



## **We Are the Goldens**

*Dana Reinhardt*

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## **We Are the Goldens** Dana Reinhardt

Nell knows a secret about her perfect, beautiful sister Layla. If she tells, it could blow their world apart.

When Nell and Layla were little, Nell used to call them Nellayla. Because to Nell, there was no difference between where she started and her adored big sister ended. They're a unit; divorce made them rely on each other early on, so when one pulls away, what is the other to do? But now, Nell's a freshman in high school and Layla is changing, secretive. And then Nell discovers why. Layla is involved with one of their teachers. And even though Nell tries to support Layla, to understand that she's happy and in love, Nell struggles with her true feelings: it's wrong, and she must do something about it.

## **We Are the Goldens Details**

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Author : Dana Reinhardt

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# From Reader Review We Are the Goldens for online ebook

Shelby \*trains flying monkeys\* says

This book is about two sisters. The younger one Nell is supposedly writing it in letter form to her older sister Layla. They used to be inseparable. They were Nellayla.\*gag\*

Nell (who is fourteen) is finally going to high school with her worshipped older sister..she will be the other half of the Goldens. It's going to be 'awesome.'

Then she realizes that Layla is pulling away from her.

Nell becomes almost stalkerish in her adulation of Layla. (I though Layla was an idiot.)

Then the big reveal of the super sekret secret. That happens early in the book.

\*double gag\*

The only redeeming thing about the whole silly book? The best friend of Nell..Felix. The standard funny little nerd.

*Booksource: Netgalley in exchange for review*

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Linda ♥? Sassy, Classy && a Little Bit of Nasty says

*Advance copy provided by publisher via Net Galley.*

4/7/14 -

This one sounds like it's outside of my norm. Synopsis a little vague so we shall see!

5/1/14

*3.5 Stars!*

I found this to be a pleasant surprise! **We Are the Goldens** is a tale told from Nell's point of view. She the younger sister of two, and she *idolizes* her older sister, Layla. And Layla has a secret.

*Our lives are intertwined.*

Nell has a best friend, Felix De La Cruz. They lean on each other for comfort and support. He's who she tells everything to. Except Layla's secret. Because that's her sister, her role model, and you don't want your role model to be mad at you, do you?

Nell's journey into 'adulthood' was fascinating to experience. She got to learn some things the easy way, and some things she had to learn the hard way. Through it all she was fighting to stay loyal to her sister.

I found this book to be very intriguing. There was this buildup of "will she tell?" "what's there to tell?" "what is and isn't the truth?" It all led to...an open end.

There may be some out there who hate open-ended stories, but I liked it in this case. It leaves you wanting more, constantly thinking about the book, instead of 'story's over, close the book and move on'. I'll be thinking about this YA for quite some time after this. It's got me very curious and it's fun to put my own twist to the story. (Kind of like how she and Felix used to do with the buffalos!) It's a definite read for someone looking for a journey through a teen's not so simple, yet not too complicated life.

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### Elle's Book Blog says

**\*\*Please note: a 2 star rating does NOT mean I hated the book. For me it means it was "okay".\*\***

This read just didn't do it for me. The blurb of the book is mysterious and gives nothing away which is why I figured I should give it a try. Unfortunately, I felt little to no connection with the characters. Even more, I found the writing style to be plain and unappealing. The premise behind the book is very promising but because I couldn't enjoy the way it was written it was hard to get into. Essentially, the book is told from Nell's point of view and the entire time she is literally talking to her sister and not the readers. Also, this writing style muffles the underlying meaning of the book. I wish I could say I liked it more but frankly its just not my cup of tea. And the ending... don't even get me started. WTH...

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### Paula M. of Her Book Thoughts! says

THIS REVIEW IS ORIGINALLY POSTED ON CRISTINA'S BOOK REVIEWS.

***"There's something I need to tell you. Don't be mad. Please don't be mad. I hate it when you're mad at me."***

Layla and Nell are the Goldens, their parents are divorced, they're only 9 months apart and Nell knows a secret about her sister. Her sister is involve with their art teacher!! THIS IS NOT A SPOILER. It's written in the Blurb already, the real question here is what will Nell do about this information? Will she tell it? Keep it to herself? Maybe just share it to her bestfriend, Felix?

We Are The Goldens is shorter than I expected. But even though it left me wanting more, I thoroughly enjoyed it. I don't have a sister, and this book made me long for one. It made me emotional.. I was sad and happy and my chest ached a little after I finished it. I know, my feelings doesn't really makes sense.. But that's what I loved about the book. Even though it's too short for my liking, it made an impact.

The story is written in second person tense. Nell is narrating and me (you) as a reader will feel like you're Nell. Usually, this bothers me. But I'm totally immersed at Layla's storytelling that I am willing to overlook it. It's so easy to be invested which is really surprising for me because it's usually hard for a First Chapter to caught my attention. But Nell is an awesome character. I can see her as one of my best friends, her words are easy to get into and the way she narrates her story will make you feel for her. Even though we're not getting into the other character's head, I feel like I know them all deeply! In other words, the book is well written.

*"We are the Goldens, but we aren't perfect. We're going to have some hard times, and I wanted to calmly and wisely say some version of this to you: I'm here to help, we're close, our lives are intertwined, you can trust me."*

Does this remind you of Elsa and Anna feels? Because this book really is about sisterhood. Layla, the big sister, has some issues and Nell, the little sis, who loves her unconditionally, struggles to help her. Layla got on my nerves a lot of times, for being the first child and older than Nell, she's pretty stupid. And she's kind of cruel. I mean, you can see the love there. You can feel that she loves Nell, but there's manipulations and she's making Nell feel guilty a lot of times. There's no romance here, except maybe the relationship between Layla and the art professor, but no, let's not count that. But there IS an awesome friendship here. Awesome and epic that I envy it.

*"Is this what it's like?"*

*"What?"*

*"Being a boy. Do you just sit around all the time thinking about naked girls? Isn't there more to it?"*

*"Of course there is. We care about things like your intellect and your sense of humor and your capacity for kindness, but we also really like how you look naked."*

Did I mention Felix already? Because you'll love him. I do believe that we all need a Felix in our life, he's one of the most awesome character I've ever encountered. I love how his relationship with Nell shifted from super-duper-mega-ultra-bestfriend to.. something more.

I feel pretty sad about this review, I feel like I didn't do the book justice. It's well written, the characters are real and everything is realistic. From the plot to the relationships to the conclusion. It is short, yes, but it has a story that will really play at your heartstrings and it has a message. I absolutely recommend this. Now go hug your sisters!

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## **Robert says**

You might find this story exhilarating and entertaining, like an old friend whispering over your right shoulder, or then again you might not. You might find it moving and breathtaking, and it might caress you like the wind whispering against your face. You might remember the combination to your old high school locker and attempt to visit it in a moment of nostalgia, before the local authorities come to arrest you, and take you up to the big house on the hill—the one overlooking the water through a set of bars that will keep you contained for the next twenty-four hours. Or then again, you might remain unmoved and curse the heavens at this story of sisters who were seventeen months apart. The closeness these sisters shared, and the bond that held them together might as well have been superglue, even if it ended up a bit chipped around the edges.

I'd say it's nearly impossible not to feel some sort of emotion upon the completion of WE ARE THE

GOLDENS, but that would be mere conjecture and projection, and I want you to live your own life. Make your own mistakes, and dream the impossible dream...even if it blows up in your face faster than an M-80 and leaves you scarred from the nose down. For these chances and mistakes lead to opportunities and promises and hopes that might fill your body to its breaking point with desire and adrenaline, or then again, maybe you'd prefer to remain anonymous and stand behind the curtain, and let someone else make all the mistakes.

What I can tell you, though, is this tale moved me. I was inserted and transported to the heart of this story, and I found the little voice whispering behind my right ear and talking to me like an old friend who had just plopped down beside me on the sofa. And as I hugged my Kindle against my chest and read page after page, I couldn't stop the movement as it rumbled through my body and poured out of my pores, and astonished me at its sheer bravado when all I had asked was to be entertained for a few short hours of my life.

Second tense never sounded so intense and mature, even if Nell was only fifteen years old. And her sister Layla with her golden locks and skimpy frocks made all the heads of the high school boys turn. Her fair share of golden hair made me smile with pleasure and glee, and at seventeen years she was the perfect one, or so it would initially seem. But this tale has more depth and despair than its adolescence would lead you to believe.

But you'll have to find out yourself if this is a story you want to read, because all I can say is that it moved yesterday and made me particularly happy to have discovered it. With a gleam in my eye, and my eyes pointed to the sky, I reached the end of this piece. But the ending of this youthful lass, as it came to pass, left me with more questions than answers. So it can be said with the slightest hint of dread that I would have liked a slightly more definitive conclusion than the slightly open-ended one I was offered, even as I know when I have met life's strife I often have more questions than answers.

I received this book for free through NetGalley.

Cross-posted at Robert's Reads

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**Sheyenne says**

## **WARNING:SPOILERS**

*We are the Goldens!*

**This story was way better than I expected.** I mean way better I actually thought I was going to have to force myself to get through it. But it wasn't that long so I decided to just read the whole thing today.

**This story is told from Nell's pov.** But it's about how she deals with finding out that her sister Layla is in a relationship with one of their teachers. I can tell you right now if it was me I would have told right when I found out. I'm very iffy with books about teacher and student relationships. They really put me on edge (of course I'm talking about teachers and underage students). The story has to be really good for me to be okay with the relationship and the only story I can think of without cringing is *Slammed* by Colleen Hoover. I was kinda pissed that Nell didn't tell right away. But she just loved her sister's approval too much to say anything. Even though she knew it was wrong.

**Layla really got on my nerves!** I don't get how she thought that their relationship was okay. She knew it was wrong that's why she didn't want to say anything. She wants her sister to take up for her and lie with her but she feels like she can get mad whenever she wants and say rude things to her. She should have been happy that Nell was taking up for her instead of trying to make her feel bad. But instead of being the older mature sister she only cared about how she and Mr. B felt! This bitch really pissed me off.

**The only thing that really sucked about the story was that we don't know what happens when Nell tells.** The whole story is written as if Nell is telling her sister that she's going to tell their parents and why. But that's all we get. I really wanted to know how her parents reacted and what happened after. But I guess we have to just come up with what we think would happen.

**There haven't been alot of books that came out this year that I've rated more than 3 stars.** I'm really surprised that this is one of them but I'm glad I gave it a chance.

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## **Sanda says**

Sisterhood is complex. And complicated. That much I know even without having a sister. Although I've frequently wondered what it would be like to have one. Especially one really close in age. (when we were kids my little brother and I used to pester my mom - of course always Mom - to "give" us a sister...she vehemently refused...hmmm wonder if we were really that "bad")

Nell and Layla have always been very close. So much so that Nell used to consider them "one entity" when she was a kid. (and hence referred to both of them by one name - Nellayla) Layla is 17 months older. The levelheaded, reliable one. The popular and beautiful one. The star soccer player. But Nell doesn't mind. Because it's Layla and Nell against the world. Until Nell starts her freshman year at the same high school as Layla. And starts noticing all the little ways in which Layla is starting to change. Withdrawing. Keeping secrets.

We Are The Goldens reads like a letter Nell wrote to Layla. About what that distance between them feels like for her. About boys. And navigating the tricky world of teenagehood and high school. About Duncan and Parker, teen sons of family friends. About their parents. About falling in love. About missing her sister.

*"But I guess I was imposing a Hollywood version of falling in love onto a high school where there really isn't much use for love, or even dating. There's hookups and people who hang out and all sorts of variations, but the actual boyfriend/girlfriend is a rare breed at City Day."*

It was a quick and fairly engaging read for me. I tend to enjoy YA literature of this kind. And while I was reading We Are The Goldens I really did enjoy it. All the characters came to life and it made me care about both girls. However the entire time it felt like the story is building towards something significant and emotionally impactful, there was a sense of anticipation that kept moving the story forward. And then the ending fell short for me. I was left looking at the last sentence thinking "Really? That's it?" I feel that with a different ending I would've given this story a higher rating.

If there was a book telling the story from Layla's point of view I would definitely pick it up. I'd recommend this one to YA lovers who are looking for a fast read and are drawn to the subject matter.

I received a copy of this book from the publisher in exchange for an honest review.

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## **Michelle says**

*Invitation from the publisher for an honest review, via Netgallery.*

*3.5 Stars.*

After about seventeen straight months and nearly 800 books later, I figured it was time to take a step out of the typical romance themed reads and venture into something a bit different. *We Are The Goldens* is a young adult novel that does not revolve the relationship of a love interest, but rather the relationship of two sisters. The story is told in a way that had me jumping to all sorts of conclusions about how this was going to play out. Nell, the younger sister is the narrator of this tale, but the main character in some aspects is really her older sister, Layla.

Only a small age gap exist between these girls, but in the hopes of ensuring they would grown into their own personalities (given how close they were), one was pushed to start school early while the other was held back. This places Nell entering her Freshmen year at high school, while Layla begins her Junior. As anyone who has a sister knows, this gap although small, can seem like a decades when it comes to the emotional state of teenage girls. When Nell starts to see the change in Layla she can't seem to figure out at first what is to blame, but that secret doesn't last long and Nell is forced to either remain the keeper of her sister's secrets and keep her relationship close or to tell and risk losing the one person she has idolized her entire life.

The way this story was told, I felt like a connection was made with Nell, she was struggling to not disappoint her sister, to ensure that their bond did not fail. She was so certain that she could turn a blind eye to the truth if it meant that Layla was truly happy. She tried convincing herself that Layla, the perfect sister that she always looked up to, couldn't be the one to make this big of a mistake. That connection sort of ended with Nell and did not carry over to Layla though. Layla's secret and her emotional state during most of this was something that I needed to read first had, from her lips to really feel.

In the end the story was left pretty open, I am sure in the author's eyes there is a perfectly reasonable ending - but there is room to explore several avenues as to how this truly ends. For being a story that is a bit out of my comfort zone as to what really keeps my attention, this book and author did a fantastic job doing just that. Nell narrating the story but speaking it to Layla, took a little getting used to, especially when it would go from Nell speaking directly to Layla to dialogue with Nell and others; but once you get into the flow of the story the rhythm is easily picked up. Typically when I finish a story that ends like this one did, I can quiet my mind of the lingering questions about just how did it truly end... for some reason I feel like not knowing for 100% is going to drive me a little bit crazy.

If you enjoy the young adult genre, that is a little more PG-13ish, that forces you to really think about what you are reading, this would be an excellent selection. But be warned, it is not a romance even though there are relationships involved. This is a story about sisters and having to choose between keeping a secret and protecting them. The hard choices you're forced to make when you love someone.



My own thoughts as to how this ended .... If you have any inclination to read this book do not sneak a peek at this spoiler.  
(view spoiler)

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## **Laura McNeal says**

Dana Reinhardt's books always remind me of the soaring happiness that boy-girl friendships in adolescence make you feel. It's such a good, grounded, empowering sensation to be a girl in a friendship with a guy at 15 or 16, to take all the stress of "Does he like me?" out of the equation. It was one of the most adult experiences I had, and the most unspoiled. But Reinhardt is also incredibly skilled at showing what happens when you pick the wrong guy for your first love (oh, the agony), and at getting the voice of the younger sibling just right, and at showing the way out of the mess afterwards. The way out of the mess is through your true friends and your family, the ones who speak Fakespeare and know all your favorite snacks. Lastly, read *WE ARE THE GOLDENS* to experience the second-person point-of-view done right. From the very first words, "Don't be mad," Nell's voice comes to life.

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## **Ash Wednesday says**

### **4 STARS**

"I love you tons," you said.  
"I know."  
"And, Nell?"  
"Yeah, I know."  
"You do?"  
"Of course."  
"Promise?"  
"Don't insult me."  
I closed your door.  
That's how I vowed to keep your secret.

I just love that exchange. It so perfectly captures what this book is about.

I probably have the least credibility in discussing a book about two sisters. I've never had the pleasure of having one. And while there are definite perks in being an only child, I can't deny that I've always wanted to have a Jessica to my Elizabeth (because of course, I'm that Wakefield). So I'm finding it a little strange to find how much this book spoke to me. How often I've found myself in Nell's shoes and, sad as it may be, how many Laylas I have (figuratively speaking) in my life right now.

The *Goldens* are Nell and Layla, and the book is told from Nell's perspective speaking to her sister. She is recounting the events of the year when she joined her sister in school: a freshman on Layla's Junior year in

high school. There's a sense of foreboding in Nell's narrative that draws one's curiosity early on but it didn't have the heaviness of a mystery, the point I felt it was trying to make doesn't lie on the shock value of a big reveal or a plot twist. Instead this was about a 15-year old girl who has happily lived her life in the loving shadow of her sister, a faithful devotee of their oneness. This tells the painful process of that spell being broken, when the spectator from the crowd realizes she's her own person and the Emperor she so cheered on and adored for so long, is so obviously naked.

This book had all the usual suspects in contemporary YA fiction: the likeable heroine who looks up to her prettier, smarter and all around awesome-r older sister who has a secret; the funny (but this time, straight) best friend; the mysterious and brooding boy who has caught likeable heroine's fancy; the separately charming Mom and Dad. It had all the ingredients that always makes this genre reliably entertaining to me: the effortless and un-purple narrative; the quirky little details (i.e. the Fakespeare, the buffalos and the inside jokes); the believable dialogue that endears the characters to me further.

That formula is just so very hard to not work for me.

I really liked how very age-appropriate Nell's thought process came across. At 15, as a freshman in a school that looks up to her sister along with her, it was refreshingly honest how this presented the conflict of her reality disentangling from that of Layla's. I love how this depicted their love for each other, how it made me believe and empathize with Nell in carrying the burden of Layla's secret. The struggle of playing the supportive sister while keeping her best interest at heart is one that was believably difficult and worth a lengthy discussion over alcohol.

The drama was thankfully kept to the barest minimum, the gratuity kept in check. I'm impressed how this presented a young girl learning her lessons without pretense: rejection doesn't always stem from a garish confrontation, most of the times its in the quiet shame of an unresponsive cellphone, or the second-hand gossip one watches to complete its trajectory of natural death. I found it very smart and respectful in presenting teenagers beyond the hormones but not to the point of castrating them.

"Is this what it's like?"

"What?"

"Being a boy. Do you just sit around all the time thinking about naked girls? Isn't there more to it?"

"Of course there is. We care about things like your intellect and your sense of humor and your capacity for kindness, but we also really like how you look naked."

I have two minds about how Nell and Felix's relationship was handled. Because on the one hand it grazes on several levels of (view spoiler) On the other hand, (view spoiler) Which is such a heartbreaker because I really like Felix and it's such a shame that characters like him has to either be (view spoiler)

An angle that could easily be overlooked in this story is the actual dynamic between The Goldens. It's interesting how this book pointed out, however briefly in the end, the underlying pathos to all that adorable togetherness of a family ambling along as though they've not been ripped apart. It's an issue that is often glossed over in YA contemporary fiction in exchange for mom and dad jokes. But I like how this reflected on how that heartbreak filters into belated tangents of unpredictable consequences.

I was definitely taken aback with how much I enjoyed *We Are The Goldens*, it felt like revisiting an old genre, one that has now been twisted, complexed and overhauled in creative infinity, stripped to (most) of its

best working parts.

And it still hits the spot for me.

*ARC courtesy of the publishers thru Netgalley. Quotes taken from an uncorrected proof.*

Also on Booklikes.

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## Katherine says

*"We are the Goldens, but we aren't perfect. We're going to have some hard times, and I wanted to calmly and wisely say some version of this to you: I am your sister. I'm here to help, we're close, our lives are intertwined, you can trust me."*

You know how sometimes, when you're at a dinner engagement or a party, there's that one person who tries to be extremely pretentious? They use pretentious language and big words to make them see more intelligent than they are? And how in the process of doing that, they can come off as pompous or conceited? If this book were a person, **they'd be that pretentious person at the party.**

Layla and Nell have always been close. The sisterly bond usually broken by adolescence has only grown stronger between the two. If you see one of them, the other is not too far behind. They've done everything together; share their toys, bicker over who's hogging the backseat, shared all their secrets

*"Layla, you have a crazy power over me I can't even begin to understand. I was so hurt, so wounded, and then, after we got home and passed Dad's smell test and brushed our teeth side by side in the mirror, you reached over and put your lips to my forehead. 'Good night. I love you.'*

*Everything was forgiven.*

*Nothing else mattered."*

Until the day they didn't.

Senior year was supposed to be the time of their lives. But Layla becomes withdrawn, distant from the sister who adores her. And what happens next may be the breaking point of their bond altogether.

Again, I think the main problem with this book was that it **tried way too hard to be more intelligent than the writing style let it on to be.** The simple, basic plot of it all (two sisters drifting apart), became more a philosophical study of purple prose, metaphors, and deep thinking. Not that there's anything wrong with that, but it felt so out of place in this book it was hard to believe.

*"I think we all fall back into our patterns. Play our parts when we don't know what else to do. So as you went back to Layla, the girl with the world on a string, I went back to playing Nell, adoring sister, keeper of the peace.*

*The sister who lies for you."*

The said big secret Layla's keeping? The same old cliché big secret that most YA girls in contemporary books seem to be keeping: **she's having an affair with a teacher.**

*""You really think Mr. B is the answer? A teacher? An adult?"  
'I know he is.'""*

'It's true love,' she says. 'He loves me,' she says. '**GIRL, HE DOES NOT!**', I say. And the affair doesn't really go anywhere at all. It was more in the background than in the actual forefront of the supposed conflict these two girls are having.

With **pretentious sounding writing, characters as dull as dishwater, and a cliffhanger ending that was both totally unnecessary and rage inducing**, this book just didn't hit the right spots for me. However, I could see this appealing to fans of John Green or E. Lockhart's *We Were Liars*, as the writing style is similar to theirs.

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## Amy | Foxy Blogs says

**WE ARE THE GOLDENS** is a recounting of events that took place between two sisters and is told from Nell's pov. Nell takes us through her freshman year and Layla's junior year. Having hero worshiped her sister her whole life Nell is struggling with how to handle the knowledge of **Layla's secret**.

Nell and Layla have always been close with their lives being intertwined. The Goldens even had a family joke; *as a toddler when Nell learned to talk she called herself Nellayla because they were so much apart of each other Nell didn't know where one of them ended and the other one started.*

My husband and I were both invited by the publisher to read this book. After Jay finished he asked me to read it so we could discuss the ending because the ending was left wide open for interpretation. Or so I thought because I came up with a totally different conclusion to the ending than Jay. After listening to Jay's reasoning on how it ended I would have agree with him. My original conclusion to the ending probably is a result of all the ya/na genre that have major drama and climatic endings.

## TWO SISTERS...ONE SECRET

### Standalone

**\*\*Complimentary copy pre-approved by Random House Children's Books, Wendy Lamb Books, via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.\*\***

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## Michelle Wrona says

*"I wanted to twinkle underwater like the lights of the city."*

This was one of mine and even **Buzzfeed's** most anticipated books of 2014. When I found it at the library a few weeks after it was published on May 27, I ran straight for it and grabbed it with my all-mighty strength. (LOL, yeah right.)

After reading, I'm very glad that I've decided to read it. **It was a novel of change**, change from all of the mainstream books that are out there. This was a very well-written book. It's not the type that you'll want to re-read (at least I don't think so) but it's a pretty fun read that's sure to get you enticed in reading more from this splendid author.

**I just wanted to let you know that this isn't your average fluffy contemporary read.** *We Are the Goldens* is more of a darker contemporary read. In some ways, it has the aspects of those that deal with abuse and rape (especially because how the characters were feeling at times, \*cough\*Layla\*cough.\* We usually never get those type of books in the stores.

The concept of this book was very well planned out. The author made the characters deal with very harsh problems that really affected them. A very naughty teacher, signs of depression, obsession, this book was full of everything.

**Second-person narratives aren't my favourite.** I wasn't really glad that this book was written that way, Nell speaking to Layla through diary entries/letters/whatever it was, but we all have our favourite ways of books being written. With that said, the plot was kind of dull as well at times.

I don't know. Did some people think that this book was a roller coaster? Because for me, it wasn't.

For some people, I could see why they gave it a 5 star rating or a 4.5 one. This book stood out for some people because they have different tastes in drama contemporaries. **For this book, it basically matters on what you like the whole time.** The story was written extremely well, yes, but the plot at times didn't seem to get anywhere. There were no plot twists until the end and I found that this was dragging too much onto Nell's side when her sister is the main story here. The romance between Nell and Felix in the end just shouldn't have been added. **We all know that we liked them JUST as friends!** What was this, "Friends With Benefits?"

My **utterly most favourite thing** about this book was the relationships and friendships. The author absolutely made this the most BRILLIANT part of the book. She just mastered an A+ in friendship here.

The way Nell looked up to Layla really shows the truth behind the way *most* little siblings look up to the oldest ones. I'm the oldest sibling, and **this book really gave us an idea from the minds of the youngsters.**

I liked Nell, a lot. She was very independent and smart. In fact, she was more wiser and smarter than her bitch of a sister, let me tell you that. I'm not going to begin ranting on why I hate Layla, but by the end of the book, you'll realize that she was a s\*ut and just went in the way of everything and messed everything up for everyone. She really showed that life isn't fair.

The parent-child relationships in this book was wonderful. For once, we had a wrecked-but-beautiful family over here, which rarely occurs in books. In a lot of novels, when the protagonist is going through something, the parent isn't even spoken of!

Overall, this book had its flaws and imperfections and all, but it was worth it to read without any doubts. If you liked anything by Carol Lynch Williams, then this will be a much-lighter breeze for you.

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## Dana says

I went back and forth between love and hate with this book. The ending really didn't help me pick a side either. I mean that ending! Gah! However when I think about what to rate this novel, I start at the basics. This is a young adult novel and it genuinely reads like young adult (the younger side of young adult anyways). The writing style is not for everyone, it's basically one long rambling letter/diary entry but the writing is still of good quality. The relationships felt realistic.

I'm not sure whether I actually liked the main character or not. I liked her as herself, who she was when she was with her best friend. However I didn't like her as a sister. I know that she was put in an impossible situation but she was just so clingy and whiney and I know that her sister was being a little mean to her but geez. Her suffocating love for her sister was hard to read at times. Even I wanted to push her away and yell "Jeez Nell back off"!

Overall, although the main character was a little annoying at times this book was impossible to put down. The ending was a massive cliff hanger but I can understand why the author did it. My only true complaint is a superficial one, which is the horrendous cover. Maybe it's just me but whenever I look at it I just see one girl with a floating head next to her? Apart from my tiny qualm I would recommend this book. 4/5

Note: I received this book for free in exchange for an honest review.

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## Kim Bailey says

### 3.5 Stars

Everything we hear is an opinion, not a fact. Everything we see is a perspective, not the truth.  
~ Marcus Aurelius ~

This book was actually much better than I had expected. For me, YA titles can be really hit or miss. Although not exceptional, this book was a pretty good read.

Meet the Golden sisters, Layla & Nell.

Written in first person, past tense from Nell's pov. The story is Nell's letter? confession? apology? to her sister Layla. This style of narrative is not original, but I found it perfectly suited this storyline - adding depth and a sense of discovery.

The sisters are close. So close that, as a toddler Nell thought her name was *Nellayla*. Layla is older and Nell

has always been like her shadow - and has often felt like she was living in her sister's shadow - a space she happily occupies. Children of a broken home, they have relied on each other for strength and stability.

Our lives are intertwined

So what would it take to interfere with this type of bond? What extreme? This question is what really kept me reading.

Being a YA novel, there is a wonderful sense of self-discovery and growth in this book. Nell learns some very tough lessons and makes some very mature - and some very immature decisions. I loved the quiet struggle she felt moving into adulthood ... the sadness of leaving behind childhood. But most of all I really loved the development of her relationship with her best friend Felix. For me, he was by far the best character in this book. The way he sets Nell straight on her sister:

***Why does the devil always need an advocate? Don't you think he can argue things for himself?***

The ending is left open to interpretation &/or imagination. For some readers this may sound like a deal breaker ... I know many prefer to have their stories all neatly wrapped up ... but in this case it's not required. I honestly really liked that I don't know what came next - it somehow feels more realistic.

Overall a really nice read.

*A complimentary copy of this book was provided by the publisher, via Netgalley in exchange for an honest review.*

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