



If This Is Home

Kristine Scarrow

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When her mom is diagnosed with terminal cancer, Jayce searches for her estranged father, hoping he can fix everything.

Jayce Loewen has had to take on a lot of responsibility over the years. Her single mom works two jobs and long hours, leaving Jayce in charge of her four-year-old sister most of the time. When her mom is diagnosed with cancer, Jayce decides to track down her long-absent father in the hope that he will be able to make everything okay again.

Looking for her dad was one thing, but when she actually finds him, Jayce is in for a real shock. When everything in her life seems to be going wrong, Jayce has to figure out who her family really is, and how to live with the possibility of losing the person she loves most.

If This Is Home Details

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Author : Kristine Scarrow

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From Reader Review If This Is Home for online ebook

Sally says

I thought this was going to be like Thunderwith or something, with Jayce going off to live with her absent father, but not so. Very much enjoyed and was intrigued by the story.

PinkAmy loves books, cats and naps says

GRADE: B-

Jayce's mother is dying, leaving the teenager to care for her little sister. She hasn't seen her rock star father in four years, he doesn't even know about little Joelle. On her mother's request, Jayce needs to track down her father, whether she wants to or not.

IF THIS IS HOME started off slowly but I quickly became engaged in Jayce and her unfortunate situation. Kristine Scarrow gave her main character an compelling voice. Jayce had flaws, she was too stubborn and didn't ask for help when she should.

Scarrow's writing kept me interested and I finished the story in one sitting. My biggest criticism is that the story didn't feel fresh. DON'T YOU DARE READ THIS, MRS. DUNFREY by Margaret Peterson Haddix is nearly the same story.

IF THIS IS HOME, while a compelling, worthwhile read, isn't the type of story I'll reread. I probably won't remember the plot or characters after I read a few other books.

Hristina says

Copy received via NetGalley in exchange for a fair review

Actual rating: 3.5

This seemed to me like an awesome and touching story after I read the summary. And it is. But it didn't wow me as much as I expected it to.

It's an okay read that quite realistically depicts the situation, but I wished that there was more work put into the characters. The main one was awesome, and I liked the way she acted towards what was going on, but it still wasn't as amazing as I imagined it. It wasn't nearly as memorable as I thought it would be.

Louise says

For a 16 year old, Jayce has a lot in her hands especially now that her mother is diagnosed with cancer leaving her with her 4 year old sister and a father that she hasn't seen since she was very young. This is a

book about finding the truth and coming in terms with it, being strong and resilient during though times, and letting go.

Jayce is truly an admirable character, she is also a well-written one. She acted very realistically towards the circumstances. She is a strong and resilient girl. I loved how important her family was in her life, and that it was the center of the story.

I found the plot predictable, I kind of guessed some of the whats and whys. Still, the family aspect is so commendable. And I also liked how there was no romance here, there was certainly love but not the romantic kind. It was the love that was so much more important, the one that will help you get through tough times in your life.

The plot and storyline was okay, but I wasn't blown away by it. I lacked connection with the story, it was like watching something so intently but not feeling it. I started reading this prepared for a good cry, but the tears never came which was a surprise because I really cry so easily. Maybe, it had something to do with a writing style because it was kind and just plain and straightforward writing.

This is a very realistic book, it's heartbreakingly but in a hopeful way. It was such a quick read that I finished it in one sitting. It's heartwarming but forgettable. Overall, I definitely recommend this book to anyone who's looking for a sad but hopeful quick read.

Thank you so much Netgalley and the publisher for giving me an eARC of this book.

MORE REVIEWS AND OTHER STUFF ON MY BLOG: <https://geniereads.wordpress.com/>

A touching quick read.

I loved how this was a family-centered novel. It's a very refreshing read considering that it didn't really had any romance to it. There was love, but not the romantic kind. It was so something more important, the kind of love that you'll find in your family and close friends. The novel is heartbreakingly but hopeful in a realistic way. The thing that I didn't like was the writing style, it lacked depth and emotion for my taste, that's the why the novel didn't completely move me. From the synopsis I kind of prepared myself for tears but they never came.

These are only my initial thoughts and they're pretty much scattered around. A full and much coherent review soon!

Michelle (FabBookReviews) says

3.5 stars

Canadian author Kristine Scarrow's sophomore young adult novel, *If This Is Home*, is a contemporary story covering everything from terminal illness, complex teen friendships, sibling love and difficult family history. Taking place in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Scarrow's compact novel embraces much of what I personally

love about Canadian YA: the overwhelmingly fluid, uncluttered, quiet yet potent writing; rooted protagonists and secondary characters that read as genuine and free of veneer; and the presentation of unidealized concepts of teenagers and 'the teenage years'.

In *If This Is Home*, we follow the first-person narrative of sixteen year old Jayce Loewen- known as J.J.- as she and her four year-old sister Joelle deal with beyond devastating news: their mother is sick with lung cancer. A tight-knit family of three, with a long-absent father and long-estranged grandparents, J.J.'s mom has been her *everything*. When a doctor gently states an unspeakable prognosis, J.J. is overwhelmed but determined that she and Joelle stay strong and stay together. In the midst of high school chaos with her less-than-considerate best friend, and worried about what might happen if they lose the only parent they've ever known and had, J.J. goes in search of her father. With the help of a boy she meets in detention, a teen named Kurt, J.J.'s life begins a complicated roller coaster of major revelations and disappointments.

In a plot move I really appreciate, Scarrow grows the relationship between J.J. and Kurt as platonic and heartfelt. Perhaps due to the more serious nature of the crux of the story- that of J.J.'s intense love and protectiveness for her sister and mom and the threat of it being torn apart- Scarrow decided to keep that story element more neutral. Arguably a more unconventional route to take in a teen novel, yet one that works so well here with the direction the story takes. Scarrow also writes and develops the relationship between J.J. and her mom and sister, and- later- another family member very well. I would have appreciated more, however, by way of introduction and background to J.J. herself, Kurt (I feel he was introduced and then suddenly so involved with the family), and more about the Loewen family history. Certain aspects of the story came across as rushed or a little surprising, or in need of elucidation: as a whole, *If This Is Home* is absolutely moving and interesting, but I feel as though more detail would have been of benefit to add even further richness and depth to the story.

Overall, *If This Is Home* is a moving read, deftly written, propelled by a solid, well-written protagonist. As noted above, I would have liked more exposition about Kurt, as well as background exploration into J.J.'s mom and grandmother to add more foundation to the story, but in all, I truly enjoyed this read. Readers who enjoy contemporary Canadian YA lit, or readers who enjoy authors such as Susin Nielsen, Robin Stevenson or Sarah N. Harvey (all write so beautifully on family and serious subject matters), might especially appreciate this lovely book. Scarrow has published one YA title prior to *If This Is Home* called Throwaway Girl; it is one title I've seen in local bookshops and am now inspired to pick up.

I received a copy of this title courtesy of Dundurn Press in exchange for an honest review. All opinions and comments are my own.

Kayla (Kayla's Book Nook) says

I felt as if I was really able to find home in *If This Is Home*. This book was absolutely everything I wanted it to be, and more!

What attracted me into requesting this was the cover, as well as the intriguing synopsis. I love me some books centring around families, as they are a great break from the romance reads, and this was definitely the book I was searching for. :)

For a quick summary, *If This Is Home* revolves around 16-year old Jayce, who lives at home with her mom

and younger sister. Her dad left them when Jayce was very young and has no contact with them, so when her mom gets sick with terminal lung cancer, with the help of a friend, Jayce decides to go on a hunt for her father, and when she finds him, she isn't too happy with what she sees. Will she be able to pull through a life without her mom, or will she find someone that will happily take care of her and her sister?

The characters of this book were very in-depth and just amazing, and I loved the protagonist we had in Jayce. I felt so sorry for her as she went through everything! Anyway, despite all that, she was very strong and responsible, and instead of breaking down into pieces when she found out about her mom's illness, she instead toughened up and did everything she could to prepare things for afterwards. She was also a great sister and friend, and to be completely honest, I loved following her footsteps. ;)

Kurt was also a sweet, loyal guy, and I really enjoyed that this book wasn't really about the romance between the two, but about the friendship. Jayce and Kurt were fabulous as friends, but I think they would be great as a couple, too! <3

The one thing that I didn't necessarily love about this book was the ending. I know, I'm so picky when it comes to these! I feel like there were still some loose ends to be tied, and that it came to quite an abrupt stop. Like, hello, I still have questions! I am in need to see a sequel or an epilogue to this awesome story.

All in all, *If This Is Home* was a fantastic, coming-of-age story, and it gave me so many FEELS. Anyone looking for a short but sweet read about family and friendship with amazing characters MUST pick this one up, starting on January 28th! ;)

Jamie Ryan says

If This is Home by Kristine Scarrow was really a great read. Heartfelt and emotional, it was well worth it!

16 year old Jayce lives at home with her mother and younger sister. Her father left them years ago when Jayce was quite young, and has not made contact with anyone in the family since then. When Jayce's mother is diagnosed with terminal cancer, she decides to try to find her father... but it might be a case of be careful what you wish for, because when she does find him, he's not exactly what she had been hoping for.

I thought the characters were really well written, and the story flowed really well. This was definitely one that is full of emotion. I really enjoyed it!

I reviewed this book after receiving an ARC from NetGalley

Nadine says

If This is Home is a beautiful story about family, forgiveness, and personal strength in times of hardship.

If This is Home follows a young girl, Jayce, taking on more responsibilities than she should because of her ailing mother and absentee father. The reader follows Jayce as she tries to come to terms with potentially losing her only parent, discovering the truth about her parents' past, and learning to forgive those who may not deserve it.

What I liked most about this novel was the writing style. It isn't overly poetic or dense. It's laid back and relishes in its understanding of the type of novel it is, so I was able to connect with the main character immediately.

I also really enjoyed the lack of romance. In similar novels, authors mistakenly always add a romance plot line for the main character. This takes away from the main point of a story about family and healing. Scarrow excluded a romance by exchanging it for a platonic friendship. This made the story immensely enjoyable and is easily one of the main reasons I rated the novel four stars.

The only issue I had with the novel is the slightly unrealistic ending. There's a part at the end that made me roll my eyes, but it was the only logical conclusion for that plot line. I think Scarrow wrote herself into a corner and took the only way out despite its unrealistic nature.

Overall, If This is Home is a beautiful story about healing and forgiveness. I would recommend it to anyone looking for a young adult contemporary that deals with tougher subjects without a ridiculous romance thrown in.

**I received this in exchange for an honest review.

Nicole Perry says

Probably more of a 3.5. I thought that the author did a good job of bringing attention to some of the heavy issues that some teenagers are dealing with. It is important to remember that we often do not know what is happening in the lives of others. It is nice that even though the issues are mature, the language used is still extremely clean.

Λ?να Θωμ?ρεη says

If today someone saw a blonde girl, on public transport to sniffle and sucking the nose, stop wonder, it was me.

This book was very sad and unfair.

There is Jayce who must be strong to deal the situation of her mother.

There is Kirt a new friend that makes her life a little better.

There is a dad who he never be around.

There is a little sister who she needs attention and love.

There is a grandmother who's not so good mother

and there is a mother that struggle to survive

Just as I said... This is a sad sad story....

3.5 stars !!!

Amy says

Grab some tissues, faithful readers. This YA tale from Kristine Scarrow will give you All The Feels.

At sixteen, Jayce is accustomed to being self-reliant. Her mother works a myriad of jobs to support Jayce and younger sister Joelle, making Jayce a sort of de facto mother to her four-year-old sister. When her mother gets cancer, though, an already stressful life becomes fraught with greater concerns.

Jayce decides it's time to find her wayward musician father, but she winds up finding all sorts of family intrigue. She also finds a new best friend and, perhaps, more to a sort of former best friend. Even more importantly, she finds the strength to trust and to give others a chance to let her trust.

This is a quick, if emotionally fraught, book. I think its brevity causes the biggest problem with it: there are plot holes, and some of the ends are tied up too quickly and too neatly. It's almost as if Kristine Scarrow exhausted herself emotionally and had to just end the story.

Teenage readers, though, will enjoy the book, perhaps recognizing their own friendships in those that Jayce has. They may even recognize the flaws and weaknesses of their parents.

Review copy provided by the publisher in exchange for an unbiased review.

Caron says

This review can also be found on my blog at: <https://diminishingthoughts.wordpress...>

I received this book from the publisher on NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

"True courage is looking in the face of adversity and deciding that you'll stand firm."

The synopsis of this book is extremely detailed and basically gives us the whole idea of what goes on in *If This Is Home*. Jayce looks after her sister Ellie everyday and most of the time it's as if their mom isn't around because she may not be physically absent but she definitely isn't there. At first this bothered me because why was her mom so tired all the time? Why wasn't she doing anything to get better because it's not Jayce's job as a sixteen year old to be taking care of the family if a parent is around.

As the story wound on I started feeling sorry for their family because clearly they'd been through some tough times. It wasn't like they had anyone close to them that they could call to help out so naturally when Jayce's mom was diagnosed with cancer, she'd go search for her dad thinking that family was family, whether you wanted them or not.

I went through this book so fast that I actually had to sit down for a moment and think to remember what I'd read. There's nothing forgettable about this book but the pages were flying by and it was like a song playing that you really enjoy but you realise you never heard any of the lyrics so you have to listen to it again.

I loved most of the characters in this book. Jayce thought and acted a lot older than a sixteen year old but I think since she was practically pushed into parenthood, raising her sister and taking care of her mom, she had think more responsibly. There were one or two characters who I felt were just fillers but they didn't play too big a part so I didn't mind it.

This was quite a heartbreak story but I think the message here was about how the ones who you think would accept you without thought could easily be the ones who'd cast you out. And the ones who you want no business with are the ones who'd fight for you to make things right.

I'm glad I decided to request this book. I'd definitely recommend this story and look forward to reading more by this author.

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✗Tabby✗ says

Received from: Dundurn

Received Via: NetGalley.com

THE REVIEW

Why this book?

it seemed like a book for me

What I thought

Jayce must search for her father after her mother is diagnosed with cancer. I wasn't blown away by this book. It had its moments sure, but it's not something i'll read again. The characters also didn't really stick out to me. I could read characters just like them in a hundreds of books. With that said It did has a few surprising twist and turns. I also found myself enjoying it for what it was a nice simple book.

Giselle says

An unsolicited Advance Reader Copy was provided by Dundern Press for review. Quotes pulled from the ARC may be incorrect and may be subject to change

What happens when the most stable person in your life has a terminal illness? What happens then? Fifteen year old Jayce had to learn how to let people in and to stop trying to care for everybody, and let someone else take care of her. I like how realistic her friendship with her female best friend was. I also liked seeing Canadian cities being named and the proper spelling of certain words lol

This was a quick but emotional read. I really enjoyed the platonic best friendship between the female and male characters. Not only is a mother daughter relationship emphasized but a father and a grandma one at that. I tested up at certain points because it just broke my heart. This was exactly what I needed right now for I needed a good cry.

Jayne Catherine pinkett says

requested this book from Dundurn Press for my independent and honest review and I absolutely loved it. Jayce has her younger sister to look after as her mum is struggling with ill health. As they do not have much income so Jayce goes without herself at the amusement to her high school friends. As her mother deteriorates further, this story develops into the most heartwarming tale of family devotion humility and shows how determination can have positive outcomes. The writing was beautifully crafted as were the characters. Jayce finds a friend in a local boy with a so called bad reputation. Their friendship and mutual understanding of being a teenage carer helps each of them to keep going. This is well worth the read for YA readers of any age. Makes you think about what's important in life and to cherish those we love whilst they are here. Well deserving of my 5*.

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