



Why Can't I Be You

Allie Larkin

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At one time or another, everyone has wished she could be someone else. Exploring this universal longing, Allie Larkin follows up the success of her debut novel, *Stay*, with a moving portrait of friendship and identity.

When Jenny Shaw hears someone shout “Jessie!” across a hotel lobby, she impulsively answers. All her life, Jenny has toed the line, but something propels her to seize the opportunity to become Jessie Morgan, a woman to whom she bears an uncanny resemblance. Lonely in her own life, Jenny is embraced by Jessie’s warm circle of friends—and finds unexpected romance. But when she delves into Jessie’s past, Jenny discovers a secret that spurs her to take another leap into the unknown.

Why Can't I Be You Details

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Author : Allie Larkin

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From Reader Review Why Can't I Be You for online ebook

Delee says

After reading a few dark, depressing books in a row, I really needed to read something light and fun. WHY CAN'T I BE YOU hit the mark for me perfectly!

Jenny Shaw has just been dumped by her boyfriend. She feels disconnected from her family, her job, her one friend...and her cat. While on a business trip Jenny is mistaken for someone named Jessie and jumps at the chance to become somebody else for awhile. Jenny/Jessie juggles both lives, attending the three day work conference as Jenny, and a 13 year high-school reunion as Jessie. Whew! Confused? No? Good.

I loved this character, her new friends, and I loved being taken back to everything 90s!

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BookLover says

While reading this book, I felt like I had stepped back into the 90's and a ROM COM movie. **It was awesome!**

Jenny was a super likeable character. She is very down n her luck and down on herself. When she is mistaken for someone else, she inexplicably "goes with it" and attends her look-a-like's high school reunion. I was constantly cringing, wondering when the truth would come out.

As Jenny got more and more attached to her "high school friends", I got more and more attached to Jenny and her completely unbelievable story.

Did I mention that I thought the book was awesome? Particularly the last sentence! Made me smile.

Maja (The Nocturnal Library) says

Somehow, I feel that I've outgrown chick-lit ages ago (it's funny how I'll never really outgrow YA, though), but when an opportunity arose to review Why Can't I Be You by Allie Larkin, I felt an immediate connection and jumped at the chance to do so. There was something about the retro-looking cover that pulled me in right away, and the idea of stepping into someone else's shoes so completely both thrilled and intrigued me.

Who of us wouldn't want to be someone else, at least for a day? There were days when I just wanted to leave

everything behind and become someone new, someone daring and social, someone who took chances on every turn or at least someone who felt comfortable in their skin. Our own skin can get too tight, and wanting to escape it makes sense in some situations. That's what Jenny did. When the opportunity presented itself, she jumped at it and never looked back. After all, her boyfriend-soon-to-be-fiancé just left her for a girl equally average and plain – not even an upgrade, which was more insulting than anything else.

I'm not sure classifying *Why Can't I Be You* as chick-lit is exactly fair. I'd sooner call it women's fiction (there is a slight difference in quality between the two in my opinion). It's certainly less formulaic and flaky than your average Sophie Kinsella novel, and there were some genuine emotions there felt heavier and more honest than I'd expected.

Despite its pretty simplistic plot, *Why Can't I Be You* surprised me with its emotional complexity. It was thought-provoking and entirely satisfying. I loved the very subtle romance between Jenny and Fish, but even more, I admired her friendship with Jessie's former best friend. All things considered, *Why Can't I Be You* is a good way for us YA and UF readers to step out of our comfort zone and stir things up a bit.

Jamie Cook says

In my opinion there are two kinds of chick lit, the majority being the kind with ridiculous plots, one dimensional characters and sometimes crude humor. The other, more hard to come by chick-lit, is a well written story with relatable characters and a lot of heart...*Why Can't I Be You* was that kind of book for me. You still have to use your imagination for the plot of this book and 'just go with it' but I enjoyed it from beginning to end :)

Pauline Tilbe says

I gave this book 5 stars because it's good. It's a great read, good chick-lit. But it has great characters, they evolve through the story. The best thing about this story is Allie Larkin says some pretty important things. This story is about having people in our lives-family and friends-and wanting them to be a certain way. Most times, people can't live up to our expectations but we want them in our life so much that we change ourselves to maintain the relationship. Jenny has this issue with several people in her life. She happens upon a group of friends that she enjoys so much that she lies about who she is, just to be with them. Not because she's mean or evil, but just because she's lived with the void of this kind of true friendship she sees. And she wants some of it for herself. First, she has to start living for herself. I read some other reviews about this being a light read, cute story. It is cute and light, if you just run through it. I really recommend that you take your time. There's a lot to be said in this book, take a close look at Jenny's relationship with her mother and see how it affected everything in her life.

Luanne Ollivier says

Allie Larkin's latest book Why Can't I Be You? has just released and I have to tell you - I absolutely adored it!

Jenny Shaw thinks she has a pretty good life. She doesn't love her job, but she thinks she's pretty good at it. And it looks like she's finally getting some recognition - she's being sent to a conference by her boss. Well, okay it's because her boss can't attend. And she's pretty sure her relationship with her boyfriend Deagan is about to go to that next level.....

And it does, only it's not the level Jenny had envisioned. Deagan drops her off at the airport.....and drops her altogether, saying he needs to explore his feelings for another woman. Stunned, Jenny stumbles on the plane and heads to the conference. When she arrives at the conference centre, she thinks she hears someone calling her name....but they're saying Jessie. The woman is so glad to see 'Jessie' - she had no idea that she'd be attending the school reunion!

And with that hug, our Jenny steps into someone else's past. It's been a number of years and they really do resemble each other - enough so that the group of friends from Jessie's past welcome her back into their circle. And though she knows she should come clean...."For a little while, I wanted to forget me."

For this group of friends is warm and loving and fun - everything that Jessie realizes has been missing from her life. And with every day that goes by, it gets that much harder to admit the truth.

Jenny was such a great character - she was the kind of person you'd like to really have as a friend. Larkin does a great job taking us on Jenny's journey to discover what she really wants and needs from her life. I laughed out loud, I empathized and I crossed my fingers, hoping for the best for Jenny. And for the rest of the cast as well. Larkin has also created a great group of supporting players, just as likable as Jenny.(And one is named Luanne!) I found myself often stopping to think about my own friends from high school as I turned pages.

Yes, Why Can't I Be You definitely has chic lit elements, but it's much more than that. Larkin explores relationships - family, friends, co-workers and romantic all with a keen eye.

"Nothing is as it seems, and then you get older and get to decide if you want to go back and see everything the way it really is or if you just want to move on."

Does she get found out? You'll have to pick up the book to find out. I can totally see this book being made into a movie!

Maja says

3,5 stars

I enjoyed this one. It was good and different. The end was sweet and the characters were likable. I found many beautiful things in this book: friendships, true love, second chance love, new beginning...

Sheri says

Meh. I found the first 50 pages or so okay. I could believe that Jenny was so sad and dispirited that she went along with Myra until the shuttle arrived and she went off shopping alone. And then, if she bumped into them later on during the weekend maybe she could have continued the charade. But when it kept going, it became way too implausible. First, as Karen points out why did no one ask her over and over again WHY SHE LEFT? Who would really just pick up and hang out without any awkward reunion stuff...even if she really was Jessie FUCKING Morgan (and really, people called her that...to her face?).

Despite Jenny's internal monologue of "I really shouldn't do this, I'll stop soon", there was no effort to clear anything up until Karen comes along and causes a fuss. I just didn't buy any of it. And of course the "Disney-fied" ending in which Jenny no only figures out what she wants, but is able to get it. That doesn't happen anywhere but in a Hollywood movie.

Chit lit to the extreme, it was an easy read and mildly entertaining but nothing matched up to reality and there was no real insight or human nature angle.

Claire says

Put Allie Larkin's second novel on your to-read shelf! She's a fabulous author, and if you haven't yet discovered her first novel, STAY, you have time to read that one while you wait for WHY CAN'T I BE YOU. (Plume/Feb. 26, 2013.)

Fun, smart, charming, and heartbreakingly honest, WHY CAN'T I BE YOU takes its title from a hit song from the English rock band The Cure. It's the story of Jenny Shaw, who has spent her life trying to be all things to all people. On the way to the airport for business trip, she's dumped by the guy she thought she'd marry. Once she arrives at the hotel, a moment of mistaken identity gives her the opportunity to become Jessie Morgan at a class reunion for a high school she'd never attended.

It's a fun premise, filled with Hollywood potential, and Allie not only executes it fully, but transcends it until it becomes the story of a woman who loses herself long enough to find herself.

Andi Winterfield says

I was thrilled to receive an advanced copy of Why Can't I Be You by Allie Larkin. I absolutely loved this book & it was impossible to put down! I felt a strong connection to the main character Jenny Shaw, because of things she deals with in this book. Some of it was so familiar & so heartbreakingly that I found myself wishing I could give her a hug.

Even though Jenny is pretending to be Jessie Morgan, she fits in seamlessly with all of her friends. Myra is so much fun & Robbie is beyond awesome. Fish makes for a great love interest & Heather has such a genuine sweetness that makes me wish everyone had someone like her in their life. I loved the closeness of the group & how happy Jenny was with all of them, like she was meant to be their friend all along. But it was

also nerve wracking knowing that she would eventually have to tell them she was not Jessie.

Allie Larkin is incredibly talented & her writing is smart, hilarious & heartfelt. This book made me laugh out loud, made my heart ache & made me appreciate even more the incredible friends that I have in my life.

Why Can't I Be You is perfect from the first page to the last & I think anyone would enjoy reading it. If you're looking for more from Allie Larkin, I also highly recommend her debut novel, Stay.

Catherine McKenzie says

Such a fun read! Read it in one sitting.

Jennifer says

Why Can't I Be You is a standalone novel written by author Allie Larkin. In this book, the main character Jenny Shaw assumes someone else's life when she is mistaken for "Jessie". Jessie has been missing from her social circle for the past thirteen years and apparently Jenny and Jessie look so much alike that Jenny just picks up where Jessie left off. Although this book is intended to be entertaining, I just couldn't get past the very predictable consequences that were bound to happen at any moment. Jenny's impersonation of Jessie is bold and with each day that passed I just cringed. On the plus side, her character is written well and as a reader I could understand where her desperation to continue living Jessie's life came from. It just wasn't enough for me and I found myself to be more anxious than entertained. All I can say is it must have been a "glass half empty" kind of week for me!

My favorite quote:

*"It's hard to look at it like that, isn't it? Because if you can be a better parent than the ones you had, you have to face the fact that your parents had that choice too. If you're not fated to be an awful parent, they weren't either. And," I said feeling my throat tighten, "it's easier to believe that we're all just f***'ed than it is to know there are choices." I rubbed my hands together to try to get my fingers to warm up. "It hurts less to think they couldn't have done any better than they did, doesn't it?"*

Suzanne says

What would you do if you could suddenly become someone else? When Jenny Shaw is mistaken for another women, Jessie Morgan, while on a business trip, she decides to go with it as a way to escape her life for a few days. What she doesn't realize starting out is how connected she will become to the people who think she is "Jessie Morgan," or what it will do in terms of helping her find focus and direction in her life. I loved this book, and it really gives you a lot to think about in terms of identity and the true meaning of friendship...

Maggie says

I really, really, really loved this book. I used to read a lot of chick lit, which I feel this falls into, but I've mostly replaced that with YA lately and haven't missed it. That said, I am so happy I decided to read this one.

At first I was kind of skeptical that a group of people could mistake a stranger for someone they have known since childhood. But as I read the story it made sense. They haven't seen Jessie for 13 years and they parted on bad terms, but still tried to track her down. I guess sometimes when you really want something to be true you just see it that way. I was also skeptical that someone would play along with the idea that they were someone else, but the more I read about Jenny's upbringing and the hardships she experienced the more it made sense.

Unfortunately I think I have some of Jenny's crappy upbringing in me and I could definitely relate to how difficult it is to connect to people when you're keeping a big portion of your life a secret, that said, I know I couldn't pretend to be someone else like that. There were some amazing points in this book about identity and the choices we all make to become who we are.

All of the characters in this book were great. Even though what Jenny did was crazy I still loved her and felt for her. Myra seems like she would be an amazing friend and the rest of the group of friends was great. I would definitely love to be friends with those guys.

The entire time I was reading I was dreading the moment when Jenny would reveal who she really was. I think the way that Allie Larkin did it was perfect, it was uncomfortable and terrible, but still really heartfelt. And I thought the ending was spot on, it made me wish there was a sequel!

Lynne says

Imagine that your life just kinda sucked at the moment and you were given the chance to take on another person's identity. That's exactly what happens in this book. Obviously we get to know Jenny and realize that she isn't doing this in a mean-spirited way. After all, she honestly thought someone had called out "Jenny" from across the hotel lobby ... when in fact they thought it was "Jessie" - a long-lost friend. So begins the adventures of Jenny aka Jessie. Jenny goes from being down and out to having a best friend who designs clothing in her memory, some friends who remember the good ol' days and a potential love interest. Not too bad ... except that she does feel a little tormented about deceiving her new friends.

The story is pretty predictable (not in a bad way - but you just kind of know where things are headed) ... my one major complaint was that Jenny was a little bit of a "woe is me" character. I wanted to empathize with her more and found that I only did near the end of the novel. Otherwise, a recommended read.
