



## No and Me

*Delphine de Vigan , George Miller (Translator)*

[Download now](#)

[Read Online ➔](#)

# No and Me

*Delphine de Vigan , George Miller (Translator)*

**No and Me** Delphine de Vigan , George Miller (Translator)

**The international award-winning story of two girls from different backgrounds, united in friendship**

Parisian teenager Lou has an IQ of 160, OCD tendencies, and a mother who has suffered from depression for years. But Lou is about to change her life—and that of her parents—all because of a school project about homeless teens. Whilst doing research, Lou meets No, a teenage girl living on the streets. As their friendship grows, Lou bravely asks her parents if No can live with them, and is astonished when they agree. No's presence forces Lou's family to come to terms with a secret tragedy. But can this shaky, newfound family continue to live together when No's own past comes back to haunt her?

Winner of the prestigious Booksellers' Prize in France, *No and Me* is a timely and thought-provoking novel about homelessness that has far-reaching appeal.

## No and Me Details

Date : Published August 3rd 2010 by Bloomsbury USA Childrens (first published August 22nd 2007)

ISBN : 9781599904795

Author : Delphine de Vigan , George Miller (Translator)

Format : Hardcover 256 pages

Genre : Young Adult, Fiction, Contemporary, Cultural, France

 [Download No and Me ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online No and Me ...pdf](#)

**Download and Read Free Online No and Me Delphine de Vigan , George Miller (Translator)**

---

## From Reader Review No and Me for online ebook

### Nomes says

Ahhhh, this book is just CHARMING.

I had no idea what to expect or if No and Me would be my kind of read ~ I really didn't expect to LOVE it as much as I did. It's a really different read to most contemp YA's I've read lately ~ which could be because this is imported and translated from French.

I think this is the kind of book that some people will ABSOLUTELY ADORE and soak up and fall in love with. It may also leave other people scratching their heads and 'just not getting it'

I am in the FALLEN IN LOVE category :)

It's very much a book for people who appreciate literary fiction, lyrical writing and just poetic and gorgeously funny sentiments. This is due to the CHARMING and unique narrator, Lou ~ who has leapt on to a list of protags I ADORE.

I'm not going to go much into the plot (you should discover it for yourself) but it centres around Lou (who's 13 ~ but skipped two years of school and is with the 15 year olds) and No ~ who's 18 and homeless. I wondered if it would be too MG for me (with a younger narrator) ~ but it's the opposite ~ it could easily slip into adult sales with it's intelligent and gorgeous protag and it's outstanding prose. It really is a cut above in terms of YA literary fiction ~ I was continually pausing to re-read sentences and paragraphs and just to make sure I was not missing out on even one perfectly placed word.

Alongside Lou and No, there's Lou going to school (and the usual coming of age school stuff ~ parties and a crush ~ there's always a guy, hey ~ and assignments) and also Lou's parents ~ who I loved as characters. Lou's mum was beautifully handled ~ there's some painful family history and some mental illness and it was achingly told.

The plot unravels at a steady pace, gradually revealing secrets and also moving forward to a conclusion that makes you feel like you just don't know what is going to happen. (I really didn't ~ it could have gone so many different ways)

But it's not the plot that had me enthralled (although I was invested in the story). It was the writing. I felt like I could keep pausing to jot down half the book into my journal of favourite quotes. I haven't crushed this hard on writing for a LONG time ~ it was perhaps reminiscent of Maggie O'Farrell and Sonya Hartnett for me ~ authors who make me gasp and think and just revel in words and ideas and sentiments.

Overall ~ it's a hopeful book, it'll break your heart a little, it'll make you think. It's nostalgic of the teenage years and the hope and optimism that surrounds them. It celebrates wanting to change the world, believing you can while at the same time feeling completely swamped and disenchanted and wildly fluctuating between everything. It's about family and friendship and growing up. It's just lovely lovely lovely. Le sigh...

---

## Maja (The Nocturnal Library) says

This summer, I met a young girl from Croatia's most war-affected city. She came here, on the other side of the country, to live in a trailer and work in a supermarket for very little money. It was just a lousy summer job, but to her, it was more than good enough. When at home, she lives with her father, barely scraping by, both of them unemployed throughout the year because there are no jobs where she comes from. She told me about growing up hungry and going to school with her stomach completely empty. She told me how her mother refused meals to leave more for her, because she was still growing and she needed energy for her schoolwork. She told me how her parents took turns eating because there wasn't enough for both. And she said it all with a big smile on her face, the smile of a person who refuses to be defeated.

I kept a brave face, but then I drove home and I cried for hours. I hugged my sleeping child and I swore that she'll never experience anything similar. (I bet the girl's parents made the same promise at some point, though, all parents do – and it scares me to death). But when I started thinking about things that could have been done to feed this girl when she needed it the most, things that SHOULD have been done, I felt deeply ashamed, even though back then, I was no more than a teen myself.

There's really no point to this story, except that I felt it needed to be told. *No and Me* isn't one of those books that try to convince you you're equipped to save the world – you really aren't, and neither am I. We do the best we can, most of us, and we live knowing it's not nearly enough. And it's because of that knowledge that we turn our heads the other way and try to protect ourselves from things we cannot change.

This is exactly why I don't like reading contemporary YA. Things like bullying, abuse, even smaller family issues, make me feel hurt and powerless, and it's something I tend to avoid at all costs. But *No and Me* is not one of those books. There's something so very gentle about it because it doesn't try to shock or hurt, nor does it try to change the reader in any way. It just is – it is a story, simple and beautiful, easy to read and even easier to accept, even while it's breaking your heart.

In *No and Me*, a thirteen-year-old child genius Lou Bertignac interviews an eighteen-year-old homeless girl for a school project and subsequently decides to save her. She brings her into her home to live with her damaged family and treats her like a sister she'd lost when she was just a child. Lou Bertignac is an extraordinary character: understanding how her mind works (she has an IQ of 160) and how it reflects on her emotions was a challenge and a true delight. And of course she and I have a huge thing in common:

*People who think that grammar is just a collection of rules and restrictions are wrong. If you get to like it, grammar reveals the hidden meaning of history, hides disorder and abandonment, links things and brings opposites together. Grammar is a wonderful way of organizing the world how you'd like it to be.*

\*sigh\* I wholeheartedly agree.

This is the longest non-review I've written in my life, so I need to offer you an alternative. My friend Catie over at The Readventurer reads all these books I'm too much of a coward to pick up, and then she writes amazing reviews that are equal parts rational and emotional. She is my favorite reviewer in the world (and I'm not just saying that), and she's the one who convinced me to read this book, so please check out her review if you can.

---

## Adriana says

*"Eu nu sunt pentru tine decat o vulpe, la fel ca o suta de mii de alte vulpi. Dar, daca tu ma imblanzesti, vom avea nevoie unul de altul. Tu vei fi, pentru mine, fara seaman pe lume. Eu voi fi, pentru tine, fara seaman pe lume.*

Poate ca doar asta conteaza, poate ca e de-ajuns sa gasesti pe cineva pe care sa-l imblanzesti."

---

## Catie says

One of my most vivid memories from childhood is the first time I realized that homelessness is a regularly occurring thing. I think I was about five or six, and as my parents and I were climbing into our old car, a man came up and asked my father for some spare change so he could get something to eat. My father gave him some coins but I was so shocked and devastated. It didn't seem like enough. Surely this man needed immediate help! When we got home, I went to the plastic jar where I'd been storing up loose change for months, hauled it out, and demanded that we go back and find that man so I could give it to him. In my child's mind, that jar was a vast fortune, capable of solving the whole situation. My mom brushed it off and demurred, but I didn't understand. There was a man out there who didn't have enough to eat and obviously that was an emergency that needed to be dealt with. I felt anxiety for that man for months afterward, wondering where he was and what happened to him.

In later years, when I didn't have enough to eat, I learned that poverty is something that most people don't want to hear about or acknowledge unless they're living it. I learned that it should be a source of shame for those who experience it first-hand. I learned to hide it and pretend as much as I could that it wasn't happening. Now, when I'm driving in my closed up, air-conditioned car I often pass by people on the street, holding up signs asking for help. And maybe I feel a stab, but I don't stop. And I try not to think about them after I've passed.

This book so artfully encompasses both of those points of view: the child's and the adult's. Lou, the thirteen year old narrator, is a child prodigy wise beyond her years in some ways but still very immature in others. When she begins interviewing eighteen year old No, homeless and abandoned by everyone she ever counted on, she wants to save her. She's old enough to know that saving No is not something that she should wish for or attempt, but she's young enough to try to do it anyway. She still has a bit of that belief left – that a jar of coins or a bath or a home or unconditional acceptance could solve everything.

I think that what hits me the hardest about this story isn't so much that Lou would try to save No, would believe that she *could* save No, but that No so obviously wants to be saved. Despite knowing deep down that no amount of Lou's help will save her, No wants it to be true. Not just for herself, but for Lou too – it's as if she wants to give Lou the gift of her rescuing. And despite my years and years accrual of denial and apathy, these girls got to me too. Even though I knew that nothing in this world is ever solved that easily, I desperately wanted it to happen. As the story progressed and the slow but inevitable intrusion of reality set in, the sense of doom I felt really turned this quiet little book into something substantial and powerful for me.

*No and Me* has the kind of narration that I love best: a deeply personal voice with a narrow focus that feels all-consuming. Lou is the very real, flawed, sympathetic person who gets to tell this story, but No is always

very much there. She may be in the background but her actions – both on and off-stage – are a huge presence in the novel. If you've ever been a square peg/over-thinker/misfit (as I believe many of us readers are) then I think you'll probably really relate to Lou:

*"I'm not too keen on talking. I always have the feeling that the words are getting away from me, escaping and scattering. It's not to do with vocabulary or meanings, because I know quite a lot of words, but when I come out with them they get confused and scattered. That's why I avoid stories and speeches and just stick to answering the questions I'm asked. All the extra words, the overflow, I keep to myself, the words that I silently multiply to get close to the truth."*

No's story hit me the hardest, but I loved Lou's as well. She's a very closed-off and fearful person and her relationship with No (and with sweetie/layabout classmate Lucas) leads her to a very grey but fulfilling ending, which I needed after No punched me in the gut.

Delphine de Vigan's writing is clean and subtle but powerful and I am completely impressed by the translation. I've read a few translated novels this year and this one really stands out. Every word just feels right. That being said, this book also feels absolutely Not American which I LOVED. I hate it when translated books are stripped of everything uniquely foreign during translation – what's the point? I read French and German and English and Australian and etc. books because I WANT to experience something non-American.

This book reminds me quite a lot of Antonia Michaelis' *The Storyteller*, but it's much less brutal and much more quirky and sad. Apparently there's also a film! But it's only available overseas. Boo.

#### Perfect Musical Pairing

Brand New – Sowing Season

Noelle from Young Adult Anonymous gave me this song and I matched it up with this book for her in one of our challenges. I still think about this book every time I hear this song, which to me is about slow healing and recovery and about inner strength.

But, while I was listening to this song (over and over, naturally) I started thinking about how much I love songs in general that have delayed and sudden crescendos (and books too...kinda like this one, for example). And that made me think of this song:

Jimmy Eat World – Invented

Which I think is my song for Lou and Lucas and that ending which was just perfect.

Also seen at The Readventurer.

---

#### **Nafiza says**

First, thank you Keertana for recommending this book to me. Your review pushed me to pick it up and I can't tell you how glad I am that I did so.

I have this fascination with books written in different languages. Mostly because I can't read them and I am

immediately convinced they are troughs full of treasure that are locked to me because of my inability to read them. This is the feeling that drove me to learn English when I was a kid and the same feeling that drove me to learn Korean. I'm still working on the Korean but French and I had a short relationship that spanned just the four months that made up one term. I may go back and try to learn it again but until then, I will remain ever thankful to translated books. There are not many out there but I will try to read the ones that are.

I'm not so familiar with French lifestyle and culture to be able to comfortably comment on how French the novel is. And I don't know if the translation changed the narrative in ways to make it accessible to North American readers (or should I say English readers). The book is told from the perspective of a very bright, very smart fourteen year old who is not just smart on paper but smart in the way she thinks and observes the world around her. *No and Me* is a painful novel. The pain, however, is juxtaposed by hope. There are different kinds of losses and Lou learns several heart wrenching lessons about life and people.

This novel is inordinately beautiful. The prose, the relationships between the characters and the subtle romance. There is no brashness that is so common in North American YA protagonists. Lou is more restrained, in fact, the entire novel is somewhat restrained. The passion is there but the flavor is different. No broke my heart and I will long wonder what happens to her. And that I think is the ultimate success of this novel. The author creates characters who linger in your memory long after the pages of the book have been turned.

---

### **Scarlet says**

*“How do you find yourself at the age of eighteen out on the streets with nothing and no one? Are we so small, so very small, that the world continues to turn, immensely large, and couldn’t care less where we sleep?”*

Four years ago, on my way home one night, I met a girl in the train. She was a kid really, selling cheap jewellery. I was standing by the exit, waiting to get down at the next stop. The train jerked, she dropped her stuff and I helped gather it all up – maybe that's how we got talking. It was a conversation that lasted less than a minute because I had to get down soon, but I remember asking her where she lived. She said:

*“Hamara toh koi thikaana nahi hai didi. Hum toh bas idhar-udhar so jaate hai. Kismet ho toh platform par.”*

Translation :

*“People like me don’t have destinations. We sleep here and there; on platforms when we’re lucky.”*

I can't stop thinking about that encounter ever since I began reading *No and Me*.

I liked this book a lot. I think I would have liked it just as much even if I hadn't met that homeless girl that night. *No and Me* has an impressive subject, two brilliantly sketched characters and a beautifully written story. It's amazing how this book, which I stumbled across by chance, has left such a deep-seated impression on me.

I won't say that the book is perfect. A lot of the things that happen are too convenient (view spoiler). Plus the

book ends so suddenly that it's bound to leave a lot of readers feeling high and dry. But that doesn't really matter – not to me at least.

For me, *No and Me* isn't so much about the story as the strangely beautiful bond it explores between the two girls – Lou and Nolwenn. Two girls, who live in starkly different worlds within the same city. Two girls, who try to help each other and make promises they can't keep. Two girls, who can never fit into each others' worlds, no matter how hard they try.

And just like that incident in the train, this book doesn't really make me sad; rather, I feel tormented, ill-at-ease and thoughtful. I feel guilty that I never asked her name. I wonder where she is now, where she's sleeping tonight.

*No and Me* deserves a lot more readers than it gets.

---

*"Before I met No I thought that violence meant shouting and hitting and war and blood. Now I know that there can also be violence in silence and that it's sometimes invisible to the naked eye. There's violence in the time that conceals wounds, the relentless succession of days, the impossibility of turning back the clock. Violence is what escapes us. It's silent and hidden. Violence is what remains inexplicable, what stays forever opaque."*

### **Jim Fonseca says**

This is a young adult novel, set in Paris and translated from the French. A friendship develops between a 13-year old special ed girl and a young woman (18 years old) who lives on the streets. The latter is Nolwenn, the “No” of the title.

We're never given a diagnosis in the story but we realize the special ed girl is autistic, and seems to have Asperger's syndrome. She's brilliant but stands by herself under a tree at recess; stifles her laughter; whispers in class; is terrified at having to make a class presentation. When she has to speak, her mind becomes a jumble of thoughts and she freezes up. She's seldom invited to parties but even so, she'll pass. She's invited to go skating but declines because she'll tangle the shoe eyelets.

Psychologists have told her parents she is precocious and has a “disturbing maturity.” She reminds me of some other special ed characters in books such as the boy in *Me and You* or the older characters in *The Solitude of Prime Numbers* who very well know how to “act normal” but it's just so exhausting! [Coincidentally both of these other books happen to be by Italian authors.]

The girl tries the best she can: she hangs out at the train station to study other people's emotions. Some of her thoughts:

“Sometimes it seems as though something's lacking inside me, like there's a crossed wire, a part that's not working, a manufacturing error. Not, as you might think, something extra, but something missing.”

“They shouldn’t make people believe that they can be equal, not here [in school] and not anywhere.”

“My mother’s right. Life’s unfair and that’s all there is to it.”

Her parents are supportive but they have their own problems that add to the girl’s burdens. A short time ago her mother lost her baby sister and now is so depressed she never leaves the house; she has no energy for even simple household tasks; she sits in the dark staring into space. Of her mother she says “I don’t want to talk to her because she doesn’t know who I am any more, because she always seems to be puzzling over what the link is between the two of us, how we’re related.” The girl hears her father sobbing in the bathroom at night.

The special ed girl meets the young street woman when she decides to do her school project on homeless people. We know the sad story of the young woman and we know she’s on drugs and where her spending money comes from. And we know that due to her “disturbing maturity,” the 13-year old knows what’s going on too – it’s just not explicitly stated since this is a young adult novel. The parents of the girl agree to take her into their home under “tough love” rules and she makes an impact on the whole family. The story is realistic, so we don’t expect a happy ending.

All in all, a pretty good read for both young and old adults. The author may be specializing in writing about personality disorders because her latest work, *Nothing Holds Back the Night*, is about a family coping with a woman’s bipolar disorder.

---

### **Eric Boot says**

This book wasn’t really bad, but it wasn’t good either. I didn’t really like the style of writing and the romance was just bad AF. But it was quite eye-opening about being homeless in a big city. Overall 3 stars.

Probably longer review later/

---

### **Hershey says**

*A poignant tale of longing and belonging.*

Have you ever befriended people who live on filthy streets?

Forget that question, have you ever looked at them in the eye?

Do you remember in your Social Science class, the books and the teachers always tell you that everyone is equal?

### **Do you believe it?**

If yes, then why aren’t you making friends with the poor? Why aren’t you giving them food, clothes and a

place to stay? How much can the Services set up by the Government help? There are millions of homeless people. Can we provide a home for all them? I don't think so. Very few with hearts made of gold will provide. Not everyone.

Lou is a person whose heart is made out of gold. She befriends No - a homeless street girl. I don't know why or how; it just happens. Their bond is...*beyond* words. I cannot understand how a little girl like Lou can be so big. Bigger than the biggest of the humans.

She understands the complexity of life. She wonders how life keeps going on and on. She's super clever. She conjugates theories when faced with difficult situations. She's beautiful in her own way.

And there's No who is as unique as Lou. She is very different. Very quiet. She doesn't speak much but this book is all about her.

I didn't like this book as much as I wanted to but it made me wonder. You know, there is so much happening, so much that doesn't include us. Often, the world revolves around us. We mess up our speech and fret over it for days but at the same time, somewhere someone is homeless, sick and dying and yet they keep quiet and accept life as it is.

I don't know where my thoughts are exactly going. One day, I want a free world. A world where everyone has a home, everyone can buy whatever they want without paying, do whatever they want (of course, not murdering and stealing and all), there could still be laws or new laws could be introduced, there could be so many changes.... It's seems very far- fetched, I know. Someday, I hope things change. I hope people change. I hope people have hearts made out of gold.

---

### **Indah says**

My very first french book I read by myself. Can't say that I'm not proud. I really liked the story but I didn't like the ending at all.

---

### **Blair says**

Do you ever read something you love so much that it immediately makes you want to purchase the author's entire back catalogue? That happened to me with Delphine de Vigan's *Based on a True Story*. I so adored it that I was inspired to go on a second-hand book-buying spree, ordering copies of all de Vigan's previous novels (well, all that have been translated into English). I decided to read them in chronological order, meaning *No and Me* came first despite appealing to me the least.

I saw this in a lot of bookshops back when it came out in 2010, but it never really caught my interest. I assumed it would be one of those sickly-sweet happily-ever-after stories designed to make the reader feel smug about their moral stance on an issue without actually having to do anything about said issue.

Furthermore, most reviews treat it as YA – it was published as adult fiction here in the UK (where it was a Richard & Judy book club choice), but it's about teenagers, and I can see how it might be better suited to a younger reader.

The narrator is Lou, a precociously intelligent 13-year-old. She's skipped a couple of grades at school, is terribly shy, and has no friends – if you don't count an unlikely (and, I must say, rather unbelievable) alliance with Lucas, the bad boy heartthrob of her class. At home, her mother, unable to recover from a family tragedy some years earlier, is severely depressed. At the start of the story, Lou is put on the spot by a teacher about an upcoming presentation, and tells him she's met and will be interviewing a homeless girl. That's the catalyst for Lou to befriend an 18-year-old runaway named No (not, as I first assumed, because she has 'no name' – it's an abbreviation of Nolwenn). Lonely Lou gets very attached to her very quickly, leading to great upheaval and more than a little drama.

There are some glossed-over bits and some implausibilities. Lucas's interest in Lou is far-fetched, his parents' near-constant absence is very convenient, and Lou's chronic shyness in other situations makes the ease with which she approaches No seem unlikely. But de Vigan writes around these issues with a tricksy elegance, and Lou's voice is perfectly pitched: startlingly clever in the way only a precocious kid can be; sometimes funny; often more revealing about the narrator herself than the story she's telling. The plot tackles the moral complexities of Lou's altruism, commanding her idealism in the face of others' indifference, while refusing to shy away from the fact that she may, in the end, do more harm than good.

I wish I hadn't read the last page, which I hated – I was leaning towards 4 stars until that. Otherwise, this is a likeable, thoughtful story with a charming narrator and a sobering streak of realism.

[TinyLetter](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Instagram](#) | [Tumblr](#)

---

### **Michela De Bartolo says**

Primo libro letto di questa autrice francese , è credo proprio che recupererò altri . Sono rimasta ipnotizzata dalla sua scrittura scorrevole ma emotivamente coinvolgente. Lou ,tredicenne solitaria , con un Qi superiore alla media, per un compito in classe decide di parlare della solitudine, quella che accompagna i i vagabondi per strada. Conosce No una ragazza sola al mondo , che decide di aiutare , regalandola una vita "normale ". Le due ragazzine si aggrappano tra loro, come naufraghi in una tempesta, mordendosi e graffiandosi a vicenda, ma soprattutto avvicinandosi, accettandosi e riempiendo l'una il vuoto dell'altra. "Gli effetti secondari dei sogni" è una storia di violenza, solitudine d'amore e abbandoni .

E' la dimostrazione tangibile che non si può salvare a tutti i costi chi non vuole essere salvato. E che per amare qualcuno fino in fondo bisogna accettarlo per come si è, con luci e ombre, con direzioni che lo posso portare lontano da noi, con scelte che non comprendiamo fino in fondo.

---

### **Reynje says**

At just 246 pages, *No and Me* is a slight book, a blink-and-you'll-miss-it volume I found tucked in the dusty, unfrequented back shelves, behind a stand of current best-sellers in sparkly foil jackets. I remembered seeing a friend's review praising the book for its charm (\*Hi, Nomes!\*), and if you're familiar with my own reviews you'll know I can't resist a quiet, moving story. So I hooked it out with a finger – it had obviously been jammed there on the bottom shelf for a while – and brought it home to be read. And now that's it's read, rather loved.

No and Me is a subtle and tender story about home and homelessness, told through the gentle, unique perspective of Lou, an ‘intellectually precocious’ thirteen year old girl. Lou’s family is quietly falling apart in the wake of a tragedy: they are a seemingly functional unit, yet they are separated and circling each other like satellites, held in orbit by the gravity of their unvoiced pain. Advanced through the school system by two years, Lou is struggling to find her footing socially, to align the intellectual and emotional worlds she inhabits.

Then Lou meets and befriends No, a girl living on the streets of Paris, with a fractured past and a bleak future. As No enters the lives of Lou and her family, she irrevocably changes them, and the way Lou sees the world.

I’m not sure how much of the rather distinct tone of this book is attributable to Delphine de Vigan’s particular writing style, and how much is owed to the translation from French to English. Regardless, there is a delicate beauty to this story and the unembellished manner in which it is told. There is something in Lou’s narration, the way she constantly filters, processes and analyses the world, the particular angle of her perspective and quirks of her personality, that speaks eloquently of the fragility of life and relationships. De Vigan’s writing is both clear and expressive, with some exceptionally lovely, quotable lines.

There is a touching naivety and simplicity to the way Lou views No, and her sense of responsibility to affect change where she can. At one point, Lou says that it’s the “buts” that are the problem. If we saw past them, chose to act in spite of our reservations, maybe we could accomplish more. In some ways, this is more than a story about just No’s life and it’s juxtaposition with Lou’s, but also that of Lou’s coming of age, in the sense that she begins to understand the difference between expectations and reality, what it really means to trust, to be let down, to understand that even our best efforts and intentions are not always enough for someone who is broken. What it is to feel impotent against a harsh world.

The characters are lovingly crafted, with distinct personalities and dimension despite the sparseness of description and page time for some of them. From Lou’s shattered mother, her quietly stoic father, No’s thorny exterior and bruised heart, Lucas’ fearless nonchalance (Lucas <3), each of them feel real and nuanced, and have strong presence throughout the story as it unfolds.

The quietness of No and Me may not be to the particular taste of some readers – it’s a story that builds gradually and is weighted by Lou’s introspection. It’s a book to be savoured and internalized. It’s restrained and understated. But personally, I found it exceptionally lovely and thought-provoking, with a lot of honesty, emotion and depth within its comparatively few pages.

---

### **Petra CigareX says**

There are three people in this story. No, who is homeless, hopeless, untrusting and the natural ally of Luke, the rich and almost-bad boy. Two teenagers together. But he has a crush on Lou, who is years younger, too clever and naive only when it suits the story. And she is more the character used to reveal the story than a truly interesting heroine. The dark secret of the parents is sad, but banal. Their healing, the way they shake themselves off is what people do when they have guests, they make an effort. I found the taming of the street girl just a little simplistic and expected. Luke seemed to me to be the most interesting character but he was left undeveloped, the side kick. The writing was perhaps more YA, lacking the depth expected in adult literature.

The book didn't, to me, contain any revelations. It wasn't a moral lesson, it wasn't the sort of book to be a guide to teenagers about how not to make mistakes or to stand up to peer pressure, to be oneself. It wasn't, to me, any of those worthy things that other reviewers have seen in it.

What it was, was a really great story absolutely beautifully-written. Sometimes that's all you want from a book, to be a damn good read.

---

## Keertana says

Rating: 4.5 Stars

*No and Me* is that book that you wish you had a time machine for; the one you want to go back in time and thrust to your young teenage self, begging them to read it because perhaps, if they do, they'll understand life a little better and won't make all the mistakes they will. It's the type of novel that whiskers you away into a completely different world, but its prose isn't flowery like that of Laini Taylor; instead, it's a more subtle type of beauty where each and every phrase simply makes you put down the book and *think*. I knew, even before I picked up *No and Me* that it would be amazing - it did, after all, come recommended to me by three of my most trusted bloggers - but I didn't quite expect the level of wonder, of emotion, and of nostalgia that this book would make me experience, all over again and somehow new at the same time. Truly, *No and Me* is a literary gem like no other and really, I cannot recommend it enough.

Delphine de Vigan's debut into YA Literature seems to be a simplistic story, one of Lou, a thirteen-year-old precocious girl living in France who interviews No, a homeless eighteen-year-old woman, for a school project. Only, Lou can't stop thinking about No or the homeless life she leads and when she invites No to live with her, to become part of her family, she doesn't count on No's own past coming back to haunt, not only No, but Lou as well. In my eyes, the depth and beauty of this novel isn't in its plot or subject matter, but in its writing. Lou, as a highly intelligent teenager, sees life in a different light and it is this - her flashes of brilliance, her incredible insight - that made this novel so special for me.

*No and Me* isn't an easy novel to read. I'm sure that we've all had an experience or two with homeless people, perhaps less if you haven't traveled outside of America. Ever since I was a child, however, I've been painstakingly aware of the plight of the homeless and beggars. Born in India, I witnessed hoards of homeless people daily, on every street, begging for money or selling cheap plastic toys to tourists in an effort to make a few cents. If it wasn't on the streets, it was in the railway stations as children sold tea instead of attending school, in the airports where they would greet you stepping off the plane - everywhere. I've visited India every summer since I moved to America when I was a baby, but it never fails to shock me, every time, the number of homeless who are *still* there, who will probably *always* be there, and most of all, the plight of those like us who are, frankly, unable to do anything.

It is this lesson that Lou learns in this novel, this earth-shattering wake-up-call, but more than even her friendship with No, her dependency on her, her refusal to believe that No and herself really did not belong in the same world, let alone the same life and the same home, was Lou's life at home. Although this novel focuses primarily on No and her impact on Lou's life, it also focuses on Lou's parents; her mother who has been numb with grief ever since her second child died in her arms, her father who cares for No with an optimism that hides his inner grief, and Lou's own social awkwardness when making friends and approaching seventeen-year-old Lucas who is everything she sees herself as not being. For me, it was the realistic portrayal of Lou's home life, of her struggles with her parents and her inner insecurities about

growing up with a mother who never really cared that touched me more than anything else.

Perhaps best of all, though, is how painstakingly life-like this novel is. Its ending never wraps up any loose threads, never tries to explain No and her behavior or even the lives of those living on the streets, never tries to sugar-coat the fact that Lou's mother will never be the same despite the tragic events that happened years ago...it's almost an abrupt ending, one that leaves you smiling, with the twinkle dimmed from your eyes. Yet, it's a beautiful story, one that is written unflinchingly, told realistically, and leaves you wanting to simply hold the novel to your chest as you're forced to - yet again - contemplate the simple truths of existence that one person is too small to change. Nevertheless, this manages to be a novel of immense hope and although I wished for a slightly longer, dragged out, or even more conclusive end, I wouldn't have it any other way - this book is perfect, just the way it is.

*I'd urge you all to check out the reviews of Catie from The Readventurer and Maja from The Nocturnal Library who are the reason why I picked up this gem.*

You can read this review and more on my blog, Ivy Book Bindings.

---