



The Last Time I Checked, I Was Still Here

Lark Griffing

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“Hey, Skank”

Amy’s day was starting off just great. Ronnie was already giving her grief, she’d had an embarrassing wardrobe malfunction, and it was only first period. Sitting in class fuming, while the word skank filled her head, Amy made a choice. From now on, things were going to be different. Amy was done — done with it all, her school, her endlessly grieving dad, and the always annoying Ronnie and her bevy of friends.

Amy’s decision to take off may not have been her finest moment, but she had to save her sanity. Her grief-stricken father wasn’t going to help in that department. Escaping to her childhood sanctuary was Amy’s only hope to save herself and heal.

Irresistibly engaging, *The Last Time I Checked, I Was Still Here*, is a journey of heartbreak, hope, and adventure that will leave you wanting more.

The Last Time I Checked, I Was Still Here Details

Date : Published April 1st 2017 by Wind Lark Publishing

ISBN : 9780998871912

Author : Lark Griffing

Format : Paperback 201 pages

Genre : Fiction, Young Adult



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From Reader Review The Last Time I Checked, I Was Still Here for online ebook

Crystal Wilke says

The Last Time I Checked, I Was Still Here is a good debut novel for Lark. The book is very well detailed. Lark knew what she was talking about. The story was interesting and I didn't want it to end. This book is different from other books, I would say its for YA or even Teens. There are some teachable moments throughout the book. I would like to see Amy and Dan's relationship.

I voluntarily reviewed an ARC for this book.

Dean Bell says

Read this book from cover to cover in one sitting. The plot was well thought out and developed. The characters were accessible and it was easy to develop an emotional bond with them. The last few chapters had me turning pages as fast as I could, breathing quicker and even crying at points. Loved the theme and beautifully-described settings; and best of all the story really stirred a "wanderlust" I haven't felt since I was much closer to Dan and Amy's age. A great read for any age!

Deanna (A Novel Glimpse) says

Original review: A Novel Glimpse

Note: I received this book from the author in exchange for an unbiased review.

3.5 Stars

The Last Time I Checked, I Was Still Here is Lark Griffing's début novel. It's a young adult coming of age journey. Amy, harassed by classmates and emotionally abandoned by her father, sets out to her maternal grandmother's house. Her grandmother's house was her happy place growing up, and Amy hopes spending time there will help her find what she needs.

The majority of The Last Time I Checked, I Was Still Here was written in Amy's perspective. She was a young woman struggling with the loss of her mother, being constantly uprooted to new towns by a grieving father, and finding herself under constant ridicule by the mean girls of her newest school. Amy was unhappy, and she sought out her happy place to find solace. What she found at her grandmother's house was a link to her mother, and a way to discover more about herself. I admired her strength and willingness to try something new, liking hiking.

Smaller sections of the book were told in Dan's perspective. He was a young man who was trying to make decisions for the next phase of his life. Dan was very into hiking, and much of his point of view were his hiking journeys with his friend. I have to admit that Dan's chapters threw me off at first. They were linked loosely to some of Amy's through the sport of hiking, but it wasn't until almost the very end that Amy and Dan's connection became apparent.

That leads into my biggest issue with this book. The majority of the book passed by at a very slow pace. There was way too much set up for me. Nothing very exciting happened until almost 80% into the book. There were tons of details about Amy learning about hiking, but not a whole lot of action. I wasn't really invested in the story until that 80% mark. And then, the wrap up at the end flew by too quickly for me. I think the story would have worked better for me had the big event happened toward the beginning or middle of the book, and had more time spent on the connections between the characters after. I felt like I missed a bunch of healing and friendships developing at the end.

The Last Time I Checked, I Was Still Here was a strong début novel. I found the writing to be good, and the third person narration flowed well. It's a book anyone interested in hiking or adventures in the great outdoors would appreciate.

Shari Ring Wolf says

Mostly good story

I shelved this book for awhile because I found something more suited to my taste to read. Despite my advanced age I generally enjoy YA fiction. In this book, the teenage characters seemed sort of "black and white". The kids in the main characters life at the beginning of the book were vicious and selfish for no apparent reason. Very one dimensional. The writing was just a little too simple: I will go there. I am right behind you. See Jane run. Go Spot go. Then our girl leaves her home and goes to stay with her grandmother. The kids there are milk and cookies wholesome and oh so nice. Again, one dimensional. I almost stopped reading the book for good. I finished because the author seems to have a real life grip on the sport of hiking and wilderness safety, and she showcased Boy Scouts as the remarkable program it is--not just cub scouts for very young boys. I liked the plot and the story. The way the story was written seemed simplistic to me although the issues and emotions presented are anything but simplistic or unimportant. I noticed this is a debut novel. With more writing experience I think the author will improve writing style and character development. She nailed the plot and her research and knowledge about her subjects are amazing.

Gregg says

I am always careful about buying books for young readers. I wanted to make sure that the book did not glorify/glamorize that special drama that teens and tweens latch on to: "I'm on the verge because nobody cares". So for 3 bucks I downloaded and pre-read the book.

I don't have much to compare the book to that doesn't date me back to the Hardy Boys but I felt like everybody in the book were good enough characters that if a kid wanted to emulate one of them that would be great. The story struck me as very real and it was very easy for me to relate to the inner dialogue of the characters which the author carefully paints with very simple language. I am sending the paperback to my Sophomore niece and am curious to see her Amazon review. I gave it 5 stars because it was pleasant to read straightforward and I really never knew what was going to happen next.

I'm not sure a young person would notice this but I think the author paced the story in a different than normal way. I think it was done to leave the reader with a certain taste in their mouth, a pleasant and vivid snapshot of a person's feelings that I am still savoring.

Lori Hoffman says

This is a great book not the usual book I read. Amy mother died when she was seven now in high school she went to stay with her Nana to find herself but she found out about her mother instead got involved with hiking then was attacked by a bear and almost died.

Alanna says

I received this ebook as part of a Book Club review group.

Well. I loved this! I often pick up a young adult book as I find them a nice, easy read to end a busy day or week. This debut novel by Lark Griffing however, stirred up some emotions as well. The story is different to those YA storylines we often see these days, not even a touch of romantic storyline in there. The storyline gave me such a feeling of wanderlust, and although 10+ years older than the characters, I felt a sense of relatability and connection with each of them. A great read for all ages.

Jack Massa says

Beautifully written coming of age story. Strong characters of different age groups plus lots of interesting facts and details about camping and wilderness hiking. A pair of interesting protagonists who overcome their fears and inner demons to find self-acceptance and self-reliance.

Excellent first novel by a gifted writer.

FeeMac says

This book was an unexpected treat to my imagination. Beautifully written novel. Lots of drama, discovery, thrills and suspense. Had me hooked right from the start and it didn't let go even after I'd turned the last page. Brilliant!!

Marsha says

This is Lark Griffing's debut novel and while not a normal read for me, once it got going a bit I really enjoyed it.

Amy and Dan don't know each other, but are both fighting their own painful memories. Dan loves camping and hiking and Amy has a new found love. They meet under terrible circumstances. I don't want to give anything away, but the book is a pretty good read.

Chrissy says

I enjoyed this story, but it was not what I was expecting. The pace was relatively slow but steady enough to keep me interested. However, I felt like I was waiting for the story to really begin the whole time I was reading. I would expect this book to be more of a prequel to how Dan and Amy eventually become a couple, which is only insinuated in the epilogue. I feel like this book was more about healing, and I didn't expect that when I started it; not that it's a bad thing, because it was actually a really good story. Just more like a slow moving stream, than a rushing river. Each of the characters, including several of the secondary characters, have to accept and learn to move on from a tragic event in their lives. Unfortunately, it takes another tragedy to not only help them move on, but to bring them together. I've been back and forth about my rating on this book. I would have certainly given it 4 stars, but I couldn't due to the lack of excitement throughout most of the story. It was good and interesting, but it didn't grip my emotions or make me anxious for answers. Except for one small scene towards the end of the book.

J.M. Davis says

This is a novel centered around the self-discovery of two teens whose lives intertwine at the most unlikely (but it works so well!) section of the book. I knew their paths would cross, but being a YA, I had a suspicion a romance would soon kindle. The author threw me for a loop, and I was pleasantly surprised to see the two characters develop into their own, primarily ON their own, before ever meeting. I enjoyed the explanation of the trails and gear, as it was believable and apparent the author knows a thing or two about hiking. There was humor mixed in, which gave some scenes the lightness it needed, especially since the main characters' backstories were somber.

Example:

"I know all about her," said Scooter. Amy looked at him in surprise. He winked at her and continued. Stevie was staring raptly at him. "Amy comes from Sheboygan, Wisconsin where her family owned a pickle factory. Amy was caught selling the secret recipe to the Vlastic people. All hell broke loose, and they sent her away to Berlin, where she couldn't do any more harm to the family business."

Funny stuff! :)

I enjoyed this debut novel from Lark Griffing, and if you're looking for "not another typical YA" novel, I think you will too!

Michelle Ella says

I absolutely loved this book! The writing flowed and I was completely caught up in their two stories and wondering how they were going to intertwine. I would completely recommend this story and look forward to future stories by this author!

Shannon Davison says

I enjoyed reading this. Good story for all ages. Amy sets out on an adventure to find herself. I voluntarily reviewed a copy via Blind Date with a Book Review Group.

Heidi Brown says

I really like the way Lark Griffing writes. This story is for middle school age to adult. Everyone will get a little something out of this story. How to handle grief when losing someone. Everyone handles grief differently and this story deal with it. I also like the support of the characters in the story and how it goes between two stories in all. I recommend that my family and friends read this book. Even the younger generation of my family should give this book a read.
