



Pretty Crooked

Elisa Ludwig

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Willa's secret plan seems all too simple: take from the rich kids at Valley Prep and give to the poor ones.

Yet Willa's turn as Robin Hood at her ultra-exclusive high school is anything but. Bilking her "friends"- known to everyone as the Glitterati-without them suspecting a thing, is far from easy. Learning how to pick pockets and break into lockers is as difficult as she'd thought it'd be. Delivering care packages to the scholarship girls, who are ostracized just for being from the "wrong" side of town, is way more fun than she'd expected.

The complication Willa didn't expect, though, is Aidan Murphy, Valley Prep's most notorious (and gorgeous) ace-degenerate. His mere existence is distracting Willa from what matters most to her-evening the social playing field between the have and have-nots. There's no time for crushes and flirting with boys, especially conceited and obnoxious trust-funders like Aidan.

But when the cops start investigating the string of burglaries at Valley Prep and the Glitterati begin to seek revenge, could he wind up being the person that Willa trusts most?

Pretty Crooked Details

Date : Published March 13th 2012 by Katherine Tegen Books

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Author : Elisa Ludwig

Format : Hardcover 358 pages

Genre : Young Adult, Contemporary, Romance, Womens Fiction, Chick Lit, Retellings

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From Reader Review Pretty Crooked for online ebook

Charlotte says

I was really looking forward to reading this story, as the premise is pretty cute and I really liked the cover. I loved the idea of a modern day, female Robin Hood stealing from the rich, obnoxious kids at her school and giving back to the underprivileged scholarship kids that are tormented by the populars.

I was very curious how the author was going to manage to have the MC stealing, literally breaking the law, and getting away with it. (Or so I hoped.) I thought she might cook up some kind of cute twist where the horrible kids get their just desserts or something. Not very original, I know, but can be fun when done right. However, this story went in a whole other direction. A much darker direction than the cute cover implies.

I guess I'm guilty of the old adage of judging a book by it's cover, because this was not the book I thought it would be. But that did not deter me because I was hooked right from the beginning. I enjoyed Willa's voice and fresh perspective. She had a great attitude and I loved her dynamic with everyone she met at school. I loved her banter with Aiden and how she shut him down, yet could not stop thinking about him. I liked the characters that Ludwig surrounded Willa with and thought she did a great job of letting us get to know everyone.

There were definitely some fun parts to the story and some characters that I truly enjoyed and want to get to know better, especially Tre and Aiden and even Chelsea. Ludwig does a great job of setting up Willa's desire to balance the playing field. But at this point in the story things sort of went sideways for me. Then, the last quarter of the book, while intense and fast paced, just had me frustrated. Lots of plot twists that had me wondering...what the heck! Where did that come from?

I don't mind being surprised....not at all. I actually love it, but it has to fit, and I'm not sure the last part of this book fit with the first part. Ludwig got us pretty dang invested in the characters from school and that whole environment, and it seems as though that part of the story just disappeared. (Maybe it will come back in book 2??)

The last quarter of the book definitely sets you up for book 2 though. (And I can not for the life of me figure out where she is going to go with it.) The ending had me swiping my screen like a crazy person thinking there is NO WAY she is going to end this here. While that can be insanely frustrating, it does definitely leave you hungry for more.

As I read, the feeling that it was really written for young teens kept creeping into my thoughts. I got irritated over some of the language and thought a young teen would feel right at home reading words slipped in here and there like, 'skillz' and 'seks'. There are also a lot of popular culture references that would appeal to a younger teen audience.

So this is where this book really becomes a conundrum for me. Some of the party scenes were a bit mature for a young teen reader, yet the language and content are definitely aimed younger. That makes this hard for me to recommend to the age group I think it's directed at, as well as difficult for me to recommend to the older YA readers that might not be satisfied with the direction the story took.

What to do....what to do...SO, I gave it a 3, which could be almost a 4 for the younger YA reader and definitely a 3 or less for the older YA reader.

If I had to compare this to another series I would say maybe Pretty Little Liars? Or House of Night? I tried House of Night books but found them to be written too young for me. If you liked those, this one might be just right for you.

An advance copy was provided by the publisher for review.

Sierra Abrams says

Pretty Crooked by Elisa Ludwig (Pretty Crooked #1)

Pages: 358

Release Date: March 13th, 2012

Date Read: 2012, February 5th-11th

Received: ARC from NetGalley

Rating: 4/5 stars

Recommended to: 13+

SUMMARY -

Willa Fox is no extraordinary girl, but her life has never been ordinary. She's moved all over the country with her single mom, an artist just waiting to make it big. But then she does make it big, and Willa's life is flipped dramatically.

First, they get the fancy new house. Next, Willa is accepted into Valley Prep, the wealthiest school around. Not only that, but Willa is befriended by the Glitterati, and, believe it or not, the hottest guy at school who seems to have some special interest in her.

The life of glam is wonderful, for a time. But what about Mary, Sierra and Alicia, nice girls who rely on scholarships to get this kind of an education? When the Glitterati start to cross the line, taking good humor to the level of obscene, Willa has an idea. With the help of Tre and even the Glitterati themselves, Willa keeps her eye on one goal - to bring balance and justice to the filthy rich halls of Valley Prep.

MY THOUGHTS -

Helloooo! Elisa Ludwig deserves a standing ovation!! Pretty Crooked is just one of those well-written, well-built, awe-inspiring books that leaves you totally satisfied but wanting more. I love this book and will be very proud to have it on my shelf. I'm already looking forward to reading this again and again and again!

CHARACTER NOTES -

Willa was fantastic. I love her to death. Her voice (mixed perfectly with Elisa Ludwig's writing style) caught me from the very beginning. I agreed with some of her decisions and disagreed with others, but that was something that really drew me in - is everything she's doing right, or only some, or none of it? (More on that in story notes...) In any case, I really respected her and felt I could relate to her. She rocked this book and I would totally read the next book just because of her.

But, amazingly, there is quite a bit more draw than just Willa. Aiden? Ummm yes please! I didn't feel like he was a major role, but the end totally bumped him up and I'm sure there will be more of him in the next book! He was...so confusing, so wonderful, so just...Aiden. I'm in love with him. True story.

I liked the other characters a lot as well! The mean girls were mean.... Like, MEAN. And even the mean girl who wasn't so mean was just...ugh. She cared more about social status than standing up for the right thing,

which infuriated me almost more than the mean girls themselves. All the characters were really three dimensional and so impressive.

STORY NOTES -

This story is a puzzle, a moral question, a self-questioner. Literally the whole book I was asking myself, "Is this right? Is it necessarily wrong? Is it justice or revenge? Is this okay?! What would I do???"

On top of that, there were a lot of twists and turns to keep you guessing. The two big ones that had me really guessing: Willa's mom (what the heck is she doing?!?) and Aiden (mmmm). I really really want to know more!

And can I just say - I felt way cool reading the scenes in which Willa... *ahem* does her thing. You know, steals. It sounds so bad. It really does. But what kind of an honest reviewer would I be if I didn't put that in here? It was like, I felt cool, and super awesome that Willa was trying to smooth things out in her school, and yet really really guilty at the same time. I mean, how did Elisa do that to me?! I have no idea. Ask her. ;)

I don't want to say too much about the story line because I feel like I'll give it away but man! I just enjoyed it so much! It was fascinating, well-written, with brilliant characters, great plot twists, and lots and lots of good questions!!

SUMMING IT UP -

Foxy (pun intended...) and way too cool. I'm eagerly anticipating Pretty Sly, the next installment in Elisa's fantastic debut trilogy!! Can you tell - I'm excited!!!! :D

For the Parents -

A kiss, some crude comments. Nothing over the top. I definitely respect the author for this!! Recommended 13+

Giselle says

Ever since enjoying Elisa's self-published novel June of Rock, I've been looking forward Pretty Crooked; with its fun, quirky cover and synopsis, I had high hopes for it. I wasn't expecting such a fluffy story, but I was glad to find it an enjoyable, quick read, nonetheless, that reminded me a tad of Mean Girls.

Willa only wants to even out the score by stealing from her rich friends, and giving to her poorer ones. Although a bit far fetch, the plot is pretty amusing. Coming from a small town where there are no private schools or "higher society", I'm always captivated by their inner workings. Grand living situations, unlimited shopping, privileged attitude; it's so much fun to read about! Even though I can't say Willa is particularly smart in her proceedings, I really liked her and could easily understand where she was coming from by wanting to even the playing field. In between her mischief, Aidan is the main male character that Willa is crushing on. No doubt he's charming, but I simply didn't see it. He is the definition of a player, plus he's so incredibly snobbish I couldn't root for him at all. I much preferred Tre, and I don't know why Willa doesn't feel the same. A bit too naive maybe? Either way, the romance didn't convince me, fortunately its presence in the book is scarce.

In addition to the teenage Robin Hood storyline, we've got suspicious parental behavior by Willa's mother; late nights and strange meetings. I was deeply curious to find out what exactly was going on. It feels

ominous, as well as more interesting than your cliché "affair" or "re-appearing father" scenario. Sadly, this is left greatly unresolved since, unbeknownst to me, Pretty Crooked is the start of a series. I guess I should have taken notice, regardless, I still feel like we should have gotten some kind of answers, at the very least an elaboration. Instead it's merely floating in the background bugging like a constant itch that, ultimately, never gets scratched. It surely tugs on my love of mystery, though, leaving me craving for book 2!

If I had to pick I would recommend June of Rock over this one, but Pretty Crooked is, nevertheless, a fun little quirky tale that is perfect for a light read.

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For more of my reviews, visit my blog at **Xpresso Reads**

Megan says

So smart, so fun--PRETTY CROOKED is realistic YA fiction at its best. Willa Fox has just transferred to a super-rich private high school in Arizona when she's only known public schools her whole life. Her artist mom has just hit it big, scoring them a gorgeously extravagant house and a life far removed from their usual routine of subsisting on noodles. Willa instantly becomes friends with the "Glitterati," beautiful, rich girls who own the school. But Willa comes to learn that all that glitters is not gold--there is some serious inequality and bullying going on at her school, targeting scholarship students. In a completely believable and sympathetic arc, Willa struggles with doing the right thing, determining what exactly that means, and determining whether that right thing is worth it. Is standing up for the right thing worth her leaving the friends and fun she's never had otherwise? If she doesn't actively participate in bringing down the scholarship students, is she at fault at all? Even if she does fight for the right thing, will it make any real difference?

Willa decides to go for it, stealing money from her rich classmates to finance purchases of designer clothes for the poor kids at school. And while Willa knows those clothes are superficial, she also sees the very real effects they have on the scholarship kids' confidence and how they are perceived at school. Maybe she can succeed in showing everyone at Valley Prep that what makes people popular and not popular is completely arbitrary--really just a bunch of sparkles. But just because Willa has good intentions doesn't mean her actions don't have consequences. The author doesn't shy from complexity, making PRETTY CROOKED incredibly realistic and complex while still having a fast-paced plot that got me so wrapped up, I almost missed my subway stop.

And I haven't even mentioned the hot love interest, the well-developed secondary characters (the Glitterati is Mean Girls-type crew that I loved), the mystery surrounding Willa's mom, the luscious descriptions of insane mansions and prep schools that sound like they're straight from a movie. This book was so much fun to read, had such a great story, and showcased really, really good writing. Usually when I love a book this much, I cringe when I hear it's part of a series--I think, how could a follow-up be better? I think, this book was so good as one unit, I don't want more. But instead, Ludwig writes an entire story and crafts an ending that leaves the perfect amount of stones unturned. I can't wait for Book 2!

If you like a good realistic fiction (seriously, my number one comp is the movie "Mean Girls,") you will love PRETTY CROOKED.

Heidi says

“Two and a half stars: A modern day, reinvented Robin Hood that doesn't quite work.

Willa is used to being the perennial, new girl. She and her single mother, an artist, have bounced around from place to place Willa's entire life. Finally, her mother has a stroke of good luck and sells some of her paintings for a phenomenal price. With their new, found fortune the pair settle into the wealthy community of Paradise Valley, Arizona. Willa is enrolled in Valley Prep, a prestigious private school. On her first day, she is nearly run over in the parking lot by a fellow student, Cherise. Luckily, for Willa she comes out unscathed and makes a new friend. Willa quickly realizes just how out of her league she is, when she plunges into the pool of wealth and privilege that most of the kids at her new school enjoy. Except for a few students, who are on scholarship, from the nearby underprivileged community of Maryvale. Willa is immediately lured by the glamour and glitter of the rich girls. She emerges into a circle of girls known as the Glitterati. Willa soon opens her eyes and realizes how uneven the playing field is for the girls from Maryvale. To make matters worse, Willa learns of a hateful, anonymous blog that bullies and gossips about members of the student body. When Willa realizes that the cruel posts are singling out the Maryvale students, she hatches a wild and daring plan to try and even the odds. Her scheme is to steal from the rich and spread the wealth. How long can Willa keep up her dangerous plan?

What I Liked:

*I enjoyed Willa, especially watching her struggle to make sense of her environment. At first she is easily swayed by the shopping excursions and flashy new clothes but then her conscience kicks in and she endeavors to make a difference. I liked that Willa was able to fight back against the cruel and cunning girls whom she once thought of as friends. Willa is a fun and likable main character.

*I liked the way the author immerses us into the shiny, wealthy environment of Paradise Valley. I lived in Phoenix, Arizona for ten years, so I am familiar with all the locales mentioned in the book. Ms. Ludwig's descriptions are dead on accurate. The community in this novel is all about image, flashy cars, expensive clothes and jewelry, etc. The only flaw I found, was two different characters were wearing windbreakers in the fall, trust me no one wears windbreakers or jackets until at least November.

*I liked the author's writing style. She has a nice, even flow and delivers an entertaining story. There are some nice descriptive phrases throughout.

*I enjoyed the presentation of a slow and indecisive romance. There thankfully, is no love triangle. Instead we are treated to an immediate attraction, that Willa tries to deny, but she just can't seem to resist the good natured, want to be bad boy, Adrian. I liked the sparks between the two.

And The Not So Much:

*I appreciated the attempt to fashion a new spin on the Robin Hood story, but for me this story misses the mark because Willa fails to do something truly good with the stolen wealth. Her heart is in the right place, but stealing from her wealthy classmates in order for her to purchase designer clothes for the disadvantaged girls doesn't exactly do much good. If she is going to rob the rich, she should do something better with the money. The whole idea came across as being silly.

*I was interested to see how the author would handle the bullying issue, especially since a fourteen year old girl here in my community, who was the victim of this heinous activity just committed suicide. The rise in online bullying is a pressing problem facing youth today. I was hoping that the author would spin a positive message regarding taunting and tormenting. Sadly, it doesn't really happen. Willa and Cherise finally take a stand against the bullies but they do nothing to try and stop the behavior. I have said this before but it bears repeating, if we want to put an end to bullying then we need to change public thinking. It is not acceptable for any of us to sit by and watch these venomous people continue to anonymously post hateful messages. As an author you have the power with your words to spread a message, so do it. Don't give us characters that are

afraid to do something, write us a character who will stand up and fight!

*I was disappointed in the fact that Ms. Ludwig presents an intriguing storyline surrounding Willa's mother. After the first chapters there is a definite shift in the relationship between Willa and her mother. The tight bond begins to falter as the two start keeping secrets. Willa's mother acts strange, vanishes at odd times, is preoccupied and appears disheveled and red eyed. Over time their is a significant deterioration in the mother's health. I was anxious to get to the root of the problem but there is absolutely no resolution or revelation in regards to this plot line. This was a major disappointment for me.

*This book finishes abruptly, with relatively no conclusion to any of the story lines. This novel avoids a cliffhanger but it just ends, leaving the door open. I was not expecting this, considering that there was no indication that this was going to be a series and second, I don't see anyway the author can realistically continue this story line without doing a major divergence. I won't go into further details on this to avoid spoilers, but let's just say, it is unrealistic to continue the stealing from the wealthy to buy high dollar fashion for the poor.

Pretty Crooked was one of those books I picked up expecting a light, entertaining read. What I found was a book that ended up being frustrating with an improbable premise and failure to convey a more positive message. The author asks in the beginning do two wrongs make a right? The answer is obviously no in this book, so what is her point? I am still wondering. The ending that failed to reach any kind of resolution was also a big let down. I know many others have enjoyed this book, but unfortunately for me, it just doesn't work. Sadly, this book is one that I can't fully recommend. I am hoping that the author in her continuing books of this series will tackle the pertinent issues head on and use her voice to make a difference.

Favorite Quotations:

“So there was nothing to do but embrace my own personal freakiness, and smile with pride as I pedaled. Eat my dust, cars.”

“The girl cliques were almost never looking for new members, while guys were like social ShamWows--- they could just keep absorbing new kids into the fold.”

“Above us, a single row of clouds was drifting across the sky like curdled cream.”

“I wasn’t just a thief, I reminded myself. I was an equalizer and I was about to make some things right.”

“Lying she liked to say, is poison in a relationship.”

“I watched as she stepped out into the hallway, melting into the shadows, and I heard the whisper of the door dragging over the carpet.”

“And all I’m saying is money doesn’t make you classy.”

“A delicious warmth spread over me, like melting Nutella on a banana sandwich.”

“You can’t live a lie forever. It gets to be a burden.”

“The moon had popped up and it was full and bright and exposed, almost vulnerable out there all by itself in the enormous open sky, dangling over the sharp peaks of the mountains.”

A copy of this book was kindly provided to me for review by Harper Collins Publishing via Netgalley in

exchange for an honest review.

Originally posted @ <http://rainydayramblings.typepad.com/>

Celine says

Review originally posted in: <http://forget8me8not.blogspot.com/201...>

My review:

Cover:

The cover is so cute and totally reflects the story of the book! I like how the model in the cover seems to be running away after stealing, how there's cash flying away from the bag and the cute high heels!

Story:

What if you have the power to change the social order in your school.....by stealing?

Willa is a new student in Valley Prep. She is already introduced to the Glitterati on her first day and actually hangs out with them. But when she realizes that not all students are having the same luxurious lives as these girls, Willa decided to do something. Something to change the social order and she decided to do it by stealing from the rich ones and giving it to the scholarship girls who are struggling with inadequate funds for school and life. What she did not know was a little complication, falling for guy called Aidan Murphy, the popular guy of Valley Prep. Can Willa succeed in becoming the new Robin Hood for Valley Prep?

I never actually thought I would enjoy this book a lot! I really enjoyed reading the re-telling of Robin Hood in this story. I can actually feel myself living the life of Willa and going to school in Valley Prep. Reading about Willa's attempts to learn the skills of 'thievery' until she finally succeeds in doing it, her mom's mysterious relationship with a man and her crush on Aidan makes this book an interesting and fun read! Although there wasn't much romance as I thought it would be based on reading the summary before starting the book, I still loved the relationship between Willa and Aidan! The ending contains a mystery I'm really curious and this makes me dying to read the second book already!

Characters:

Willa the Sly Fox, you're my newest Robin Hood! While doing your 'thievery', can you please get me some books? Who knows one of the houses you visit have lots of books! Preferable YA of course! ;) I really loved Willa's character. Even though she almost got carried away with the Glitterati in shopping branded clothes, she decided to serve justice for the scholarship students who are unlike the Glitterati by stealing! This makes me Willa so awesome. I love reading about how she finally learns the skills needed to commit thievery and how she finally uses it to steal different things from the Glitterati. She was such a fun character to read! Aidan definitely makes this book even better to read. He was an unexpectedly sweet and funny character who actually had a crush on Willa too! It was great that we also get to read the wonderful relationship between Willa and her mom plus Willa and her friends too! Gosh, I love all the characters. I wish I can steal them for myself. But not the Glitterati. They are so out of the list! :P

Overall:

Robin Hood meets The Cliques! Pretty Crooked is a fun and light read you will enjoy! Do you want to know how a Robin Hood steals in this modern era? Read this book and find out about Willa the Sly Fox plus meet

the cute Aidan! This is a 2012 debut you don't want to miss!

By the way, you guys might want to check your bags. While reading this review, Willa might have already taken something from you! ;P

usagi ?? says

Warning. There are going to be spoilers in this review, but I'll try to keep them below the cut. While this story is pretty solid in the technical areas of writing, personally, there are some things that really, really bothered me about this story that I just have to get out there. I will admit to being a huge fan of the Robin Hood myth, but this story doesn't only just use it as an excuse for bad behavior, but makes a total mockery of the original tale (yeah, I know this is a really loose retelling, but the original story has a ton of meaning that this book kind of mocks, whether it's aware it's doing so or not). While this story can be entertaining, it left a rather unpleasant aftertaste that had me struggling to finish the book in its entirety.

That being said, this book gets the one extra star I was originally going to give it because of the solid technical areas that I really couldn't nit-pick too much, even if there were some heavy cliches in there (especially re: Aidan's character). It's entertaining in the beginning and got a few chuckles out of me, until the whole bullying issue came up and it all kind of went downhill from there.

While I had to give it to Willa for not going along with the bullying of the Busteds and even raising the subject to the rest of the Glitteratti, I was really kind of dismayed that she didn't take it farther than that. This is why kids kill themselves – because other kids standby and do nothing OR they don't do enough/half-ass it. Willa really should have taken it farther, but she didn't. Her growing addiction to shopping and lack of honesty about it with herself also disturbed me, because the solution to pull a Robin Hood and steal from her Glitteratti friends just facilitated the ability to keep shopping and get the Busteds some nice clothes just kind of dressed (no pun intended) the whole idea of the original noble act of feeding the poor with the rich's money into a complete mocking charade.

All while still NOT saying anything/pushing the matter about the bullying any further, by the way.

Here's the biggest part that bothered me the most – who does she go to to ask her on how to steal things? Tre. One of the other few kids of color, self-described as having his own "Prince of Bel-Air" story (I did chuckle at that as it was charming as a self-description), but who also has a criminal record. Funny. None of the other kids, presumably white, have a record that she can go to.

Guys, if you've been reading the blog for a bit, you know I'm really not one for YA books with a moral at the end of the story. Messages are fine, but they're also different. Not only does this try to do a "moral of the story" (though it was so convoluted I was struggling to see what that moral was – I think it was something like "stick up for the bullied kids"?), it also carries the message that it's cool to steal from your friends if they're cruel and mean to others in order to do "noble" things like buy the scholarship kids clothes, and it's cool to do the absolute minimum when the end result might be someone killing themselves. Though that doesn't happen in this story, kids killing themselves from bullying DOES happen in real life, as we've seen in the huge rash of suicides over the past few years – or maybe we're just noticing it more as a culture? It's hard to say.

Not to mention that if you're caught stealing that much money, you're definitely going to be someone's girlfriend in jail sometime soon. But I won't even go there, because it's obvious enough on its own. The longer the story went on, the more convoluted and confusing it became as to what Willa's real motives were, and as with all unreliable narrators, was so disorienting (and infuriating) that it was getting more and more difficult to finish the story.

Final verdict? This book had a lot of promise for the first half, and I did enjoy that first half. But once the points above hit as arcs and mini-arcs of the story, I just couldn't in good conscience finish it – and I'm not really that much of a moral person. Perhaps this is a good example of what not to do in all of these situations, but the execution could have been much better to say the very least. However, this is just what I thought of it – if you want to read it, I urge you to do so, so we can talk about the points that are so problematic. Books like this, if good for little else, are good conversation starters for societal problems portrayed in it. So let's talk about these issues, shall we? "Pretty Crooked" hits stores on March 13th, 2012 in North America, so be sure to go and read it and come to your own conclusions.

(posted to goodreads, shelfari, and witchoftheatregoing.wordpress.com)

Rachel Harris says

PRETTY CROOKED is a fun ride. A mixture of Robin Hood, Mean Girls, Wendy Toliver's LIFTED and a splash of Simone Elkeles's LEAVING PARADISE series, Elisa Ludwig's tale of the have and have-not's keeps the action coming and the mysteries at every corner.

While I admit the prologue was a little hard for me to get through, once I got into the heart of the story I was completely hooked. The voice is fresh and witty, making it an easy page-turner, and the main character Willa was extremely likable. Without giving spoilers, I'll say straight away that one major concern I had reading proved fruitless—in no way does this story glorify crime or justify it. Crimes are dealt with in a very real and believable way. But so is the hard and EXTREMELY relevant topic of cyber bullying. As if kids don't have enough problems with popularity, grades, hormones, acne, and whatnot, now they have the World Wide Web filled with anonymous blogs and Facebook, allowing gossip to be spread in the blink of an eye. Can I just say how glad I am this wasn't a concern when I was growing up?!? Kudos to Elisa Ludwig for tackling this tough issue—that's probably an unfortunate reality for far too many young adult readers—and presenting it with good advice (okay that the main character ignores but still LOL) and real thought.

The focus and main conflict of Willa's story is navigating new friendships and the slippery social order, but there is also romance and hot boys simmering around the edges. PRETTY CROOKED is the first in what I hear will be a trilogy, and I believe Ludwig has set herself up for some hot future guy action (I can't decide who I'm rooting more for, Aiden or Tre!). Book Two promises to be filled with swoony moments along with realistic portrayals of all the characters living with the consequences of their actions. The cliffhanger leaves us with a several mysteries left to solve, and I have no doubt even more will pop up.

For fans of LIFTED, LEAVING PARADISE, and Contemporary YA that deal with real issues with wit and heart, PRETTY CROOKED will not disappoint.

Danny says

Read Review at Bewitched Bookworms

What a fun?!?! When I read the synopsis I knew this book would be something to read when in the mood for something light and fun! Also, I'm a big big fan of Robin Hood so the synopsis really sold me!

Modern Robin Hood Tale – with a twist and .. fun!

At Willa's new school everything is about appearance, about wearing the right clothes and about who to talk to. The typical rich school, right? But, Willa was never used to be "rich" and didn't grow up with that much money which is why she cannot accept and tolerate the bullying the "mean" girls do. Which is why at some point decides to ..act! First on impulse, then systematically planning! She goes deeper and deeper into the "Robin Hood" mood and ... suddenly she's too deep to get out! In the middle of all this there is also another mystery that takes part of the plot which I'm so eager to find out more about! That's all I'm going to say – I don't want to spoil the mystery for you!

Will a protagonist which is part naive part heroic

I still cannot decide if Willa is just way to naive or totally heroic. Anyway, I did love her!! Her heart most definitely is at the right place and she only wanted to right some wrongs. Of course, I cannot agree with how she went about this, but.. truthfully it was tons of fun following her journey to become a criminal. Willa is a wonderful young girl who hates how her new rich friends treat the "poor" ones and she realizes how wrong this is. And, it takes a lot of her to step up and do something instead of just tolerating!

Mean Girls, Bullying and some cute boys!

Seriously! What else do you need to make a story round and fun? The mean girls are really mean and they way they treated the unfortunate kids was harsh and horrible! Elisa Ludwig did a wonderful job portraying the very important issue of bullying and I loved to see that apart from Will also other girls started to open their eyes!

Then of course we have the cute boys! Oh how we need them! And, we get them!! Aidan is awesome! I loved him so much! He was one of the super rich crowd, yet he didn't care – on the contrary he wanted to be different and did everything he could to appear as the trouble maker and the bad boy. Yet, in his heart he wasn't the bad boy at all!! He's a wonderful deep character which we only begun here to understand and I hope to see more of him!

Bottom Line

I had so much fun with this book! It was a page turner which addresses the important topic of bullying in a funny but also very heart warming way. I had so much fun with this book! It was a page turner which addresses the important topic of bullying in a funny but also very heart warming way. There are kids who see that there is something truly wrong with the way underprivileged kids are treated and instead of just watching – they decided to do some something. Willa was a beautiful character, I love her and her values! Fantastic debut in refreshing new series about values and kids that try to work on changes instead of watching!

Colette says

Such a fun, quick read! Fans of Prep or the GG series may enjoy this novel. Overall 3.5/5 stars; not the most well-written novel, but entertaining nonetheless.

Mimi Valentine says

I LOVED THIS BOOK. I can't even begin to explain how much! I thought it'd just be a cute novel that would keep me highly entertained — and it was, but it was also *so much more*. **Pretty Crooked** was book that I could gush about for weeks and still have things to say!

Robin Hood had always been one of my favourite stories, and **Pretty Crooked** only increased my love for it! This was more than just a modern re-telling of a classic. Elisa Ludwig created an extremely fun story that had lovable characters, a well-written voice, and the perfect REALNESS factor that made everything more believable and enjoyable.

I *adored* Willa! Fifteen, bubbly, sweet, and witty, she was a character I connected with instantly and found myself rooting for with everything she did. And I expected Aiden to be just another cookie-cutter bad boy, but he was actually such a sweet, funny, and layered guy! ♥

Plus, I loved Willa's relationship with their mom and her friends too. A lot of books nowadays focus only on the main characters and their romance, so it was refreshing to read about a full cast of amazing characters. I loved every single one!

Hilarious, heartwarming, and 100% entertaining, **Pretty Crooked** has earned its place high on my favourites list! I loved everything about it. If you haven't added this to your TBR pile yet, then I highly recommend that you do because Elisa Ludwig is an author worth waiting for!

BUY or BORROW?: Oh my gosh, buy this book for sure!! I really want to buy two copies for myself when it comes out: one to look gorgeous on my shelf, and another to carry around in my purse so I can re-read it everywhere! x) It was that amazing!

(Original review at Mimi Valentine's YA Review Blog)

Wendy Darling says

This first half of this book was pretty entertaining. Willa moves to new town, tries to fit in with the wealthy crowd now that her mom's made it big, meets new friends and cute boys. I was enjoying it for the brain candy kind of a book it was and I thought the concept of her somehow playing Robin Hood in this new school would be fun. But then we hit the wall of the impossibly shallow way she decides to do it, and the book lost me.

How does Willa try to help those who are less fortunate? (view spoiler) Can it get much sillier than that? The gigantic eyeroll when this happened nearly pulled my eyeballs right out of their sockets. The stealing got more and more ridiculous (view spoiler), Willa makes incredibly stupid and short-sighted decisions, the risks

got bigger and bigger (view spoiler)...and for what? Did she really think what she was doing would make such a huge difference? I would like to think that most teens have a lot more common sense and judgment than this character exhibited, especially when they have the opportunities that she is afforded. The story got more and more convoluted with a side story involving her mom, a boy with a troubled past, the FBI, and various other plot points that never got resolved, because apparently there are going to be four more books in this planned series.

While I'm not in the camp that thinks every YA book needs to teach lessons or be morally sound, the basic set-up just felt so pointless and farfetched to me that I just couldn't get past it. It probably wouldn't bother me so much if the whole book was more of a lighthearted caper or a more fantastical sort of adventure, but being that this was all set up for altruistic reasons, this "solution" seemed very misguided overall. I did like the humor and the easy writing style in the first half, and I think readers who don't have a problem with the basic scenario will enjoy this book much more than I did. But for me, this promise of the Robin Hood concept just wasn't fulfilled (view spoiler), as I just couldn't get past the superficial nature of where the story went.

An advance copy was provided by the publisher for review.

Wandering Librarians says

Willa and her mother have always moved around, but now that her mom's started to sell her paintings, they can live a more comfortable life. For the first time, Willa is living in a fancy house and going to an exclusive private school. It isn't long until Willa starts noticing how much some students have, and how little others do. Willa decides to level the playing field.

This was ridiculous. Like, totally ridiculous. Willa falls in with the super popular crowd, who at first she thinks is all nice but in fact turns out to be terrible, terrible people who take great pleasure in online bullying. In particular, they pick on a trio of Mexican scholarship students. Willa decides there is only one thing to do: steal from the mean rich people and then use the money to buy the scholarship kids really fancy clothes, and then they will fit in and everyone will want to be friends with them.

What? That is the stupidest idea ever. It's not their lack of fancy clothes that makes them targets, although it is something to make fun of them about, it's the fact that they are not wealthy and not white. And duh, of course when the crimes are discovered they're going to think it's those scholarship students that everyone still hates but have suddenly started coming to school in designer clothing. Damn Willa. You may have a 3.8 but you are not very bright. And did not think this through very well.

The most interesting part of the story was what was going on with Willa's mom. Or at least it had the potential to be interesting. Something is clearly going on with the mom, something sneaky she wants to keep hidden that is weighing very much upon her, and Willa is far too busy going shopping to think about it very much. But it didn't freaking get revealed. Because (and I did not know this when I started) apparently this is going to be a series and it just ended without wrapping anything up and telling me what was going on with the mother which was the only reason I kept reading. And no, I don't care enough to read any more in the series.

There's also this side plot with Willa and a guy from her school, Aidan, who at first seems like a jerk but in fact has a heart of gold and gets himself kicked out of school because he hates it so much. We also don't know why he got kicked out. It's a secret.

The book was full of fairly flat, stereotypical stock characters: Aidan - the pretty boy, Tre - the Black kid from Detroit who teaches Willa how to steal stuff, Kellie - the evil blond, Cherise - the other Black kid who has apparently spent her life appeasing Kellie so she could be in her group, and so on.

So to this book I say "meh." I didn't buy the plot or care much about the characters. I just wanted to know what was up with the mom! It's got a lot of fashion and name dropping, with the added dose of crime, so maybe Gossip Girl fans who are looking for something more?

Pretty Crooked comes out March 13, 2012.

Larissa says

This book is amazing. I just finished it minutes ago (would have finished it in one sitting but I had a evil chem final. Ew) and my head is spinning. This book had everything: tons of laughs, grins, twinges of sadness for the main character...even a bit of mystery!

This book does have some cliches, as does any book if you think about it. It's just that is was more obvious to the reader. When I first began to read I was nodding along thinking "Okay so another typical YA fluff book where the new girl becomes magically popular then she does something to screw it up and finds out there is better things then being popular." So basically Mean Girls aha. I was proved completely wrong, though this book does have so cliched aspects it didn't play a HUGE role for me. It wasn't like it was cliche after cliche. This book does have some shocking twists that will be thrown your way, some predictable and some not. The book is told in such an amazing way that you don't notice the cliches. The style of writing makes it a perfect quick/fun read that will drag you in from the first word. What really sold the book for me? The characters!

So the main character wasn't totally annoying and dependent on a guy. :o

Yes that seems to be a trend for most YA books, and love triangles but let's not mention that travesty here, alrighty? Good. Now Willa (I love her name!), the main character was very likable and personally I could really relate to her. Sure, she was really naive but that's what made her likable, like you didn't want her to get hurt by the rest of the cruel people at this school. I also found her really funny and she had some great one liners when flirting with Aiden (: Willa also does learn throughout the novel which is good because if she was as naive as she was at the beginning of the book I'm sure I'd dislike it more. She had backstory and as I previously said character development which makes a great character.

Aiden. He was the main love interest of this book. If you're looking for the biggest cliche in the book look no further aha. He was the hot, rich but actually an nice guy unlike the rest of the school. Strangely, he appealed to me though, especially as the story went on. Loved his banter with Willa as I said. He also had some backstory which was only touched in this novel but I'm sure with further be explained in the next novel. Though I'm sure he could be portrayed as annoying quite easily the author did a great job with him. His best friend is named Tre, and I quite liked him aswell. He also had a backstory which was more explained then Aiden's. He was also more secretive then Aiden and was a mentor to Willa which made his character quite interesting. I can't wait to see more of these characters, asap (;

Overall this was a quick, fluffy, fun book which will lead you on a great ride. The ending was perfect. But of course there was a cliffhanger which will have you begging for the next book. 2013...really?! -- I guess that's what I get for getting an arc though lol.

Loretta says

This book for me was MEAN GIRLS + GOSSIP GIRLS meets ROBIN HOOD. Really!

Although the Mother / Daughter bond had me leaning towards GILMORE GIRLS too!

This book was a really good, cute read! I loved it. I seriously cannot point out one thing I did not like about this one. Modern day Robin Hood. When I first read that I was skeptical as to how that was going to play out. Elisa Ludwig really brings this book to life. Her writing was amazing and I loved the characters.

Willa and her mother have just moved to Paradise Valley, Arizona. Willa will be attending Valley Prep, which is a private school, and of course Willa is used to going to Public School and not being considered at all rich. But, her mom was able to work this out, so here she is. This makes her nervous, but Willa fits in perfectly. Making friends right away, and not just any friends, The Popular girls.

After finding out that her "friends" were behind some cruel torture pointed to some fellow students who were not "popular", Willa feels that she cannot just sit there and let them do that. But what can she do?

Not really wanting to become apart of their torture Willa makes a plan. But she is going to need help learning how to become a great thief. Yes, thief. Taking her new found skills & trying them out.

Her 1st time is stressful I kept saying get out the floor yo. haha

Willa is yes, the Modern Day Robin Hood. But with the good comes the bad right?!?!

I love her attitude as a character. Having the heart to do something for these girls. Although maybe just saying something would have been easier. But, you can not say anything to The Glitterati and get off scot free. She took it into her own hands. With of course the help from Tre.

Ludwig created a very solid story with characters that you will love. Even the "Mean Girls". Although there is one that I had a hard time loving. Because she was just right down.. mean!

I love that this story is apart of a series. Because I hope to learn more about Willa's mom. Which you get to learn a lot about. That is something that I think you don't see a lot of in books. The parents. So that to me was a great thing.

Now, on to Aidan. I loved this character and I loved him with Willa. Tre was a great character too, I am just really rooting for Aidan. I am looking forward to see what unfolds in book 2. Pretty Sly.

After the minor cliff hanger, in Pretty Crooked, I am really hoping for some answers. + to find out who Willa will ultimately choose.

Pretty Crooked will steal you from the 1st page. (No pun intended =])
