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NOBODY SHOULD HAVE A NIGHT LIKE THIS. 8:30 P.M.: It's been four years since Michelle was killed. Leo can't stand to be at home with his mom -- she's crazy with rage. He's got anger of his own and pictures of his dead sister he can't get out of his head. 9:00 P.M.: Bree parks her mom's car and locks the doors. She's in a bad part of town, but she knows the bar has to be around here somewhere. All she wants is to escape for a while and have a good time. 9:15 P.M.: Leo, out for a drive to get away from his mom, spots Bree. Why is this girl alive while Michelle's not? By 6:30 A.M., when their long night is over, everything has changed.

The Long Night of Leo and Bree Details

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From Reader Review The Long Night of Leo and Bree for online ebook

Becka dittmann says

I thought the book was pretty good. It was interesting and kept my attention. The book is always making you wonder what is going to happen next. It starts off with Leo and his mom arguing about his sister. Then another character comes in the story and her name is Bree. Bree and her mom arguing also. They both leave their house very upset and Leo thinks he has to make up for his sister's death four years ago. He thinks since his sister was stabbed 57 times and had her throat slit, he had to do the same to some other girl. Bree was on the street that night and he kidnapped her. He brought her back to his house and was planning on killing her but then he had a change of heart and instead of killing her he calmed her down and let her go. They grew a friendship and she wasn't scared anymore. She said that if she wanted to find him she could and she considered it. I would recommend this book to older teenagers because younger children would not get into it.

Lacey says

Sometimes the shortest of books make the biggest kind of impact. I think if I were thirteen and reading this book, I would have put it down with tears in my eyes, wandering about life and what it would bring for me. Now, as an adult reading this book, I am forced to think about being a teenager and all the drama that comes with it. I enjoyed the read and I think that Ellen Wittlinger writes with such raw passion.

Bg says

So this book is pretty much revolved around Leo, who's still dealing with the horror of his older sister being brutally murder by her boyfriend four years old. And Bree who is sick of her over protective parents and controlling boyfriend.

Leo wants to get away from his crazy grief stricken mother and Bree wants to do what she wants without having to be shielded every two seconds by all her rich friends. Leo and Bree meet up with a kidnapping because Leo thinks that she's a street walker trying to get attention. And then proceeds the long night.

This book only took me about two days to read. And I was disappointed when it ended. Reading it gave me a sense of being dark, confused, and scared. But as it went on Leo, who wasn't all that of a bad guy, just hadn't gotten over his sisters death.

Some elements of the book felt almost romantic in sick kind of way. But it was all still very good. Some part of me was hoping that Bree and Leo had something. But that wouldn't have made since I guess. But all in all this book could really get you burning the midnight oil. I'd recommend this book to anyone who likes something short and a little tense.

Mike says

Ellen Wittlinger, I'm finding, isn't an author that I'm going to consistently enjoy. I really loved Parrotfish, but I was mildly disappointed in Sandpiper, and I'm very disappointed in this. Wittlinger is capable of being good, I'm certain of it, but this was far from her best work. And it's really a shame, because Wittlinger had a great premise, and she could've done something great with it. Alas, it was not meant to be. Since I'm too lazy to string this into a proper review, here's a list of everything that Wittlinger does wrong with this book:

It was rushed.

This is probably the biggest one. The book was *tiny*, at barely over 125 pages. Because of this, the pacing was rushed - everything happened so fast that it was hard to get invested in it. Things that should've been slow-burning, that should've taken their sweet time to be effective, things such as Leo and Bree opening up to each other were rushed because of the small page count. Which is closely related to my next point...

The character interactions were inorganic.

This is mainly because of the last point, but it was annoying, nonetheless. Bree came to trust Leo way too fast, not letting us appreciate the potential subtlety of it, and making it a bit unbelievable.* Likewise, Leo's getting an initiative to do something about his home life (which was honestly pretty horrible), was inadequately explored, making the decision itself too sudden and uninteresting. Leo and Bree simply shouldn't have trusted each other with as little talk as they did, and the entire plot hinges on that happening. That being said, what little of their conversations we got did have plenty of potential - it was just too rushed to provide any significant impact. And speaking of the two of them together...

The two narrators were disproportionately interesting.

The book is narrated jointly by its title characters, but only one of them really drew my interest. Leo's situation is far, far worse than Bree's, to the point that it's very hard to care about hers. Both characters were well-developed, but Bree just wasn't interesting as a narrator, and I found myself skimming her sections. Leo was far more interesting, to the point where I think he really should've been the only narrator. Bree was just unnecessary. Supporting this...

Both narrators had the exact same voice.

This one pretty much speaks for itself. The prose was fine on a sentence level, but when it came to the way that Leo and Bree spoke, I couldn't tell them apart. They should have pretty different narrative voices, but at times, I had to check back to see who was narrating. And on a related topic...

There was a strong lack of surprises.

I've pretty much given away the plot of the entire book, because there's nothing here that you wouldn't see coming from the very beginning. It was incredibly predictable - Wittlinger had to know this, yet she does nothing about it. This is especially apparent at the beginning - the book had a large amount of infodumping at the beginning about the narrators' lives, providing us with some really clunky exposition. This is despite the fact that we would often see what was just said demonstrated in a scene, meaning that the infodumps were a waste of pages, nothing more. Wittlinger could've also took the book out of its predictable groove by withholding information until Leo and Bree gave it to each other - it would be a nice way to give the book some genuine surprises. It's a trick that's used surprisingly rarely, despite its success when it is used - just look at This Is Not A Test, a book that pulls it off flawlessly. Having nothing to do with this point...

There was slut shaming.

Yes, the author of Sandpiper used slut shaming. No, I don't know why. Bree is described, both by herself and

by Leo, as being dressed like a slut several times throughout the book - in fact, it's what prompts Leo to kidnap her. The way her outfit was described also seemed to imply that dressing that way was bad in and of itself; at one point, her skirt was described as being "up to her ass".

There were good bits (Leo's psychological state and home life, the prose on a sentence level), but overall, the book was too short and forgettable to make any real impact. Wittlinger is a talented author, and I know that she can do better than this - I hope she does soon.

*And by a bit, I mean extremely. I don't believe that anyone can trust someone that kidnapped them and held a knife to their throat as quickly as Bree trusted Leo. Bullshit. I don't buy it.

A new and improved version of this review can be found on my blog.

Lucy says

Four years ago today, Leo's sister was brutally murdered. Since then, his family has fallen apart. His father left them, and his mother has gone mad with grief. Today, on the horrible anniversary, Leo needs to get out of the house and away from his mother.

Bree is sick of her controlling boyfriend and overbearing mother. She can't take it any more. She heads for the bad part of town, determined to find a bar her boyfriend wouldn't approve of and have a good time.

When Leo sees Bree walking alone, something snaps in his brain. Why should this girl get to live when his sister is dead?

That's only the beginning of the long night of Leo and Bree. And when they come out on the other side, both of them will be forever changed.

This book is a fast, intense read that doesn't really resolve anything. It was compulsively readable and intense, but it felt like we ended in the same place that we started.

Alyssa says

The Long Night of Leo and Bree gives an interesting look into the terrifying world of abduction. Leo is a severely damaged boy, still recovering from the murder of his beloved sister. Bree is a girl trying to escape her sheltered life. When their paths meet on the anniversary of the murder, an impulse drives Leo to take Bree's life into his own hands. Terrified, Bree decides to make an effort to save her own life by opening herself up to Leo. Perhaps if she shows him that she is a whole human being, he will no longer want to hurt her. In the end, the pair of strangers discover that they are more similar than they thought. It isn't long before they begin to spill their hearts to each other. Who would have known that your life could be changed for the better by your abductor? I thought this story proved the fact that people are not as different as they seem to think. It is possible to relate to someone who lives a life completely opposite of yours. You never know when someone will change your life. The ones you look down upon may very well turn out to be the ones who make the largest contributions to your understanding of the world. I liked this book. It is thought provoking, it is out of the ordinary, and it will definitely make you wonder what flourishes in the minds of

everyone around you.

Alexis Karfis says

Alexis Karfis

Book Review. The Long Night of Leo and Bree

The Long Night of Leo and Bree by Ellen Wittlinger is a work of fiction book about two different characters Leo and Bree. Leo is poor and Bree is rich. Both have different lives but similarities. The book starts off after 4 years since Leo's sister's death from her abusive boyfriend. Leo gets in fights with his family a lot especially his alcoholic mother. He then goes on a drive and spots Bree walking from her rich town to a bar to play pool. Leo keeps complaining about how this girl, Bree, should've be the one to die and not Leo's sister. Leo then decides to kidnap Bree. Bree talks to Leo about her life and her problems, hoping they can get along. Later on the night, Leo then talks to Bree about his life problems as well. They touch on thoughtful topics that occurred to both of them and realize both have a lot in common. For example; Bree's sister died at a young age. Both teens don't know what to do or even how to get on with life, but Bree lets Leo off the hook and she is not going to turn on him. After reading this book, what I took from it is exactly what the characters learned as well, "When you make yourself real to somebody, they become real to you too." The way the book showed this is when Bree and Leo expressed themselves to each other and noticed how similar their lives are. If you just keep giving chances to people or anything, you can receive and learn a lot from that small little thing. This theme also draws back and connects to friendship. I can connect to this because one time I disliked someone who I barely knew the beginning of freshman year and never even gave myself a chance to communicate with her and get to know more about her. Just a couple weeks ago we finally talked to each other and realized how much we had in common and it was great to finally know a lot about her and make a new friend. This connects back to when Leo didn't know who Bree was until they actually talked and now are great friends. I recommend this book to middle school kids and teens because it definitely is a short decent sized story with a great meaning that we should all be using today.

Zakk says

Each day seems worse than the day before. Thats how i'd look at it if my sister or brother was murdered. It's one of the many pains of life that can't get a band-aid, a kiss, and it goes away. Accidents like this don't go away in a week. Sometimes it takes months and even years for the pain to go away. It'll even tear someone apart before it gets better or at least that's how it worked out with Leo. But then take a look from Bree's angle. Bree hates that everyone is on her back telling her what to do with her life which i know from personal experience. Until she goes to the next neiborhood to do what she wants to. Which turns out to be a big mistake because someone with really bad personal issues kidnapps her. She doesn't know who her kidnapper is, where he came from, or what he's going though. But to be in that situation and be totally calm is courageous. Also to actually stop and get to know someone you neccessarily don't want to know and to get something out of it is awsome. I don't know if i could do that because i think i'd be too scared. I really liked the battle between good and the inner demons in this book.

Cathleen Ash says

Leo's going nuts. His mother's screaming upstairs and yelling at him and he's hiding in the dark, on a couch,

in the basement storage area of his apartment complex.

"Leo, come here this minute you worthless turd!" His mother screams out as Leo cowers on the couch. He knows she's just getting started, that it will get worse as the night progresses because of the date. It's the anniversary of his sister's pointless, brutal murder by her boyfriend. A boyfriend Leo didn't really like, but he backed up his sister when she asked to stay out late with the guy, because at 13, Leo thought he was setting her up as an example, and when he was her age, he'd be able to stay out late with his girlfriend. But that was before the police called, and showed his mother pictures of his sister with the stab wounds, and asked about the boyfriend and what he looked like and how he acted.

"Leo Damn you to hell, where are you?" His mom's screaming still and Leo knows he has to get out, leave this house or go insane as he watches his mother, who drinks too much now and just isn't sane anymore, since his sister's body was found, a year ago. He knows if he doesn't leave he might fall asleep, and the dreams, the dark dark frightening dreams, will catch him. But if he stays awake, he has to fight off the buzzing noise in his head, the noise that threatens to drown out the whole world. He must concentrate, sneak upstairs and grab his keys, escape the house and just drive away, at least for this night.

Bree lives in another town, and she's not having any fun at home either - but it's a very different home. It's a house, not an apartment, and her parents, instead of yelling at her, have planned her future in fine detail: to marry Jesse - who they like (because he's rich enough and his family has enough status in town) and to go to college with him until they get married. She can't stand it anymore, she wants away - someplace different, someplace where people don't have a lexus and a volvo and a boat. Someplace where her mother doesn't constantly wonder why she would apply to Mount Holyoke (it's far away) since going to Tuft's with Jesse is, of course, what she's going to do. She puts on clothes her mother would faint dead away if she saw her wearing them, and takes off.

This is destiny: Leo - angry at the guy who stabbed his sister to death, escaping his psycho mom and driving around trying to stop the buzzing in his head. Bree, needing to get out of a life well-manicured by confining parents, walking down the street in her town - a street her parents won't even drive on, let alone walk through.

Leo sees her walking, dressed like that, at night, and knows that this is the person his sister's boyfriend should have stabbed, nobody would miss her. She should have been the one stabbed 57 times until she was totally totally dead, not Michelle, his sister, who had a family that loved her. He pulls the car over in front of Bree, wondering what he's going to do next to stop the buzzing noise in his head.

This begins *The Long Night of Leo and Bree* by Ellen Wittlinger.

jackie says

This book was really interesting to read. With the exception of bad lingo, it's a pretty good book. It gives you an inside glimpse of what goes on in the minds of the kidnapper/possible murderer and the victim. Although I somewhat questioned the reality of their conversations and their almost-friendship at the end, it certainly has a unique plot. Also, it makes you aware of how, at the caprice of one's mind, dangerous life can truly be. Murder really affects people and this book shows the different stages through Leo's life.

Austin Williams says

The Long Night of Leo and Bree is written like a diary between the two main characters. Most diaries have entries about everyday life and things that people might not want to share with others but this book is not like any other diary. All the events in this book from the thrilling moments to the cliff hangers and more

depressing moments this book has you hooked every paragraph of the way. Ellen Wittlinger uses imagery all throughout the book to get across what was going through the minds of these two teens. This book had me interested from start to finish, from the start of night to the next day. These teens start as strangers in totally different worlds but throughout the book and some unfortunate events they become somewhat friends and realize they are not so different from one another. This book really helped me get different viewpoints on life and what people are really dealing with. Without the help of my student teachers i never would have been able to find this short, great read.

Within these short passages between the two characters many lenses are shown but none as much as the gender and psychoanalytical lenses. Without the gender lens Leo wouldn't have been lead to what he did later on in the book and there would have been no climax or falling action near the middle and end. The psychoanalytical lens in this book really helps and adds on to the gender lens and the whole idea of the book and climax. Without these two lenses there would have been no plot to the book and all the things that happened throughout it would never have happened.

The lenses built the book very well along with the tropes that are seen throughout it. Wittlinger uses multiple tropes in this book them being the typical ones like the emotional, defenseless, sassy rich girl and the masculine boy. These tropes help build all the dialogue and reasoning in this book. Leo's reasoning behind his actions are built solely off these tropes. This book also avoids one major trope of the emotional boy. This avoided trope helps with the end of the book very much, without this I feel like the book would have been less predictable but at the same time it helped end the story.

Janie says

Leo's sister was brutally murdered four years ago, and since then, his dad left and his mom went crazy (scary abusive psycho crazy). He's the one with the job, taking care of basic necessities such as food, and one night, when it get to be too much, he goes for a drive.

Bree is just a rich girl who wants to get out from under the controlling thumb of her mother and boyfriend. And one night, in a fit of rebellion, she goes for a walk on the "bad" side of town...

Told from alternate views, this is the story of how they met and came to know each other...

There's a name for this type of situation: (view spoiler)

Nick says

There is a few reasons that I loved this book. One reason is because the book can teach you a few things about how you can't just go walk around cities by yourself when you don't know them. Another is how anyone can seem crazy but once you get to know them they can seem pretty cool. The reason I mention this

is because Leo takes Bree hostage and at first he seems crazy, but if you keep reading you realize that he's not really crazy he just hasn't faced his sister's death, and he doesn't know how to deal with it because no one talks about it with him. By the end of the book I felt like Bree maybe would have liked to date Leo but she didn't get the courage to ask him because of the circumstances of their relationship. I wish the ending of the book would have been with them two dating in the end because of how good they could relate to each other. This book is up there with my favorite books because I can understand why Leo did what he did even though it was wrong, and also because it gives me a good view of how someone may act when they experience a loss of a loved one, especially at a young age.

TheCosyDragon says

This review has been crossposted from my blog at The Cosy Dragon . Please head there for more in-depth reviews by me, which appear on a timely schedule.

It's been 4 years since Leo's sister was killed by her boyfriend. Leo is still haunted by the sight, and his mother is out of her mind. Bree leads a boring life in comparison, but when she heads out to a bar, and finds herself lost, confronted by Leo and threatened with murder.

The back of this novel is very misleading. This is not romance. It's a horrible night for them both, but it has the potential to lead to positive things. I'm not sure exactly what though.

I felt along with the characters, I felt Bree's terror and Leo's confusion. I found myself being disturbed by what was happening, and not wanting to put the novel down for fear of something happening while I wasn't looking!

At the same time, I couldn't feel the same connection with both characters. Leo has so much depth, while Bree seems like a simple rich girl. I guess that's her role, but surely Wittlinger could have picked a better antagonist? Or at least make me feel some sympathy for her. If I had thought it would make Leo feel better, I would have told him to kill her.

I purchased this novel because I've enjoyed Wittlinger's novels in the past. It has nothing on Parrotfish, but is really much better than Hard Love. That's not to say it's perfect though, or anything other than a quick, worth-reading-once, novel. Don't bother buying it unless you're determined to collect everything from this author, just borrow it from the library to make up your mind yourself. I'd recommend this for mature teenage readers.

Terry says

Lately, there seems to be an uptick in the YA titles about kidnapping. Perhaps economic uncertainty leads teens to characters controlled by forces well beyond their command; perhaps it is just the inherent conflict and drama to be found in Girl, Stolen, Stolen: A letter to my captor, Living Dead Girl and What Happened to Cass McBride?. Even older titles (The Girl in the Box, When Jeff Comes Home) are seeing some traffic. This reminds me of April Henry's "Girl, Stolen" in that the narrative alternates between the hapless victim and the not-really-a-bad-guy perpetrator. This one isn't quite as strong a story, but it is still good. I didn't buy the ending, but up to the final couple of pages, I thought it was realistic and well done.

There is genuine insight as to Bree's state of mind; Leo is a bit less well realized, but his confusion and near-insanity are plausibly laid out. Once the crime happens, the book moves along. There's a bit of swearing and there are discussions of violent murder, but even Middle School students would enjoy this fast read.
