



How to Tell Toledo from the Night Sky

Lydia Netzer

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Lydia Netzer, the award-winning author of *Shine Shine Shine*, weaves a mind-bending, heart-shattering love story that asks, "Can true love exist if it's been planned from birth?"

Like a jewel shimmering in a Midwest skyline, the Toledo Institute of Astronomy is the nation's premier center of astronomical discovery and a beacon of scientific learning for astronomers far and wide. Here, dreamy cosmologist George Dermont mines the stars to prove the existence of God. Here, Irene Sparks, an unsentimental scientist, creates black holes in captivity.

George and Irene are on a collision course with love, destiny and fate. They have everything in common: both are ambitious, both passionate about science, both lonely and yearning for connection. The air seems to hum when they're together. But George and Irene's attraction was not written in the stars. In fact their mothers, friends since childhood, raised them separately to become each other's soulmates. When that long-secret plan triggers unintended consequences, the two astronomers must discover the truth about their destinies, and unravel the mystery of what Toledo holds for them—together or, perhaps, apart.

Lydia Netzer combines a gift for character and big-hearted storytelling, with a sure hand for science and a vision of a city transformed by its unique celestial position, exploring the conflicts of fate and determinism, and asking how much of life is under our control and what is pre-ordained in the heavens in her novel *How to Tell Toledo from the Night Sky*.

How to Tell Toledo from the Night Sky Details

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Author : Lydia Netzer

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From Reader Review How to Tell Toledo from the Night Sky for online ebook

Rebecca Foster says

(3.5) The peculiar title is what first interested me, but the synopsis sounded even better. George and Irene, both 29, work at the Toledo Institute of Astronomy, where George looks to the stars for proof of the existence of God, and Irene makes black holes. It seems they are fated to be together – or is it all their mothers' manipulation? Call it a cross between *The Big Bang Theory* and John Green's *The Fault in Our Stars*, blending science and romance into a quirky love story. The visions and lucid dreaming can get a bit weird, but I liked the mixture of deadpan and sarcastic characters. Somehow Netzer makes a book with themes of cancer and suicide very funny indeed. Odd but enjoyable.

Rachel Watkins says

Here she goes again. Lydia Netzer has written another stellar, sweeping love story that isn't like any you've ever read. This book is a mystery; it's a magical conglomeration of astronomy & astrology, super colliders and reading tea leaves. HOW TO TELL TOLEDO FROM THE NIGHT SKY is about the most bizarre arranged marriage you've ever heard of along with a tragic unrequited love story. Like her characters Irene and George, Lydia Netzer is a dreamer. I'm so very thankful.

Tamsen says

Someone else wrote this in her review, and it was dead-on: "Within the first few chapters, I was drawn into this story - the language and style of writing, the characters, the plot. I thought, "This resonates; I am really going to love this.""

Of course, the follow-up to this is but....

Something miserably failed for me. I'm not sure if it was the wide variety of characters - which I did like individually. Collectively, they were a little too out there to be believed (except Belion - that dude rocked). It might have been the predictability of this. Maybe 60 pages in, when my interest began to wane, I predicted the complete rest of the book. It's especially unfortunate with such a unique concept, but there you go - unique, yet predictable. It could have been that question on the preview: "Can true love exist if it's been planned from birth?" Because first of all: ugh. True love. And two: who really cares anyways?!

If there is a spinoff of Belion (forget that other, super weird chick Silvergirl), I'm in.

Danielle Prielipp says

Brilliant! Nerd-romance at its finest...and I was reading the "preliminary passes" version because I just couldn't wait for the final edits.

Jen says

Lydia Netzer has once again produced a beautiful, intricate story about unusual people that is unlike anything else I have ever read. I didn't think it was possible for me to like a book about love and science and relationships and hallucinations any more than I liked *Shine Shine Shine*, but I believe I do in fact like *How to Tell Toledo from the Night Sky* even better. Just...read it.

Suzze Tiernan says

A romance for nerds, involving black holes and astrology, super-colliders and binary code. This book seemed to go from quirky to deeply emotional in a heartbeat. Not for everyone, but a great read nonetheless.

Emily says

I loved Lydia Netzer's debut novel, *Shine, Shine, Shine* and she didn't disappoint me one bit with her second book. The thing about Netzer is that her writing is funny AND smart, so you actually feel the neurons in your brain rapid firing with every word. She's completely outside the box, and it's fresh, fun, and exciting. *How to Tell Toledo From the Night Sky* is a genuinely moving love story at its core, with the added bonus of humor that is sweet and almost soul touching. George and Irene's mothers are astrologists who give birth to "twin souls," and plan to raise them separately so they can meet later and fall in love. The mothers have a little bit of a falling out and it is almost by divine intervention that George and Irene meet again. It's unlike anything I've ever read before, and for that... I am grateful. When I grow up, I want to be Lydia Netzer.

Taryn Pierson says

Irene and George were literally born for each other. Their mothers, Bernice and Sally, best friends since childhood, concocted a cockamamie plan to have babies at the same time and raise them in parallel ways that would make them seem fated once they finally met as adults. Wham—their children would fall in love with each other, Bernice and Sally could live out their twilight years as in-laws, and their children would be deliriously happy and fulfilled by their bizarrely arranged marriage.

Of course, it doesn't work out that way at all. Sally and Bernice's relationship falls apart, and Bernice loses herself in a lake of gin. The plan is off, abandoned along with their friendship. However, they may have set in motion something that can't be stopped. George and Irene are both grown now, astrophysicists working at universities, and when their lives intersect, their undeniable connection is just as their mothers originally planned.

I'm trying to come up with a way to describe this book without making it sound like a super-cheesy romance novel. It isn't one, at all, but every time I talk about it, I feel like I'm summarizing a steamy, melodramatic bodice-ripper. There are definitely some heated encounters between Irene and George, but those scenes are more scientific than carnal. Irene has some serious commitment issues and cynicism about destiny, but her

slow journey to trusting George isn't trite like a two-hour romantic comedy.

The book works because it's not formulaic. It's a weird, writhing conglomeration of random things: the science of black holes, reading the future in tea leaves and crystal balls, online fantasy role-playing games, a girl who speaks in whistles and squawks like a bird, a man whose scientific discoveries have come to him from hallucinations, a late-night expedition into a funeral home to steal ashes. All of that in one book, and it not only makes sense, it sings.

Lydia Netzer has a supremely creative yet twisted mind, and her latest book is the trippiest and sweetest romance you're likely to read.

(And if you haven't yet had the pleasure of acquainting yourself with her debut novel, *Shine Shine Shine*, you must must must.)

With regards to NetGalley and St. Martin's Press for the advance copy. On sale July 1, 2014.

More book recommendations by me at www.readingwithhippos.com

Alison Law says

I love Lydia's books because they offer something for everyone. If you want to get your nerd on, you can practice your lucid dreaming with Bernice, get lost in one of Belion's gamer fantasies or manufacture black holes with Irene. Literary fiction fans will appreciate the many allusions to classical literature and the gods who appear to George in Toledo. Read more in my blog post: Nerd Fiction for Everyone: <http://bit.ly/1sUj2ss>

Melinda says

Netzer's style is out of the box for me. Her version of 'magical realism' merging with eccentricity isn't quite to my tastes or standard. However, her premise is unique and her narratives always reach a level of normalcy towards the end which I find somewhat redeeming. *Shine, Shine, Shine* wasn't a show stopper for me, I'm sure many will disagree. I applaud her renegade style and her determination to see her vision through.

I am a science buff, this addition to the narrative was welcomed. Irene and George are charming. Irene the pragmatic and George idealistic. Their contrasts create tension, attraction and mass appeal.

Despite my aversion to Netzer's style, she has a gift forcing the reader to ask themselves a few poignant questions, a sign of a provoking narrative and a smart author. I found myself pondering destiny, astrology and unforeseen forces in general in matters of love. With their divided ways of seeing things, it gave the story a another level of interest by hearing their arguments regarding love and their union.

"Why do some people fall in love with each other, and others don't? What is love? It is so, so stupid right up until it's real. And then it's the most important thing in the world, whether you believe it or not."

The ending was superb, actually I felt it was going to go in a different direction, needless to say I am happy my prediction was incorrect and a pleasant surprise.

Netzer has no difficulty spinning an original romantic yarn, her unconventional characters, blending science and overall peculiar style forms a sweet sentimental story, leaving the peruser with loads to mull over. Entertaining read, Netzer fans will surely find this book more than enjoyable.

Priscille Sibley says

How to Tell Toledo from the Night Sky is Netzer's brilliant second novel. Like her first quirky book, Shine Shine Shine, Toledo will take the reader into a world that is just a little off from reality, with characters driven by real life passions and short comings. It is at times heartbreakingly sad and laugh out loud funny. Toledo will make the reader consider the absurd right along with the profound. This is the talent that Lydia Netzer displays in her world of science and art. It is her ability to juxtaposition the whole in a small time frame and intimate setting.

I don't believe in giving plot summaries. But How to Tell Toledo from the night sky is about two girls who grow up missing the love of their families. They scheme to bring true love to the children they will one day bear. Their children will be made for each other, and they will fall in love. But the course of true love is never easy. Not even in the quirky worlds that Lydia Netzer brings to life.

If you loved Shine Shine Shine, you will adore Toledo. If you didn't read Shine Shine Shine yet, run out and get it. Read it now. Read it immediately so that when you are hungry for more, you will have Toledo to read.

I was lucky enough to read an advanced reading copy of Toledo. It comes out in July 2014.

Kathleen says

I LOVED this book. It was weird, but in a good way. It kept my interest, touched my heart and gave my brain a workout.

Barbara White says

Some dude once told me he would read anything written by Stephen King—even a shopping list. That's the way I feel about Lydia Netzer. In **HOW TO TELL TOLEDO FROM THE NIGHT SKY**, her writing is glorious, her characters uniquely memorable. In one laugh-out-loud scene, I actually felt as if I were reading a modern day Dickens.

When the novel began, I had mixed feeling about Irene. I wasn't sure I liked her, but she intrigued me. By the end, I was crying on her behalf, chewing my nails for her safety, and cheering her on from the cheap seats. And George? How could anyone not fall in love with a sexy professor who hallucinates goddesses? (There's a reason for that--but no spoilers!)

Here's a small example of Netzer's ability to create character in just one sentence:

“Belion was huge, both in literal frame and personal aspect, the kind of person who sends out ripples into the room, seeming to bump into the walls even when they’re in the center.”

Belion is a gamer, and I have no interest in gaming. I have zero interest in science, too, but everything about this novel, including Belion’s subplot, sucked me in like a black hole. That’s the sign of a truly great writer—someone who can make you care about a world that doesn’t interest you.

Strip away fate, faith, science, tea leaf reading—and yes, sex in a supercollider—this is a thought-provoking novel about the miracle that we call love. I guarantee the last fifty pages will have you ruminating on predestination, soul mates, and the old fashioned girl meets boy scenario. **HOW TO TELL TOLEDO FROM THE NIGHT SKY** is sheer brilliance.

Lynne says

An adorable story that takes place where I reside. It was fun reading about the places. The story was cute too. Not literary genius but cute.

Diane S ? says

3.5 Do you believe in the concept of soul mates? That they can be engineered? Can two people be fated to meet? George and Irene are delightful characters, their are many amusing passages and throw in a few other outlandish characters and a strange backstory and you have the making of a entertaining read. Along with some astronomy, gods and goddesses and a video game, with some astrology and aware dreaming thrown in for good measure. Netzer sure has a great imagination, creates some wonderfully quirky characters and a story that clips along at a steady pace.

Kate says

I've just been striking out on all the literary-fiction-with-astrophysics books. This book had everything I should have loved, and yet...it had these tantalizing fragments of greatness that never lasted for more than a few sentences.

It wasn't *enough* of anything. It tried to incorporate far too many ideas- magical realism, science, sex, romance, inter-generational conflict, lesbians, child abuse, astrology, physics, dreams, alcoholism, video games, quirky dialog, suicide, poetical turns of phrase- that it never coalesced. There was an whole entire side-plot involving two characters that I think should have been cut entirely (or turned into its own novel), as god knows what purpose it served here. I found myself aggravated by the characters unrealistic or stereotypical traits (scientist doesn't believe in love! quelle surprise!), not to mention the bizarre non-science. There were just so many frustrating scenes that failed to serve a larger purpose.

At least half of this book is dross, which is too bad, since I suspect it's crushing a core of something beautiful. The story line about the parents and the story line about their children, that's all that was needed. Netzer writes a lot about planes of symmetry, and that's where she should have focused. There was something wonderful in those two threads, and how she interwove their parallel stories with lovely ideas about physics, fate, and the stars. I just wish we had gotten to see it clearly.

Ron Charles says

Two years ago, Lydia Netzer's career blasted off with a first novel called "Shine Shine Shine" that stretched from housewives in Virginia to robots on the moon. The story spliced together marriage, motherhood and space travel to breed a hybrid of romantic comedy and scientific reverie.

With her second novel, "How to Tell Toledo From the Night Sky," Netzer remixes those ingredients and aims for the stars once again. St. Martin's is printing 100,000 copies. And why not? An author's reach should exceed her grasp, or what's a heaven for?

Houston, we have a problem.

The story involves two astrophysicists, "twin souls," born on the same day 29 years ago. One is brilliant but strict Irene Sparks, who refuses to have sex with her gamer boyfriend. The other is. . . .

To read the rest of this review, go to The Washington Post:

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/enterta...>

Nancy McFarlane says

A quirky, geeky, wonderful feel good love story, unlike anything you have ever read. It has poetry, black holes, dreams, astronomy, super- colliders, psychics, destiny, unrequited love and the strangest pre-arranged marriage you will ever see. It goes from weird to serious; from funny to sad but in the end is an honest and emotional look at the nature of true love.

Janet says

While I liked the idea of this book, and the story was pretty good, there were too many elements that were like trudging through wet cement to read. Floating faeries and demi gods, lucid dreams, crystal balls and black holes. It just got to be too much. I should create a category for books I wished I had abandoned. This would be a good candidate.

Hannah says

At the intersection of love and science, gods and mathematics, fortune tellers and proton colliders lives this utterly charming and quirky book.

George and Irene are both scientists at the University of Toledo, and when they meet it's love at first sight. Or is it? What George and Irene don't know is that 28 years ago their mothers, childhood best friends, engineered their babies' lives so that they would be twin souls- separated in childhood but destined to love each other whenever they meet again. But when George and Irene discover the truth of their shared past, the idea of a shared future seems less certain.

A highly scientific love story that is humorous and profound and everything in between and includes fantastically twisting sub plots involving black holes, video games, and lucid dreaming.
