



We Awaken

Calista Lynne

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Victoria Dinham doesn't have much left to look forward to. Since her father died in a car accident, she lives only to fulfill her dream of being accepted into the Manhattan Dance Conservatory. But soon she finds another reason to look forward to dreams when she encounters an otherworldly girl named Ashlinn, who bears a message from Victoria's comatose brother. Ashlinn is tasked with conjuring pleasant dreams for humans, and through the course of their nightly meetings in Victoria's mind, the two become close. Ashlinn also helps Victoria understand asexuality and realize that she, too, is asexual.

But then Victoria needs Ashlinn's aid outside the realm of dreams, and Ashlinn assumes human form to help Victoria make it to her dance audition. They take the opportunity to explore New York City, their feelings for each other, and the nature of their shared asexuality. But like any dream, it's too good to last. Ashlinn must shrug off her human guise and resume her duties creating pleasant nighttime visions—or all of humanity will pay the price.

We Awaken Details

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Author : Calista Lynne

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From Reader Review We Awaken for online ebook

Tasha says

2.5 stars

I was really excited to read this book but sadly I wasn't a fan of the writing and the overall plot. Also found the romance to be a bit insta-lovey.

I did like that it touched on asexuality and explained certain aspects of it.

Olivia Chanel's Galaxy of Books says

Thank you so much Calista Lynne, the author of We Awaken, for my e-ARC of this book!

We Awaken is such an important book, this book shows us that interracial couples within the LGBTQIA community can thrive, survive and get the happy ending they deserve. This book is about two asexual girls and their journey together realizing who they are and how they can be together. **We Awaken is a reminder that once sexuality is yours alone, yours to claim, yours not to claim and no matter what, you are valid just as you are.**

“No woman in reality could ever possess such grace. That’s how I realized it had to be a dream. Her skin was barely lighter than the dark of night and a hood was pulled so far over her head it was impossible to make out whether she had any hair. The whites of her eyes stood out greatly in contrast to her skin, matching the intense purity of the lace parasol hanging over her right arm. Her clothing was iridescent and looked almost like oil as it reflected cloudy rainbows with her movements.”

I love We Awaken, this book is character driven and there is so much to love about it. We Awaken is about two asexual girl who tackle everyday problems as well as otherworldly problems involving the realm of dreams. However, Ashlinn helping Victoria in the real world can lead to a horrible fate for all of humanity.

What I like the most about We Awaken is how it explores asexuality. Though I can see why some might think this book is very informative I’d say that is not a bad thing. Sure if you google asexuality all of this information will appear, however, if you don’t know what asexuality is it is kind of hard to do this. We Awaken is a young adult book, it’s written for young people and teenagers. They might be confused, or unsure, just like Victoria is. They might not have an Ashlinn to tell them what being asexual means. **That is why this book is so important and powerful.** It will give teenagers who are finding themselves a place where they can see themselves and finally understand who they are. **Nobody else but you can decide who and what you are. There is incredible magic in that.**

“I draped myself over her shoulders as her arms snaked around my waist. It felt safe in her embrace, and she still smelled like summer nights. This was acceptance, not of her but of myself. Our foreheads were so close we were breathing the same air. Who needs kissing when

you can share oxygen?”

If you want to read something fluffy, romantic and light then *We Awaken* is the book for you. It has a perfect mix of fantasy and magic in the real world, with characters you will admire and moments so adorable you will never forget them. In a time where the A is still mistaken for Ally instead of Asexual by huge companies in the world, it's more important than ever we show the world books like *We Awaken*. Everyone needs to see that asexual people (as well as everyone else in the LGBTQIA community) can get the happy ending they deserve.

Initial thoughts:

This book is a book everyone needs in their life, *We Awaken* left me feeling enchanted and hopeful. *We Awaken* is a book I believe will give hope to so many people in the world, it will teach people to be whoever they want to be and the message it sends out, that happy endings are real and possible, is so incredibly important right now. Just two weeks ago we had a major American company believe the A in LGBTQIA stands for Ally instead of Asexual. However, this book has two on-page asexuals, and it's a smack in the face to everyone who has ever believed asexuality isn't as an important part of LGBTQIA as the rest of the letters. This is truly magical.

A more detailed review to come.

Tilly Booth says

The cover of this book is so, so beautiful and I'm happy to say that everything inside of this book is beautiful too.

If you're looking for a book to help your understanding of asexuality or would like to broaden your mind, you **NEED** to pick this book up. Calista Lynne writes this story in a great, easy way to help the reader understand asexuality and her writing is amazing.

It's the kind of book you can read in one sitting. The writing is easy and poetic at the same time making it a great, page-turning book that you'll never want to put down.

Although I liked the characters I didn't manage to get attached to any of them. The romance felt a little flat to me too. The book is small and I understand that there isn't a lot of pages to dedicate to building up the relationship between the two main characters, Ashlinn and Victoria but I found that some parts of this book had too much detail and others not enough. In this case, their relationship.

However, I did still thoroughly enjoy this book and I highly recommend it!

4 out of 5 stars!

Michelle Ellis says

My video review can be found here: <https://youtu.be/FONFTBGzGiw>

I was sent an arc to review from the author. I want to thank Calista Lynne for the wonderful opportunity to review her debut novel. All thoughts and opinions are my own.

The artistic prose Lynne paints with introduces us to a female sandwoman, Ashlinn, who shows us the beauty in dreams as well as the beauty life has offer. Our main protagonist, Victoria has recently experienced a traumatic life altering event. While working through that, preparing for college she also struggles with her sexual identity. Ashlinn explains that she identifies as asexual and has Victoria look up what that means. This technique seems like info dumping for the reader but at the same time it's important to understand this sexuality outside of the narrative as well. I felt it was very informative and now I understand more than I ever did when looking it up on my own.

This being the first book I've read with an asexual protagonist makes me realize how much more representation is needed in all genres. Some friends have recently identified as asexual and said that if they had resources like this when they were growing up they would have been able to understand themselves better.

This book reinforces the fact that everyone deserves a chance to be understood and everyone looks for love in their own ways, but that we are all deserving of the love we desire.

Calista Lynne's writing is breath taking and addictive. Each chapter and scene feels like viewing the next arrangement in an art show; They are all cohesive but most of all meaningful and thought provoking.

I enjoyed the fast paced plot line as well as several of the characters. Victoria, as a character wasn't my favorite because there were several decisions that she made that were really selfish but at the same time she was very relatable.

The dream sequences were beautiful and I want Ashlinn to visit and paint through my dreams.

This book reminded me of Scott Westerfeld's Afterworlds in the sense that the reader is diving into the dream world of the character and the F/f romance is swoon worthy. I loved the dream world and magic in this book. It was a really interesting concept.

I thought the education of asexuality, by an asexual character to another non identified asexual character was a great way to open up this dialogue and get the reader understanding that education on all sexualities is something that should be learned by all.

Claudie Arseneault says

This wasn't bad, but I'm kinda glad to be done with it. Victoria and Ashlinn are incredibly cute together, and it's great to see a protagonist go from feeling broken to being confident in her asexuality, but wow do I wish I did not have to go through so much ace antagonism to get a happy ending. This includes constant dismissal and hate from Victoria's best friend (it shifts into "i cannot possibly understand this weirdness but whatever if it makes you happy towards the very end), and another antagonist (tw for sexual assault in the spoiler tag)(view spoiler).

The result is that while the romance itself is ADORABLE (also!! interracial f/f!! so much cuddling and non-sexual intimacy!!) and Victoria's questioning is immensely relatable, reading the story itself is a constant

battering of anti-aceness and difficult scenes that leaves you never quite feeling safe. Not just from Victoria's interior narration, which I would find fair, but with the outside world constantly reaffirming everyone thinks aces are freaks, broken, and confused. Come prepared, and please warn your ace friends when you recommend this book so they know what they expect, and might enjoy it more.

Aimal (Bookshelves & Paperbacks) says

Originally posted on **Bookshelves & Paperbacks**.

I received this book for free in exchange for an honest review. Thank you to the author and the publisher for allowing me this opportunity to read it in advance.

Calista Lynne's *We Awaken* follows the story of Victoria Dinham, who is still very much struggling to deal with the aftermath of the accident that took the life of her father, and put her brother in a coma a year ago. Things get a little strange when Victoria is paid a visit in her dreams by Ashlinn, who claims to have a message from her comatose brother. Victoria finds herself drawn to this 'dream girl' and finds that their nightly meetings are what she looks forward to most. As the two girls grow close, Ashlinn helps Victoria realize that she is asexual, and gives her the much needed support and knowledge to deal with this revelation about her sexuality.

We Awaken exists in a literary world where asexuality is largely ignored; in this way, Calista Lynne has written an incredibly important novel about a community which is severely underrepresented in literature. I have very conflicting feelings about this novel, but I'm sure of one thing: if you are not aware of what asexuality is, and want to know more, this novel is an accurate while entertaining means to get this information. In some places, it almost read like an Asexuality 101 textbook, and while the integration felt a little clunky in the larger context of the story, it did the job. I now feel like I have a tentative grasp on the basics of asexuality, and can maybe even explain it to someone who is completely unfamiliar.

I used the word 'textbook' above, but I have to point out that unlike textbooks, *We Awaken* is beautifully written. Lynne's writing is the perfect midpoint between being too simplistic and too flowery- the result is a novel that is both fast-paced, entertaining and can offer beautiful language as well.

But alas, the writing technique and the subject matter are perhaps the only things that worked. Before going into this novel, I was under the impression that Victoria's asexuality would seamlessly integrate into a novel about loss, family and love. But in truth, her asexuality is largely at the forefront, which in itself is not a negative at all. What *is* a negative is that there was so much going on- her father's death and her brother's coma was largely brushed aside when Ashlinn came into the picture, so much so that when the topic of them was brought up here and there, I questioned its genuineness. *We Awaken* is an amalgamation of contemporary and paranormal; half reads like one genre, half reads like the other. Again, I did not think the two complemented each other. While in the paranormal areas, the issues of the contemporary world were largely forgotten, and vice versa. Sometimes I felt as if I was reading two different books instead of one cohesive, well-balanced story.

Which brings me to the topic of pacing. Now, *We Awaken* is a very short novel; Goodreads tells me that the page count is 180 pages. But 180 pages is still a good number to tell a story with all the details that matter.

Lynne chose to focus on the scenes that felt rather unimportant considering all that was going on in Victoria's life. These scenes could have been eliminated to make way for more heartfelt scenes between Ashlinn and Victoria- more build-up because I felt that their romance was rushed and very insta-lovey. More time could have been spent on Victoria dealing with her family. And more time could be spent on an issue dealing with mental illness that was tossed aside as a plot point- I cannot say more for the risk of spoilers.

But despite my problems with the storytelling aspect of the novel, I do think that this is a book worthy of being read, if not only for the subject matter it deals with. It was perfectly enjoyable while also giving its readers some much needed truths, so I would still recommend it to readers, especially those who look further than entertainment, and look to learn something concrete from what they read.

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Efflorescence says

Thanks to Netgalley and Harmony Ink Press for providing the ARC in exchange for an honest review.

It is really hard for me to write a proper review for this book.

First of all, I have to admit that I wanted to read this book especially because of its gorgeous cover, like many other people here. But the description also sounded very interesting and since I really love dreaming and also to read about the state of dreaming I thought this book would be a great idea.

The good things about it were not only the cover, but also the beautiful language. Sometimes it was even kind of philosophical and truly evocative. It was easy to picture the surroundings and you could relate to the feelings of the characters, as well. Therefore it was a really enjoyable read.

But I had a problem with the plot line. I always had the feeling that there is something missing and thus the story seemed incomplete. For example, there was a character called Semira, who was responsible for people having nightmares. And it looked like she was an important person of the story, but apparently she just happened to be there and the reader got no background information or anything else about her.

Another thing that bothered me was the weak world-building. I thought it was a pretty great idea to write about a relationship between a normal human being and a fantasy figure who's job it is to create positive dreams, but I never understood how this person was able to jump so easily between the two worlds, the real one and the dream world. There were so many unanswered questions and I was really disappointed not to learn anything else at the end.

There is one little thing left which I would like to address. Of course, this book handles the topic asexuality and how to deal with it very well, but the story was not only about asexuality but also about dreams. I don't know if the author didn't inform herself well enough about dreaming in general or if she did this on purpose, but the way dreams were portrayed in the book was a bit weird.

Based on the story of this book it would be possible for everyone to remember every dream and also to control it. Thus every dream in this book seemed to be a lucid dream and this is not only very unlikely but I found it also a little sad, because otherwise the plot wouldn't have been so fast paced and the book wouldn't

have been so short. I am aware of the fact that this was a work of fiction and also fantasy, but it is just something to consider if the author decides to write a sequel to this story.

Yvonne (It's All About Books) says

[

I was immediately intrigued when I first saw the cover and read the blurb, so when I was able to get a review copy at Netgalley I decided to read **We Awaken** straight away. This novel by **Calista Lynne** has the promise of a

Pallavi Sareen says

First of all, just look at that beautiful cover and how gorgeous it would look just sitting on your shelf! I got an e-ARC from the author in exchange for an honest review and when I heard that this book was a fantasy with asexual characters and something about the dream world, I couldn't resist reading it right away. And it wasn't that long so didn't take me much time either. Now as to what I think about this book, my thoughts are conflicted. So I'm just going to lay it all out for you.

Positive points :

I like the main character Victoria and how she's written, a little confused and self-conscious. She isn't that open or fun loving but considering her father died and brother is in a coma, it's acceptable. Also, she's a ballerina and trying to discover her sexuality.

I think I've never read a book about asexuals, I didn't even know that was a thing before. It's a unique concept that adds to the charm of the book.

Ellie is my absolute fav. She's outgoing, kinda crazy best friend who speaks her mind. And so what if she didn't understand asexuality at first, I didn't either!

Negative points :

Unanswered questions and not so well built world. The dreamworld and the concept of having two people responsible for making dreams and nightmares seems fine. But there are too many missing pieces that weren't explained. Like how can Ashlin spend time in Victoria's dream and still be creating dreams for others. How is she at so many places at the same time? I mean the answer's obvious, magic. But I hate how that topic didn't even come up in the book. And why did she pick Victoria out of all the people to be with. Victoria's reasons for being with Ashlin seem understandable but we don't know anything about why Ashlin's doing all this.

Why the hell isn't there more to this book? It seems more like a contemporary than a fantasy novel because of such a weak world-building. And if this book was really a contemporary novel (just make Ashlin a real person and remove the dreamworld) it would have been so amazing. A contemporary book about an asexual Ballerina discovering love. Now doesn't that sound perfect! But that just ain't so.

More things to consider :

I think this book could become so much more if it's made into a longer book. I mean it's a fantasy book, they're meant to be long because details and premise and back stories. I want to know more about Semira. And it would have been great to have more parts about Reeves and Victoria together as kids, also, Victoria and her father. Her relationship with her mother could've been better explored. There's just so much potential with this story that it feels incomplete somehow.

But that's just me. Hey, some people loved this book. I've seen some 5 star reviews. Maybe I just have high expectations now. But I did like the book, even with all its flaws.

Cat (cat-thecatladylady) says

I was interested in this book because of the gorgeous cover but, mostly, because it focus on something that's not really portrayed or even talked about in any media: asexuality.

I read this book very quickly, which means I was definitely entertained. the writing is beautiful and overall, this novel is a really nice read. unfortunately, although there were many good points/moments in this book, I can't say I really cared for the plot. I feel like it needed a few more pages to really have some depth. some scenes could be added and little plot points would seem much more realistic. everything, the romance, the protagonist career interests and her family problems, seemed rushed and I don't really see the point for that.

even so, this is a great first book and I can see a lot of potential in it. I would also definitely recommend it to anyone interested in learning about asexuality. there's a lot of good and valuable info about it!

full review here: <https://catshelf.wordpress.com/2016/0...>

CW (The Quiet Pond) ? says

As someone who falls under the ace spectrum, I was really looking forward to reading this book. Unfortunately, I was left disappointed.

- Great asexual representation and explicitly explains what asexuality is through the lens of the protagonist (who is asexual).
 - Beautiful, dreamlike writing befitting of the stories tone and themes.
 - Despite its very short length, the overarching story was very, very lacking and boring. It was difficult to feel invested in the story and the characters.
 - My advice: read for the representation or to understand asexuality better, but don't expect a riveting story.
-

K. says

Things I loved about this book:

- The main character and the main character's love interest are both asexual
- The cover
- There are excellent explanations of asexuality without it feeling like an infodump
- The dream elements of the story were fascinating

Things I was confused about with this book:

- How old Victoria's brother was supposed to be. I mean, he's her YOUNGER brother, so he's 17 at the oldest. And a lot of the time, it read like he was meant to be 14-16. But at other times, it seemed like he was 7 or 8?? So basically, any time he was discussed, I was trying to work out how old he was and failing constantly.
- Why there were so many random side plots. Like...why was there the whole ballet audition side plot when we never find out the outcome? Why was there the going-with-Ellie-to-get-a-tattoo side plot? Why was there the go-to-Ellie's-for-a-sleepover side plot? Considering the book is less than 180 pages, all of these felt like they distracted from the main story and made it feel slightly undeveloped.
- Seriously, why the hell was this so short?! It could easily have been doubled in length and the dreaming stuff, the romance, the friendships, the comatose brother, and the ballet side of things could all have been fleshed out in much more depth.

Things I wasn't really a fan of:

- The romance. Don't get me wrong, I *LOVE* that it's a F/F relationship between two asexual characters. I love that there's no pressure to take things further, that Ashlinn wants Victoria to find out what she likes and what she doesn't like in her own time. BUT. The book was so short that it felt very much like instalove. And Victoria goes from "Oh shit, I guess I'm asexual?" to "Ew, kissing is gross" to "We should shower together so I can wash your naked body" in the space of about 10-20 pages and...it felt too fast.
- Ellie. Yes, her reaction to Victoria's asexuality is realistic. But I'm not entirely convinced that any teenage girl would go "Oh, my best friend has a girlfriend now? COOL, I CAN TELL THE STORY ABOUT THIS GUY I SLEPT WITH WHO HAD WEIRD KINKS INVOLVING KNIVES!" Um. Nooooo. Keep that shit to yourself, girl. Especially when you're telling the story to two people who've LITERALLY JUST TOLD YOU THEY'RE ASEXUAL.

So yeah. I *loved* the diversity. I really enjoyed the fantasy elements to the story. And I liked the writing. But I suspect I would have enjoyed it MUCH more if it had been a 300+ page book rather than a 173 page book.

Danielle says

I received a free digital copy of this book through NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

Read the full review at Belle's Book Nook!

In the world of YA literature, there are increasing amounts of diversity taking place all the time, but there is still one identity that remains severely lacking in young adult literature, and that is asexuality. You'd be hard-pressed to find a book that features an asexual character, let alone one where asexuality is actually a major part of the plot and is properly discussed. For someone like myself who is asexual, it can be incredibly frustrating to not be able to find a book where you feel truly represented. That's why, when I heard about *We Awaken* by Calista Lynn, I knew I had to read it. A YA fantasy with a same-sex asexual relationship? *Yes!*

As far as books about asexuality go, I have to say that *We Awaken* does a great job of properly delving into the identity of asexuality and what that means while also tackling many common misconceptions, like being able to show other forms of affection and intimacy in an asexual relationship, even in the absence of actually having sex. With Ashlinn and Victoria's relationship, the novel also confronts the topic of being both asexual

and in a same-sex relationship. At one point in the story, Victoria struggles with understanding that she can still be a lesbian even though she is also asexual. For myself personally, I also felt like I could identify a lot with Victoria as she began reflecting on her own asexuality, and I felt many of my own thoughts and feelings mirrored in her words: "*How does one go about telling her friend that she didn't seem to have grown out of the kissing-is-icky phase we spent out whole youth in?*"

Unfortunately, while this novel does an excellent job of presenting asexuality, I found it to be overall pretty bland. The problem, mainly is that the prose of this novel is so overwhelmingly flowery—and at times so are the characters—that you have a hard time truly connecting with either. While there are moments full beautiful descriptions, at the same time this can be too much and the writing doesn't seem to fit with the time period. It's contemporary. So when you have a story that's meant to take place in modern day, yet the characters don't at all speak like it and the writing is told in this incredibly elegant, honeyed way, then saying words like "dear," "upon," and "such," and throwing out phrases like, "Oh you must," and, "Elation is a troublesome thing"... it just doesn't fit. You can't really visualize this teenage protagonist, because that's not how teenagers today speak. Not to mention Victoria calls her mom "Mother," which is pretty old-fashioned. So in this way, a lot of the time the writing and characters just seemed rather flat and artificial rather than coming across as truly genuine, palatable people. As a side note, I also just found it a bit odd that a dream creator who has existed for so many years is called Ashlinn. To me, this name is too modern and teenage-y. I would think a more classic and traditional name would be more fitting, but maybe that's just me.

I approached *We Awaken* with such promise and hope for an ace-representation novel that I would fall in love with. While it was a flop for me and while I would've preferred the novel to be written in a more contemporary style, I still have to respect it and the author herself for finally giving asexuality a place within YA literature and giving it the attention it deserves. For anyone who is asexual or interested in learning more about asexuality, this book will serve as a good introduction. I only hope that *We Awaken* will pave the way for more asexuality novels to come.

Leah says

This book is a beautiful exploration of sexuality -- realizing you may not identify how you thought, finding a new descriptor of your feelings, coming to terms with how it may make you think you're a freak or there's something wrong with you, and coming out. It's an important story for people of all ages who may be questioning their sexuality, and particularly so as it's one of the few books I've seen/read with not one, but two, asexual main characters. I'm thankful this book exists in the world, and I hope other queer kids find it and it helps them.

Natasha says

SapphicAthon: Ace spec mc

2.5/5

Ugh, I really wanted to like this but I found it kind of boring, the world building subpar, and I hate the mc's best friend.

