



# Keep Her

*Leora Krygier*

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Destiny doesn't factor into seventeen-year-old adoptee Maddie's rational world, where numbers and scientific probability have always proven to be the only things she can count on as safe and reliable. Still, Maddie is also an artist who draws on instinct and intuition to create the collages she makes from photographs and the castoff scraps she saves. But when her brother falls in with a Los Angeles street gang, Maddie loses her ability to create art. Then fate deals Maddie a card she can't ignore: Aiden, a young filmmaker she meets when a water main bursts inside a camera store. Aiden is haunted by the death of his younger brother, and a life-changing decision he must now make--whether or not to keep his baby daughter. Caught in a whirlpool of love and loss, Maddie and Aiden find that art and numbers, a mission to save endangered whales, and a worn-out copy of *Moby Dick* all collide to heal and save them both.

## Keep Her Details

Date : Published September 6th 2016 by She Writes Press

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Author : Leora Krygier

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# From Reader Review Keep Her for online ebook

## Danielle N says

♥ Keep Her is completely different than anything I would normally choose to read. It is also a shining example of why we need to hop outside of the norm every now and then. Sure, I would much rather spend my days reviewing fantasy and horror, but then I miss the rare opportunity to discover a title such as this that pulls at me on such a deep level. A needle in my haystack, if you will.

Read my full review [here](#).

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## Larissa says

\*I was provided an ARC by the author in exchange for an honest review

I have been a fan of Leora Krygier's for a while now, so I was very excited when I heard she was releasing a new book! There is something achingly magical about her stories I can't quite put a finger on. Most of the time for me, the plot is the most important part of the story and the writing is vehicle to carry the plot, but Krygier's writing is so beautiful, both in its descriptiveness and how it seems to tow a unique line between straight fiction and magical realism, that it takes on its own importance for me besides driving the story forwards.

I also love how she interweaves letters with the narrative and how we really get to see inside the minds of the two main characters. This author is not afraid to explore different themes of family in her books. In *Keep Her*, she focuses particularly on adoption, both from the perspective of the child and birth and adoptive parents, but also familial grief and forgiveness. I really appreciated the complexity and nuance she brought to these topics. I think often they can be treated a little tritely, but this book does not do that. With the themes of cultural identity, art, and environmentalism on top of family, *Keep Her* is incredibly multi-faceted and manages to pack a lot in in a relatively small amount of space.

One of the few things that jumped out at me that did not seem to be on par with the rest of the book was that the subplot around Maddie's relationship with her brother seemed a bit rushed. The pacing of the rest of the book was good, but then a conflict that she had had with him since before the book started resolve within a few pages. I would have liked to see more of his journey since between when Maddie sees him earlier on in the book to two they meet and work things out, he seems to be a completely different person. And while, his explanation for why that is makes sense in the story, it is still abrupt.

I highly recommend this book. If you haven't read anything by this author before, I would especially suggest you take this chance. It is one of those books that is not well-known, but reads like it should be, which are some of my favorite types of books to review.

If you have read this book or any books by Leora Krygier, I'd love to know your thoughts in the comments!

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## Stephanie Ward says

'Keep Her' is a solid young adult contemporary novel that fans of the genre are sure to love. The book is very well written, with lots of detailed descriptions and imagery. The characters were all rounded with personalities and traits that made them realistic. Contemporary fiction isn't my usual genre of choice, and I think that's part of the reason I couldn't really get into the story or connect with the characters. Maddie was a good main character and I like how the author made her unique with the whole artistic versus analytic parts of her mind. I just couldn't seem to identify with her, which made the rest of the book hard to get into. Again, there's absolutely nothing wrong with the characters or the writing - it's just my personal issues that held me up. I think fans of the genre will enjoy Maddie's story and be able to sympathize with all of the tough situations that the characters must face.

Disclosure: I received a copy of the book in exchange for an honest review.

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## Stephanie Corbett says

Leora Krygier is an artist, and words are her medium. Having loved her first two works of fiction, (*First the Raven*, and *When She Sleeps*), I anticipated the arrival of her new book, *Keep Her*, with all the anticipation of a child awaiting a gift on her birthday. She didn't disappoint.

*Keep Her* poignantly probes so many topics — death, family problems, young love, adoption, financial difficulties, and the struggle to save endangered whales — and does so with unbridled honesty yet captivating beauty. It's a gift that few authors can pull off with such style.

Maddie and Aiden meet in a camera store in California when he rescues her from a flood caused by a main break. Like star-crossed lovers, they struggle to build a relationship while battling the haunting secrets they harbor as well as the challenges they face. Aiden must come to terms with the devastating death of his younger brother, and Maddie wrestles with the fact that she, like her two siblings, is adopted or, as she thinks at times, “not wanted” by her birth parents. Complicating matters further, Maddie's brother gets in trouble with the law for his gang activity, while she watches the dream of going to art school in New York seem to dry up as the reality of her father's failing business comes to light. I could so feel for Leah, Maddie's artistic and long-suffering mother, who tries to the point of exhaustion to encourage and be there for her children and husband.

*Moby Dick* and a valiant attempt to save the whales are a thread that runs throughout the story. Like Leora, I am a lover of animals, (I was thrilled to see that she included her first dog in her acknowledgments!), and it was both difficult and informative to learn about how these magnificent creatures are hunted down by the whaling industry and die slow, torturous deaths. Leora also takes us on the incredible experience of a fight to save these giants of the sea that's so real you can almost taste the cold spray of the salt water lashing against your face.

*Keep Her* is a book that will draw you in with its wonderful story line, characters you will champion and cry with, and a new respect for how the classics, like *Moby Dick*, can still inspire us and touch our lives. Leora Krygier never disappoints.

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## **Jane says**

This is an extremely powerful book. This is another book that I couldn't put down.

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## **Jessi says**

Things I loved: the letters Aiden wrote, the creative aspects of the characters, and the issues touched upon (adoption, family, love, loss, and grief)!

Things I didn't: Maddie and Aiden fell in love almost suddenly. I wanted more depth to their story. Wished there would have been more about the save the whale cause. I also had a hard time with the ending. I got to decide what happens because it was left so open, but I also wanted more closure.

Just found out that Maddie & Aiden's story will continue! WOO HOO!!

Full Review --> <https://youtu.be/FAAycrqJgMY>

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## **Nicole Hewitt says**

This review and many more can be found on my blog: Feed Your Fiction Addiction

Keep Her focuses on the moments that define our lives and finding your way past loss and grief. As an adoptee, Maddie has spent her life feeling not quite whole—ever the outsider, even though her adopted family loves her. She is now debating taking a chance on an artistic path (in a city that might bring her closer to her birth parents than she hopes for) or staying home and continuing with the status quo.

When Maddie meets Aiden, she feels a connection quickly, but she soon finds out that he is contemplating giving his baby daughter up for adoption and she fears that if he does it will be a rift between them that she can't get past. (As a note: from reading the synopsis, I thought that Aiden was considering giving up his brother's baby, but this is not the case. This caused me some confusion at the beginning of the book.) Both Maddie and Aiden face difficult decisions that can change the course of their lives, but will the changes bring them closer together or tear them apart?

### **What Fed My Addiction:**

Aiden's letters.

My favorite part of this book is the series of letters that Aiden writes to his dead brother. Aiden uses these letters to untangle his feelings about what happened to Alex and to process the many emotions he feels while on mission for Greenpeace. It is through these letters that we get a taste of Aiden's life while he's working for Greenpeace. We also discover what made him decide to join in the first place and how he's affected by his training, his life on the ship, and his eventual mission. The letters were, for me, the most emotionally compelling and powerful component of the story.

Moby Dick.

Fans of Melville's classic will be thrilled with all of the references to the novel. It plays an important part in

Aiden's life and is woven throughout his story.

Beautiful writing.

It's obvious that Krygier is a wonderful wordsmith. Her prose is flowy and beautiful and artistically descriptive.

Fate's hand.

There's a fun little twist toward the end of the book that shows how fate played into Maddie and Aiden's story. I really liked this element.

### **Take It or Leave It:**

Adoption.

As an adoptive mom, I was a bit conflicted about the messages surrounding adoption in this book. On the one hand, I think that it beautifully illustrated the conflicted feelings that an adoptee might have. Maddie loves her parents and her life, but she never feels completely content, and she can't shake the feeling that she's missing something major because of a lack of roots. She also can't get past the feeling of abandonment that has been pervasive in her life. I thought that all of these issues were handled very realistically, and I know that many adoptees have these sorts of feelings. But, in the end, the message leaned toward (but didn't completely subscribe to) the idea that adoption itself is a bad thing and that a child would almost always be better off with birth parents than with adoptive parents. Adoption is such a complicated issue, and I thought that it was a bit selfish of Maddie to imply that her experience was the only adoptee experience and push Aiden toward something he might not have been ready for. (Though, it did turn out that Aiden's reasons for not wanting to be a father weren't really based on his readiness but on misplaced guilt and pain.)

### **What Left Me Hungry for More:**

Lack of connection.

The reason I didn't fall in love with this book despite gorgeous writing and its handling of the compelling issues of loss and adoption was that I simply never really connected to Aiden or Maddie. I wanted to feel for them, but I never truly did, despite the fact that they were both facing very painful histories. I also had a hard time connecting to the romance because I never felt any strong emotions from Maddie one way or the other before they were in love. I guess that sort of snuck up on me.

Light on plot.

This is a sort of contemplative book where not much actually happens. It's all about Maddie and Aiden working toward making life-changing decisions, but that process isn't particularly active. I thought that perhaps Greenpeace would get tied into the current story somehow, but instead we get scenes of Maddie taking disaster relief courses and Aiden editing his film. (Again, I thought maybe the disaster relief courses might have tied into the Greenpeace thread – but they didn't.)

I enjoyed this book overall, but I think it might hold a stronger appeal for people who are used to reading literary fiction. The style of the writing and the focus on life choices rather than plot both seem to point to the literary fiction genre rather than "typical" contemporary YA. For me, this was a solid 3/5 stars.

\*\*\**Disclosure: I received this book from the publisher in exchange for an honest review. No other compensation was given and all opinions are my own.*\*\*\*

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## **Alexandra says**

i unexpectedly picked this up at the library and loved it?????

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## **Deborah says**

What a beautifully written and woven novel by Leora Krygier. It is now my favorite of hers. She has truly taken on many difficult topics such as adoption, relationships, saving the ecosystem and whales, and raising children -- saving the world! The characters are very real. Their actions draw you into their psyches, and you keep wanting to know more. The integration of Aiden's letters to his brother adds a wonderful and heart-warming twist to the story. As a lover of the water and of animals, I was horrified to learn about the fate of many whales and the cruelties they endure. This book is not just a fiction work, but one that hopes to illuminate a 'real' issue and to preserve the sanctity of living creatures. By weaving 'Moby Dick' into the story, one is even more drawn to the characters and the depth of their searchings and discoveries. A perfect and must-read for all ages and stages.

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## **Liv (Stories For Coffee) says**

I did not expect to like this story as much as I did! It was such a quick read that I dove into one day and finished it in a short amount of time. The metaphors and writing style that was used in this story were so poetic and really set the scenery of California. Maddie's personality and the discussion of her and her siblings' adoption were two aspects that I really enjoyed reading. The fact that she was a Latina character also connected with me because diverse ethnic representation is so important to me. The mere fact that her family was such a large presence in her life was refreshing to read about because not many books include a family that plays a major role in a story.

Aiden's letters scattered throughout the book engaged me completely and taught me so much about his time spent on a boat saving whales from being hunted. As an animal lover, these letters opening up Aiden's past to the reader were not only educational, but made me enjoy his character even more. His love for movies and Moby Dick, which he shared with Maddie, was another portion of the novel that helped them connect together and developed their sweet and heartwarming relationship. At times I thought their blind faith in fate tying them together made me wary of their love, but, all in all, their love story was cute enough for me to brush off the fact that it sometimes felt too much.

The only part of the novel that I wished had more development was Aiden's struggle with whether or not he wanted to keep his daughter that he had before the book began. It played a large role in the background of the story, but I wish it were brought into the light more to help pack more emotion into his struggles. I also would have liked to see Maddie and her relationship with her brother more often in the book to make us root for them attempting to patch up what had been shattered in the past.

This story had so many quirky details! From creating collages, loving movies, quoting Moby Dick, and exploring the sights of California, I felt as though I were friends with Maddie and Aiden as they fell in love with each other. This is a contemporary novel that has so many hard hitting aspects intertwined to create a summery tale that will leave you wanting more in the end.

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## **Ilana says**

Keep Her is an intriguing novel by Leora Krygier. It is about a girl named Maddie who loves to make collages and how her world mixed with Aiden's world, in which he can't get over his brother's death and has to decide whether to keep his baby daughter. Together, Maddie and Aiden must travel through words from Moby Dick, art and numbers to realize if they are actually meant to be.

I rate this book 5/5 stars. It is a very good book and I really enjoyed it. Leora's writing was very good and written in a very good format. Also the story was amazing. I was in the story by page 2. It was a very fast paced book and it was interesting to follow Aiden's and Maddie's story. I would really recommend for you to pick up this book.

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## **Allison says**

Maddie makes collages out of bits and pieces of other people's lives, and that's how she finds meaning in her own. Being adopted, she doesn't really feel confident in who she is. She wants to go to art school in New York, but starts doubting her talent, even though her acceptance should tell her all she needs.

In a freak flood, she meets Aiden, a boy who lives for the sea for many different reasons. Their paths cross and the occurrence seems like an accident, but it guides her on a path that needs to be taken. Based on what happened to her in the flood, Maddie takes a course in emergency response. She learns from Aiden about his time on a boat. And she learns more than she wants to about life and love and sacrifice.

This book is one that's hard to summarize in a review, because you don't want to give too much away. Peeling away the layers along with Maddie is one of the best parts of the story. This is one of those books where, when I got to the end, I was in disbelief, until I flipped back to the front and re-read the sentences and that deep, cool feeling of understanding washed over me. The ending was on my mind for days and days.

See full review at [howifeelaboutbooks.com](http://howifeelaboutbooks.com)

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## **Joli says**

My immediate reaction upon seeing the cover: Ahh -it's about mermaids! I love mermaids, I want to be a mermaid! I must read this book.

Then after reading the abbreviated synopsis - Wait, it's about whales and Moby Dick. I read Moby Dick. Twice. Hmm, I wonder how Moby Dick can be relevant to this story. Sure I'll read it.

Then I started reading it and thought there is no way Moby Dick is related to this book. And then it is, the pieces start falling into place.

But wait, is there going to be a mermaid in the story?



KEEPING HER is a gorgeously written story about fate, falling in love, and finding your way.

The full synopsis has what I would consider spoilers and I'm glad that I didn't know Aiden's "secret" going in, because I'm sure I wouldn't have had the same response when I found out what he was keeping from Maddie. KEEPING HER pulled at my heart strings with all of the emotions that Maddie was feeling about her family, especially her relationship with her brother. And the weight of the decision Aiden would soon have to make, while he had a lot of regret and sadness over the death of his brother was immensely overwhelming.

I was swept up in the emotion of it all. I loved the letters and how they connected Aiden to his brother. The letters were also the connection to Moby Dick. As he shared his stories of training on the ship and the attempts to protect the whales, it reminded me of reading the very detailed and dense Moby Dick.

One of my favorite quotes:

"To do something right, you have to be okay with failing." - Aiden (pg. 145)

And then the moment when my heart broke as Aiden breaks Maddie's:

"But we're not the mistake." - Maddie (pg. 205)

Even though there aren't any mermaids in KEEP HER, it is a book well worth reading.

AND after I finished reading it, I found out that there is a lot of bonus material to compliment the book - maps, art, letters, and photographs! What a treat!

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## **Jax says**

This book was absolutely beautiful. I adored this book.

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## **Reviewer's Guide to Books says**

I completely loved this book! The love story isn't cheesy but completely believable and realistic, the inner dialogues of the main characters are marvellous and a work of Art in itself. Inner struggles are what I love most in books, because they are what make a character reliable.

The characters struggle to make each other understand what's going on within them, they communicate with each other, which is something many real life couples could take a bite off. And the incorporation of Moby Dick is a wonderful tool to connect and bond the two MCs. People bonding over a book is such a beautiful thing!

And the supporting characters are fleshed out well too, especially Maddie's Family. You get why they behave the way they do and you understand their motivations and conflicts.

Leora krygier delves into so many relevant topics: death and moving on, family struggles, adoption and even saving whales. And to me, all these topics (maybe except for the whales) where quiet relevant at the time I recieved the copy of this book. I live with adoptees, a close family member died and family struggles were daily routine. I really managed to find a lot of comfort in this book and it kinda showed me the importance of moving on.

This story draws you in from the very first moment, and it's brilliant. This is a book anyone should have on their shelf! The hyped contemporaries should all hide from this little sapphire!

[Taste] Orange slices dipped in dark chocolate and sea salt and I had so much fun taking pictures of this sweetie!

Hope you have a lovely bookish day!

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