans fat. In trying to become invisible to others, she has lost sight of herself and who she is. Her battle to reveal herself – including her Area – her euphemistic term for her unsightly belly bulge, is smart, funny and incredibly honest. If you're not rooting for her by the end of the story then you have no soul.

Liza Palmer is an astonishingly good writer with a terrific grasp of character and voice. She had a tightrope to walk with Maggie and Olivia who could easily have become caricatures, and in the case of Maggie, a consummate doormat for whom it was difficult to engender sympathy or sisterhood. She walked that tightrope with brilliant ease, molding her characters until they popped off the pages. Let's