



I'll Give You the Sun

Jandy Nelson

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“We were all heading for each other on a collision course, no matter what. Maybe some people are just meant to be in the same story.” At first, Jude and her twin brother Noah, are inseparable. Noah draws constantly and is falling in love with the charismatic boy next door, while daredevil Jude wears red-red lipstick, cliff-dives, and does all the talking for both of them. Years later, they are barely speaking. Something has happened to change the twins in different yet equally devastating ways . . . but then Jude meets an intriguing, irresistible boy and a mysterious new mentor. The early years are Noah’s to tell; the later years are Jude’s. But they each have only half the story, and if they can only find their way back to one another, they’ll have a chance to remake their world. This radiant, award-winning novel from the acclaimed author of *The Sky Is Everywhere* will leave you breathless and teary and laughing—often all at once. **Printz Award Winner Stonewall Honor Book**

I'll Give You the Sun Details

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From Reader Review I'll Give You the Sun for online ebook

Warda says

I've read this book for the third time now and it is still as magical as ever. My heart was aching and floating whilst I was reading it. I cannot put into words what and how this book makes me feel! I can never get enough of it. Slice of heaven of a book if there ever was one.

Original review

My heart. Words will fail me. This book did something to my soul. My heart exploded about a hundred times whilst reading it and I cannot express how much I loved it! How much I'll continue to love it. It was expressive, imaginative, and god-damn gorgeous. I wanted to bask in its beauty. Everything about it just worked! I was gushing throughout the entire thing, internally weeping, because it was just perfect. Utter perfection. Sublime. I absolutely drowned in it and had no intention to come back up.

It's the type of book you want to shove into everyone's hands, urging them to read it, so they can relish in its beauty. It left me with a renewed sense of wonder for the world, about people, our capabilities, myself. It's tragic and it breaks you, and it puts you back together again in the best possible way. And what's better is that as soon as I finished it, I wanted to pick it back up again.

Samantha says

This was the perfect book to finish on my birthday. I adored Jandy Nelson's first book, and didn't think I could love this one just as much!

Emily May says

This book should be called **I'll Give You Death by Artistic Metaphor**. It seems like I'm in the minority on this one, but I did not like the writing style at all.

I guess it should be noted that I was also not a fan of the author's first novel - *The Sky is Everywhere* - which everyone but heartless little me seemed to love. Unlike many people I know, I picked this one up because the premise intrigued me and not because of a love for the author's previous work.

You may be thinking: **this is a poetic novel about life and loss and love... how can you be so cold?!**

sigh You would not be the first. But while I appreciate that there are some good aspects to this book like the complex characters and the frank portrayal of teen sexuality in both a heterosexual girl and a homosexual guy, the style, the endless bloody metaphors and the way it became heavy on the romance... all of that just did nothing but irritate me.

There was a brief moment early on when I thought I might be reading a magical realism novel because of some of the bizarre things that seemed to be happening. But, as the story unfolded, it turns out that these are actually just overly ambitious artistic metaphors that turn almost every single paragraph into a purple and

downright weird mess. Check them out:

“Mom picks up a knife and thrusts it into his gut, twists. Dad forges on, oblivious.”

“Jude barfs bright blue fluorescent barf all over the table, but I’m the only one who notices.”

“All the hornet’s buzzed out of her. And there’s no spider to her at all.”

None of these things are actually, *literally* happening, of course. When I read the first few paint-splattered metaphors (hehe, that’s a metaphor too!), I did my single raised eyebrow face (it’s epic, I assure you), but it was when I’d read over a hundred pages of constant flowery prose that I started to feel like I’d overdosed on cotton candy. I guess it’s a certain type of reader who will fall in love with this prose - in short: I am not that type of reader.

I am the kind of person who forges strong emotional connections with characters; or at least I do if the book is working its magic. But I also find it really difficult to engage with characters - who would otherwise pull me in - when the prose is so nauseatingly bloated with metaphors. Do any of you remember *Shatter Me*?

Bloody hell... do I remember *Shatter Me* *silently fumes*

And it’s a shame because there were moments when I came close to feeling for these characters. Noah tugged at my heart strings because of his passion for art and how he wasn’t allowed to pursue it fully; Jude’s feelings of guilt and grief felt like genuine pain. But I never got into their heads because I was too busy being drowned by the metaphorical prose. Plus, I’m not even going to get started on the stereotypical way the British guy is portrayed... I’ll just say that we really do not use slang words in every single sentence.

The reveal at the ending can easily be guessed from reading Jude’s first POV and it was a little anticlimactic. Not just because it was guessable but because it was kind of blah. I still won’t give this book one star because there were some touching moments that I liked but, overall, I was pretty disappointed.

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emma says

I’LL GIVE THIS BOOK THE SUN. FIVE SUNS. More than that, if Goodreads had ever answered my impassioned plea to add a sixth star (which I sent by pony express after Ready Player One). (Pony express means mail, right? I’m a fan of that.)

<https://emmareadstoomuch.wordpress.co...>

How do I love thee, book? Let me count the ways. (That’s both a reference to this book and an illustration of how difficult it will be to put my intense adoration of it into, like, a semi-coherent review.) (Sidenote: I’ve never strived for anything higher than semi-coherent.)

Let’s start with the characters. God, do I love the people in this book. They are so, so, so imperfect - imperfect doesn’t even begin to cover it. They should suck, honestly. I should hate them. In fact, I should hate this whole shindig for the things that happen in it. In any other context, they’d give me second-hand embarrassment cringes so hard it’d shoot this book down to two stars. But NOT HERE. This sh*t is

different.

These characters are so *human*. They're so lovable and deeply good that you'd forgive them for anything. Seriously. All of them do at least one thing (and mostly more than one) that should be, like, narrative-shatteringly awful, and instead manages to make them even better. I can't explain it. YOU JUST HAVE TO READ THIS BOOK.

This book has alternating perspectives between 2 twins: Noah when he was 13, and Jude when she's 16 (which is the present). Noah is so creative and talented and amazing, and Jude is such a badass and so interesting and equally amazing. Their mom's a whirlwind, which has its ups and downs, and their dad starts off not great but becomes the best. There's Brian, who loves space, and Guillermo, one of the greatest sculptors ever, and Oscar, who I'm not going to try to put into words. (Hands down the most inherently confusing character.) They're all so wonderful and I wish I knew them in real life and could join their lil ragtag group of pals.

The character development is just unreal.

Also, the depiction of family is pretty amazing. (I'm going to use the words "great" and "amazing" a bajillion times in this review, AND I'M NOT GOING TO APOLOGIZE.) They can mistreat each other and fight and generally seem toxic, but they all love each other and they're all good people. SCRATCH THAT - MAGNIFICENT people. (You thought I was done talking about how much I love these characters? Ya burnt. I'm going to spend the rest of my life talking about them. Every review from now on? Name-dropping Noah and Jude. Get used to it.)

What else, what else...the writing was just really beautiful. I'm always really happy to see that in YA. It's pretty rare for a young adult contemporary to just be genuinely, no-holds-barred gorgeous.

And y'all know I love when my books are filled with fun facts. I wish every book had some character just inserting cool information in every once in awhile. This book? EVERY CHARACTER IS DOING THAT. There's so much fun sh*t about superstition and art and sculpting and space in this book. Ugh. God, it's perfect. It's like Jandy Nelson read my mind and made this book to check all my boxes. WHAT A DREAM.

I thought there'd be one major downside. That's the discussion of fate and ~true love~ in this book, neither of which I believe in and both of which I pretty consistently find dumb in like, every YA contemporary ever. But this book, no surprise at this point, IS DIFFERENT. It's so well done and just makes you feel all warm inside and root for the characters. Hurray, hurray. I miss this book already.

The cherry on top, you ask? The best fictional encapsulation of and response to slut-shaming I've ever seen is contained within THESE VERY PAGES. When thirteen/fourteen-year-old Jude and her mom are fighting about everything, including Jude's clothing and makeup choices, mommy dearest always asks if she reallyyyyyy wants to be "*that girl*." Pretty yuck, right? The only blemish on the perfect record of this masterpiece.

But then. But then! Blemish surgically removed, or whatever. (That was really gross. I'm so sorry.) Jude has a realization. A great, perfect, better-than-cherry-on-top epiphany. I like cherries, but this is more like the lottery ticket on top, or the Zac Efron in Baywatch (a bad movie) on top. Jude realizes: "*Maybe Mom was wrong about that girl after all. Because that girl spits on guys who treat her badly. Maybe it's that girl who's been missing. [...] I didn't bring the bad luck to us, no matter how much it felt that way. It brought itself. It brings itself. And maybe it's that girl who's now brave enough to admit [it].*"

A little bit of editing to remove minor spoilers, but how amazing is that?

Your clothing or your makeup don't change who you are. They don't prevent you from being a badass, or a good person, or brave.

God, I love this book. Read it in a couple days, and miss it already.

Can you believe how genuine this review was? That's a testament to my loveeee for this book.

Bottom line: This is going on the all-time favorites list. EVERYONE: READ THIS PLEASE. Amazing, amazing, amazing. Even better the second time around.

Jandy Nelson, GIMME YOUR NEXT BOOK.

Brian Yahn says

One of the best books I've read in a long long time, I'll Give You the Sun, gave me the chills, gave me a heart attack, gave me everything I ever wanted from a love story.

(Self-portrait: boy in love with a book)

The narrators have such fun voices, the writing and use of artistic metaphors is beautiful, and the pacing is amazing. Pretty much everything about this book is perfect. It's essentially *Gone Girl* meets *Romeo and Juliet*. The characters connect so cohesively with their incredibly dark-twisted histories that all collide into the craziest, most fulfilling love story ever.

Jandy Nelson, thank you. I needed this.

Em says

Has anyone ever finished a book and just sat there for a while like, "what did this author just do to me?"

Finishing this book was the most surreal emotion. It was like being stranded in the middle of a hazy daydream, laughing, sun-soaked and shivering, with flowers blooming in your heart. I had this sudden outburst of motivation to bake something, or go for a walk, or make a fragile human connection with some stranger in the vast and unfeeling infinity of this universe. **I was in love, not with a person but just in love.** I was literally walking around my place, thinking about this book and feeling like I was in this bubble by myself, like I was so deeply inside my mind I was actually out of touch with reality!

Look, I don't know who made me such a cheesy person and also such a romantic person and such a soft mess so full of feelings but I want a huge metal box to slam down on them and a padlock around the box and then the box falling to the bottom of the sea thank you very much.

what is this book about?

I had a very faint idea of what this book was about prior to reading it and I am almost loathe to reveal too much about it. But I will say this: **this book is essentially about art and people and people being art**, their experiences a soft canvas of creases and bumps and hard knocks, each telling its own story, and their melancholy stained thoughts the equivalent of constellation-filled skies.

It's about Jude & Noah (twin siblings) whose lives have been drastically altered over the span of three years and the book alternates between their point of views: Noah at age 13 and Jude at 16, a reflection of the resounding cleaving of before and after.

There was something so incredibly authentic about this book. It was a million galaxies of emotions and introspections. The writing was very Sufjan Stevens... very poetry-and-melancholy-thoughts... very cotton-candy-and-waterfalls-of-tears... very petals-falling-from-rose-bushes. And it all manifested in how deeply flawed and undeniably human the characters were.

I did not always *like* them and oftentimes I struggled to even understand them. But that's just how you know they've been *humanized*, in the way they were so fully fleshed-out and multidimensional.

Noah & Jude were soft people with hearts like the seas, tides of volatile emotions, swimming through earthly life and unable to land. They see beauty in all ordinary things and whatever they decide to invest their time and love into always grows the size of Atlas. Their minds were a pandora crafted specifically for them, brimming with raw potential and overflowing with everything that blooms inside of them, doom and sorrow and **so much art**.

"What is bad for the heart is good for art."

Yes, they sometimes let their jealous rampages govern them. Sometimes, they just do not listen well enough, they get enraged and jealous and spit their grief and inward disdain at the world and at each other. Sometimes, no matter how many times they tried to bury the ugliness inside, it didn't keep it from coming back alive, and it always showed in the way they took joy in pressing on parts of each other that are already bruised and sore from insecurities and self-doubt, like pouring saltwater into already gaping wounds.

"A broken heart is an open heart."

They sometimes feel so small despite having so much courage, fire, energy, for many things. They both feel things so deeply and get so hurt, so wounded by small things. And oftentimes, they succumb to their constant hesitation to trust others and each other for fear that if they let them in, they'll see all the imperfections they often see in their reflection.

And all of it spoke so deeply to me because I've seen so many slivers of myself in their feelings and actions and it wasn't always pretty or easy. But to be fair, very little of this book was pretty or easy.

"I'm sick of being a coward. I'm sick of being on pause, of being buried and hidden, of being petrified, in both senses of the word."

The main takeaway from this book, I believe, is that your life is going to be many periods of sadness and you can't expect happiness to just jump into it overnight. You can't cling onto the idea that once you achieve this or that, you're going to unlock the secret to happiness. Happiness has never been a fixed point in one's life but is a multifaceted and elusive state. Happiness grows back slowly, it tiptoes so quietly towards you until eventually it's walking by your side. You'll survive. You might be confused, a distorted version of the person you used to be, all screwed up, but **you will survive**. Small victories count as victories.

"I don't want to imagine meadows, I want to run through them."

And also, you are under no obligation to be the same person you were a year, a month, or even half an hour ago. You have the right to change. You have the right to grow. You have the right to shed off your past selves. You are still growing and you have so much to learn. One mistake does not define your entire being and the mere fact that you recognize your flaws and push yourself to right your wrongs is outstanding.

*"Quick, make a wish.
Take a (second or third or fourth) chance.
Remake the world."*

Now, onto **the romance!**

The part of me that actively enjoys being an asshole in mario kart is aggressively side-eyeing me right now but honestly fuck what I said last week, I changed my mind I want to be in love!

I am literally all about romantic clichés. I can no longer deny my true self. Throw them all in a book! Throw all of them in my face! Cover me in romanticized idealizations!! SMOTHER ME with them! I guarantee I will be ecstatic!

There's two romantic relationships in this book: **Noah & Brian** who warmed the cold voids in my soul with their wholesomeness and cuteness and it makes my heart kind of sad because I can't even hug them!

*"I love you," I say to him, only it comes out, "Hey."
"So damn much," he says back, only it comes out, "Dude."*

And then there's **Jude & Oscar** who bring me to this next point: I can't believe that some people's fate in this world is dating someone who knows all their good angles and want to take pretentious pictures of them looking gorgeous and ethereal all the time just for the sake of the aesthetics. Furthermore I can't believe I'm not in that squad! (everyone I know just literally wants A level pictures of themselves taken while they're snapping pictures of me mid-sneeze and I want it documented somewhere that I deserve better!)

Both relationships were heavily centered around the concept of *soulmates* which is um, dubious at best. I mean, how lucky do two people really have to be for them to fall in love with each other at exactly the right

time in exactly the right way? But truly, I think in this book, it was more about the beauty and comfiness of two people who wholeheartedly understand each other, surpassing all points of recognition and openness and harboring so much tenderness towards each other..... and hoo boy, what is this strange sensation? I think I'm smiling.....*pulls myself closer in the backseat of my rover*

"We were all heading for each other on a collision course, no matter what. Maybe some people are just meant to be in the same story."

Overall, this book was an unexpected sweet treat from the universe and I truly adored it!

Kat O'Keeffe says

SO FREAKIN GOOD. This just became one of my favorite books of the year, and one of my favorite contemporary novels of all time! It was funny and romantic and touching and so beautifully written! I loved it. I literally just finished it and I already want to reread it. HIGHLY RECOMMENDED!

jessica says

'maybe some people are just meant to be in the same story.'

i try not to have any regrets in life, but i do regret that i read this book too quickly and that it ended before i was emotionally and mentally ready. a book like this is meant to be cherished, to be savoured - but i was incapable of putting this down. i dont think ive ever read such transformative writing, it gave the story such a lyrical feel to it. i needed every word, every image, every emotion, every feeling. even if it did leave my heart a devastating wreck in the process.

5 stars

Claudia Ramírez says

NOT JUST 5 STARS, ALL OF THE STARS!!!

This book was perfect and beautiful and everything.

EDIT: 04/02/2015

Quería editar este review porque aunque ya he hablado maravillas de este libro en mi canal, siento que también merece que diga aquí cuánto me gustó.

I'll Give You the Sun es un libro muy hermoso y conmovedor, lleno de cosas que no me había encontrado en otros libros. Creo que la escritura de Jandy Nelson es la razón principal por la que este libro me pareció tan arrollador. Como he dicho ya en mis videos, Jandy escribe de una manera única y llena de vida, sus palabras

están cargadas de pasión y de magia y de electricidad pura. Además, tiene un talento increíble para cambiar de POV. ¿Ya ven cómo algunos autores utilizan dos perspectivas y ni siquiera se nota el cambio? ¡Con Noah y Jude se nota muchísimo! Cada uno tiene una personalidad y un estilo tan entrañable y especial que incluso si al inicio del capítulo no viniera "NOAH" o "JUDE" en grande, podrías saber quién lo está narrando. ¡Bravo por eso!

También quiero decir que aunque la familia y la hermandad son la parte más importante en esta novela (por lo menos para mí), los romances me han fascinado. La relación entre Noah y Brian me tenía fangirleando, llorando y gritando de a ratos, y la de Jude con Oscore simplemente me quitaba el aliento, ese amor que tenían ellos dos era tan fuerte, que hasta lo sentía palpable.

Además me gusta demasiado que el libro tiene su razón de llamarse "Te daría el sol", uff, lo recuerdo y se me pone la piel de gallina. No quiero spoilear por aquí, ¡pero simplemente me fascinó!

"I gave up practically the whole world for you," I tell him, walking through the front door of my own love story. "The sun, stars, ocean, trees, everything, I gave it all up for you."

Todo dentro de este libro me tiene enamorada. Vale la pena mencionar que Jandy Nelson le da al arte un significado más allá del que yo conocía. Claro, sé apreciar el arte, pero verla a través de los ojos de Noah y Jude fue una experiencia nueva para mí. Y ay, Guillermo, qué bello señor...

Le recomiendo a todos este libro. En español se llama: "Te daría el mundo" y lo publicará Alfaguara este 19 de Febrero.

Tiff at Mostly YA Lit says

Review originally posted at Mostly YA Lit

I don't think I can properly review this book without just throwing flails and gifs and barbaric yawps into the air. It's that lovely, that exquisite that any review I write will just pale in comparison to the writing in the book. That said...I want you to read this book, so I have to try.

P.S. I borrowed all the quote gifs from Penguin Teen, because who doesn't want to see more of that gorgeous cover?!

I'll Give You The Sun is probably the most literary and imaginative YA novels I've ever read.

Everything works - the writing is expressive and nuanced, with unique imagery. You can really tell that Jandy Nelson thought and thought, and thought again about every word in the novel. Every metaphor, every description fits in with the themes of breaking and remaking, family and relationships, art and inspiration. It's an incredibly tight novel, and it's one that could easily have been placed in the literary fiction section of a bookstore.

The themes of I'll Give You The Sun are explored exquisitely - and the plot follows in a very sophisticated manner. This is a definitely a form-follows-function book - but it's done so damn brilliantly that you'll be in awe. The premise/form of the book is that Noah and Jude, fraternal twins, each have their own side of the story, Noah at age 13 and Jude at age 16. As a reader, we see both sides and how mistakes and choices change and shape each of them. The brilliance comes through how each reveal is made - to the reader and to the characters. And what makes the book even more complex is how each of those reveals follows the themes of breaking and remaking, of splitting apart and coming together that shape the characters and the novel.

The characters and relationships between them are full and clearly realized. I already mentioned the premise of the book, but let me just say that Noah and Jude are probably the most flawed and complex teen characters I've read EVER. I honestly can't think of more broken, fragile and alive characters that exist in YA fiction. We get every crazed, messed-up thought in their heads, all of their stupid actions, all of their esoteric behaviors...and it's just gorgeous to behold.

I'll Give You The Sun has one of the most realistic - and sexy - LGBTQ relationships I've ever read. This sounds weird to say, but in most YA I've read, I've never had to fan myself at a gay relationship - maybe that says more about what I read than what I don't read. This book, however, had what I imagine to be a very realistic gay relationship in its teens, and it's tumultuous and hard and beautifully steamy at a few moments.

The portrayal of art and the way it touches people will leave you inspired. I am probably the worst artist in the world (I can't even draw a straight line), but I was amazed and gratified by how art shapes the characters, how it changes and hurts them, and how it strengthens them. Art is almost like a secondary character in this book, and the way that Noah and Jude create and destroy is not just a metaphor for what they do but it almost turns into a way of living for them.

The romances are soul-crushing and soul-illuminating. Here's the thing: when Noah and Jude meet their respective partners, it's pretty much instantaneous intrigue. It's not quite total insta-love, but it's close. You guys know how I feel about insta-love (and one of them is a bad boy!)...but somehow, Jandy Nelson's writing can break all my rules and make me believe. I'm just going to give you one unbelievable passage, and you tell me you're not intrigued and kind of in love:

I know he's taking a hundred pictures, but I don't care anymore. A hot series of shivers is running through me as he continues clicking and saying: *Yes, thank you, this is totally bloody it, perfect, yes, yes, sodding hell, God, look at you.* It's like we're kissing, way more than kissing. I can't imagine what my face must look like.

"You're her," he says finally, putting the cover over the lens. "I'm sure of it."

"Who?" I ask.

But he doesn't answer, just walks down the aisle toward me, a lazy, lanky walk that makes me think of summer. He's completely unwound now, went from high gear to no gear the moment he covered the lens. As he approaches, I see that he has one green eye and one brown eye, like he's two people in one, two very intense people in one.

Jandy Nelson perfectly understands how closely entwined joy and sadness are. Guys, Jandy Nelson KNOWS. She understands why exquisite happiness is sometimes achieved only through understanding loss. She understands how grief can engulf and change and break a family, and how art can save and remake us. I don't know how else to explain the mingled feelings of happiness, bittersweet joy, and infinite sadness that engulfed me while reading except to say that Jandy Nelson is the YA Walt Whitman.

The Final Word:

I could go on and on about *I'll Give You The Sun*, but honestly, it won't hold a candle to the book itself. **If you like literary novels, if you want all the feels, this book needs to be on top of your TBR list.** Read it now. Bask in the beauty. And then give it to a friend, because a book this good demands to be shared.

Lola says

Twins are fascinating.

They can tell me they have magical abilities and can read each other's minds and feel each other's emotions and I'm totally going to believe them. To me, the idea of sharing the same DNA with someone else is extraordinary in itself.

Jude and Noah are extremely close. They may not be alike, but they both dismiss each other's differences to focus on what they do have in common: art. They both seek pleasure in the imagination and love with the entirety of their hearts. Too much, perhaps, seeing that a boy manages to come between the two of them.

There is quite an elevated amount of drama in this story. It is certainly not light, but it is romantic, emotional, intense, beautiful and sad. Not at all the same time, thank goodness, but it's hard to close this book and immediately switch activities. Proof: I didn't even intend to write this review this very day, but I'm too weak at this late hour to fight my heart on this. It wants what it wants.

No character in this book is perfect. Every single one of them is flawed in various, and sometimes unexpected, ways. Jude and Noah's mother, for instance, appears as the incarnation of the sun itself—an ethereal being—in the beginning. But this key character proves to have dark secrets of her own, secrets that affect the twins deeply.

There is much to love about *I'LL GIVE YOU THE SUN*. The only thing I did not love, however, was the almost excruciatingly slow pacing that was omnipresent because of the lengthy descriptions and dialogs. Don't get me wrong, I loved Jandy Nelson's prose, which felt wonderfully familiar to me, but I sure would not have minded to be able to read this book a tiny bit faster.

I'm actually glad I haven't read this book sooner, because studying the history of art has enabled me to pick up on the artist and painting references. Incredible! I hope you give this one a chance if you haven't already. It will rock your heart.

Kaylin (The Re-Read Queen) says

5 Stars

Overview: Fourth Read:

This is my favorite book.

It's a blanket statement—of course. Ask any bookworm their favorite book and we'll either ask for more parameters ("What genre? Classics too? Of all time or this year?") or rattle off four or five. While I'm certainly guilty of that, every time I answer I see this cover in my mind. ***This is my favorite book.***

Sometimes I wish it was something else. Something akin to Joyce or Tolstoy, so I'd sound a little smarter. Or maybe something not classified as Young-Adult, as I've slowly grown out of the age range. Or maybe just something where the protagonist doesn't use the phrase 'toilet-licking' as an expletive on the first page.

But I also don't want it to be anything else?

I understand the critiques, the one-star reviews, and criticisms. These opinions are certainly valid. *And I understand*

The writing style is as artistic as the characters and the whole book drips with prose. The metaphors are eccentric, dramatic, and consistent. **If you don't like the writing style, you won't like the book.**

(And I feel so very, *very* sorry for you.)

"Meeting your soul mate is like walking into a house you've been in before--you will recognize the furniture, the pictures on the wall, the books on the shelves, the contents of drawers. You could find your way around in the dark if you had to."

"I love you," I say to him, only it comes out, "Hey."

"So damn much," he says back, only it comes out, "Dude."

It's okay, because not every book is for everyone. But this one is for *me*.

Or at least, that's what it felt like. Maybe one day I'll be able to explain my deeply personal love for this book. How I hadn't really read a book in three-years, before picking this one up on a whim. How it was one of the first LGBT+ books I read when I was in the middle of realizing I wasn't 100% straight. How this book made me feel *known* and helped me *process* the world around me.

But all I can say is this: **It reignited my love of reading.**

I find the writing beautiful, vivid, creative and something about it just *works*.

Jandy Nelson manages to take **all the mixed up feelings of being a teenager and somehow puts them into words.** That emotion I never could *quite* name was beautifully illustrated in a way that made my chest ache.

"People die, I think, but your relationship with them doesn't. It continues and is ever-changing."

Noah and Jude are twins who used to be inseparable, but have grown apart as tragedy hits their family. They are completely different, completely *dynamic* characters. Their progression is some of my favorite character development *ever* and I loved them both. (Noah seems to be the fan-favorite, but I will defend Jude to the death.)

I have no artistic ability whatsoever, but the relationship both characters have with art was astounding. Noah especially captures moments in his life by determining how he'd paint them, and what he would name the piece. It's a compelling way of moving the story forward that matches the imaginative style.

"What is bad for the heart is good for art. The terrible irony of our lives as artists."

One of the romances happens very quickly. And one of the love-interests is a mash up of several bad-boy archetypes. I understand why some wouldn't like this.

...but the book is completely aware of it??

Nelson subverts the tropes, in my opinion. Noah's whirlwind of feelings is a tool for showing his character mature, as the scope of his emotions change as the romance unwinds. Because the focus is on Jude's development and her coming into her own self, her perception of her love interest changes and evolves with her. **There's a strong focus on mutual support and respect, while still being able to laugh and love.**

"I don't want a split-apart," I say. "I think I need my own soul."

The characters make mistakes and some of their actions are horrible. I won't excuse them, but I'm not supposed to. These actions have consequences that affect all their relationships.

At its core, this book is about family dynamics. The ever-changing, complicated mess that reminds us how interwoven our lives are. But it's not condescending or over-the-top, as it discusses these important issues with brevity and humor.

"We were all heading for each other on a collision course, no matter what. Maybe some people are just meant to be in the same story."

In summary:

Recommending this book is odd. Not because I worry about negative opinions or criticisms--- like I said, I understand those, and they are *valid*. But because I have a separate, personal love for this book.

But it takes a pretty damn remarkable book to make me love it so deeply... I think my personal love stems from how *special* this book is artistically.

karen says

"I love you," I say to him, only it comes out, "Hey."

"So damn much," he says back, only it comes out, "Dude."



i think this one was also a 3.5 for me. there were things i liked SO MUCH about it, and then there were things that bothered me a little. (and not just my fear of twins this time)

first to the good.

i enjoyed the unusual structure - the fact that it alternates between the voices of twins noah and jude where noah's story takes place when they are 13 and jude's takes place when they are 16. in the three years separating the stories, a number of circumstances have driven them apart to the point where they have gone from being spookily twinclose to barely speaking.

both threads are compelling - in noah's, we see an introverted young artist falling in love for the first time; discovering that with brian, he is able to really be himself, gawky dorky bits and all. this is the first time in his life he has been able to make an emotional connection with someone he hadn't once shared a womb with, and their scenes are all giddy excitement and quiet uncertainty and incredible attraction. it is perfectly written. but things in his life are not all puppy love and romps through the woods. the twins have always been competitive for their parents' attention, and at this point in their lives, the feisty cliff-diving surfer girl jude is daddy's favorite, while the talented noah is the apple of his artist mother's eye. their parents are going through a rough patch, fighting constantly. jude is growing into a young woman and carrying her wildness

and risk-taking into new realms, and she's in a reckless emotional tailspin as she begins to covet what little noah has of his own - his mother's affection, a spot at the art school he desperately wants to attend, and even brian.

three years later, so much has changed. jude is living a life of self-imposed penance, dictated by superstitious rituals, wearing only baggy jeans and sweatshirts, talking to the ghost of her dead grandmother, and on a complete boycott from boys. she is attending the school of noah's dreams, but is wracked with guilt over what she has done to get there, and what has happened between herself and noah to drive them apart.

the writing is very gimmicky in noah's thread. it is full of these little imaginative flourishes like

Jude barfs bright blue fluorescent barf all over the table, but I'm the only one who notices.

and

Mom picks up a knife and thrusts it into his gut, twists. Dad forges on, oblivious.

and

We're sprinting at the speed of light when the ground gives way and we rise into the air as if racing up stairs.

and he captions every scene as though it is a painting:

PORTRAIT: Jude Braiding Boy After Boy into Her Hair

PORTRAIT, SELF-PORTRAIT: Gray Noah Eating Gray Apples on Gray Grass

PORTRAIT, SELF-PORTRAIT: Brother and Sister on a Seesaw, Blindfolded

which can be cloying after a while if that kind of thing irritates you, but once you get past the first couple of instances, you just kind of roll with it and it didn't personally bother me overmuch. however, because of this writerly quirk, this is one of those books i hope they never ever try to make into a movie, because the temptation to film those bits would be there, and would be the worst kind of student-film indulgence to attempt to reproduce visually. seriously - big shudders when i think of it.

okay, now on to the other stuff that i wasn't crazy about.

oscar. oh, oscar. i assume we are meant to swoon over oscar, a boy who appears in both noah's 13-year-old and jude's 16-year-old storylines, but i just couldn't take him seriously. oscar is the boy who tests jude's boy boycott, and he's essentially just a collection of every stereotypical teen-girl dreamboy list.

- older man
- english accent
- motorcycle
- scars
- tattoos
- dark past. says things like *"I'm pretty sure the things I've done are far worse than whatever it is you've done."*
- bad boy vices

- ~~romantic~~ cheesy lines: *"Your eyes are so ethereal, your whole face is. I stared at pictures of you for hours last night. You give me chills.*
- leather jacket
- james dean slouch
- tomcat tendencies but oh-so capable of troo luv if given the opportunity
- tough-guy posturing but also soooo sensitive
- orphan
- enigmatic
- unconventional good looks
- charismatic and passionate speechifier: *he's like a roller coaster that talks.*

he's just a little silly, to me. but i am not a teenage girl, so that probably accounts for it.

here is something else that bothered me: (view spoiler)

and another rant about something that seems to happen in every book ever and MAKES NO SENSE: (view spoiler)

there's one or two other things that bothered me - their father's transformation, the convenient arrival of oscar at the end, that other novelistic convention of characters making revealing speeches when (ostensibly) alone that other people overhear, a couple of other things i can't recall just now...

but overall, i liked it. i don't think i looooved it as much as most people seem to, but the early scenes between noah and brian are themselves worth the price of admission. which in my case was free (thanks, nancy!) but you get my point. it's a sweet and sad little book that gets a little cloying in parts, but its heart is in the right place, and it's ultimately a charming little book.

"When Castor died," he says, "Pollux missed him too much, so he made a deal to share his immortality with him and that's how they both ended up in the sky."

"I'd do that," I say. "Totally."

"Yeah? Must be a twin thing," he says, misunderstanding.

*...I feel my face flush because I'd meant him, duh, I'd share my immortality with him. **I meant you**, I want to holler.*

sigh. NOAH!

you kick oscar's ass in the "romantic dude" contest.

♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥
♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥

come to my blog!

Christine Riccio says

LOVED THIS BOOK SO MUCH. IT MOVED ME SO MUCH IN SO MANY WAYS <3

Kai says

“Maybe a person is just made up of a lot of people. Maybe we’re accumulating these new selves all the time. Hauling them in as we make choices, good and bad, as we screw up, step up, lose our minds, find our minds, fall apart, fall in love, as we grieve, grow, retreat from the world, dive into the world, as we make things, as we break things.”

This novel started out weird and confusing and colourful. It took me a while to adjust to the style of writing and a few pages in I finally started to understand what was actually going on. It was still weird and colourful, but not confusing anymore.

I fell in love with the characters, all of them. I normally have difficulties picturing a book's characters, like really seeing them in front of me, but not this time. I could actually perfectly imagine all of them, head to toe, and it was amazing.

There are so many thoughts in my head but I can't really put them into words, especially not in English words so let me just say that this book was beautiful, in every way.

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