



# Over the Rainbow

*Brian Rowe*

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**The Wizard of Oz meets Jurassic Park!**

Zippy Green never meant to fall in love with a girl, but when she does, her ultra-conservative father tries to send her to anti-gay camp. At the Kansas City airport, however, she hides inside a giant suitcase and sneaks onto an airplane headed not to the camp, but to Seattle, where her online love Mira lives. Halfway through the flight, the plane barrels out of control and crashes into the ground, knocking her unconscious.

When Zippy awakens, she finds that most of the passengers have vanished. She doesn't know what's happened, but she's determined to find out. She begins a quest on foot toward Seattle, and along the way, she meets a teenager with a concussion, a homeless man with a heart condition, a child without a shred of bravery, and a terrier named Judy. Together the group discovers that more than two-thirds of the world's population have mysteriously disappeared. But that's only the beginning...

All Zippy wants is to find her Mira, but before she can she has to contend with two outside forces. The first is her homophobic father, who does everything in his power to keep her from the girl she loves. And the second is extinct creatures of all shapes and sizes, including living, breathing dinosaurs, which have replaced the missing population.

## Over the Rainbow Details

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Author : Brian Rowe

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### **Over The Rainbow by Brian Rowe**

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### **The Unofficial Addiction Book Fan Club**

#### **The Unofficial Addiction Book Fan Club's Review:**

##### **About the Book:**

Zipporah has fallen in love with a girl. She never wanted to happen, but it did. When her father discovered the truth, being a conservative and religious man, he made the decision to send his only daughter to an anti-gay camp.

At the airport, Zipporah has to make a decision, will she be willing to go to an anti-gay camp and pretend that she was ill and needed to be cured? Or will she follow her heart and look for the one she loves?

The decision was clear, she had to see her, she had to see Mira. That's why she decided to sneak onto an airplane headed to Seattle. Halfway, the plane lost control and it crash down, knocking Zippy unconscious. When Zippy woke up, she realized that half the passengers were gone, and the others were dead, except from one. Another teenager was alive, together, they explored where they were.

In their exploration, they met an old man and a child.

The four of them took to an estrange journey where 70% of the population has gone missing and has been replaced by extinguished creatures.

Will they survive this journey? Will Zipporah's father get what he wants? Will Zipporah find her true love?

##### **Review:**

We have received an ecopy of Over The Rainbow via Netgalley in exchange for an honest review.

I don't intend to offend the Author with this review, and I apologize in advance if any words in this review may be an offence to the Author or anyone reading this. I just want you to have in mind that this is my mere personal opinion and I will try my best to give my opinion with due respect.

I have been seeing this book everywhere for a while, and I mean EVERYWHERE! Wherever blog I entered, there it was! A review, a promotional post, or just the cover. So I thought "This is a good book!" Right? It had to be. So, when we saw it was on Netgalley we decided to ask for a review copy. Luckily, they approved our request.

After a few pages, I was certainly that Over The Rainbow was going to be a fun read. I liked the first part of the book, where Zippy was dealing with her "illness" (she being gay). Mr. Brian shows the behavior of some extremist religious people, it was something that made me think. I don't want to go against anyone beliefs, but I think that they are people, not monsters! And I really like how he portrays this difficult reality, even

though the book is set on 1999, it easily could be apply to this same year, because we still don't accept/respect gay people. I don't know about you, but I respect and admire Mr. Brian for writing about such a delicate topic.

Everything was fine, I was happy reading about Zippy, I thought it was going to be a romantic story with its obstacles and maybe some supernatural event, but then something happens that baffled me, people started to disappear, extinguished animals appear out of the blue, weird dreams (really weird). I was so confused, I'm still confused. I started to believe that people were disappearing because of the rapture, but then it turned out it wasn't, so I have no clue what was going on! I mean, 70 % of humanity has disappeared and you don't tell me why? And then dinosaur appear from nowhere...I recognize I was frustrated, I think I still have some frustration, because even when the disappearance happened, I thought the author would come with something huge like Martians, or something cool, but I was left with my pile of doubts. I think that the idea was good, but something was missing, information and credibility. I know it sounds weird, asking for something realistic when it is a fiction book, but even when you are writing a book about something impossible, you have to make it seem real.

What I know for sure about *Over The Rainbow* is that in between the book, Mr. Brian makes reference to Alice in Wonderland, and in a way, it is like a new and modern Wizard of Oz mixed with Jurassic Park, and maybe the Bible too, this last thing I'm not so sure (because of the rapture or whatever it was).

Another thing that confused me a little was this reference to Alice in Wonderland, I was just reading how Zipporah has survived the airplane crash, and then she was in Wonderland. I admit at first I was lost, but then it was kind of fun.

However, the lack of information and realism was something I couldn't ignore. As I have said before, Mr. Rowe had good ideas, but they weren't connected with each other, making the whole book a bunch of great ideas but without connection between them.

As for the characters, I started to have strong feelings for one special character, and not the I-am-falling-in-love kind of feeling. My not-so-good feelings were directed to Zippy's father. I did not like him at all, how could you treat your own child like if she/he has the plague? And what's worst it was not just because his beliefs, but because he was worried of what would people think about him having a lesbian daughter. At the end, though, he ended accepting his daughter. But still, I can't take the first image of him out of my head. Then, there is Zippy (Zipporah); at the beginning she was really funny, how she evaded her father at the airport? Hilarious! But as I keep reading, I did not see this funny girl, I didn't see nor feel anything. She was an Ok character, but I couldn't sympathize with her, which is a shame because she is, first, the main character, and second because she was a promising character. There are other characters, but it was just the same for me with all of them, I couldn't feel any emotions.

As for the end, it wasn't bad; I was left with a lot of doubts, though. I was hoping that by the end things like the rapture will be clarified, unfortunately it did not happen. Nevertheless, the end wasn't lacking of happiness.

I was going to give it One gorjuss doll (or star), but I think that "hate" is not how I feel about the book, and second because I don't like the word "hate", I think it is a strong word for describing how you felt about a book, and I wouldn't use it with that porpoise, and even less with this one. Another reason why I don't consider *Over the Rainbow* a "one star" book, it is because even if I wasn't so into it, it was really easy to read. It took me a few hours to end the book, which is extremely surprising since it seems I have only been complaining about the book.

I also don't think that two gorjuss doll will be my rate for *Over The Rainbow*, because, at the risk of repeating myself for the hundredth time, there were so many things unlinked and left unresolved. So let's just say that it wasn't my kind of read, and that's why I'm giving it 1 and a half gorjuss doll.

I like to think that people read our reviews, and follow our advices about books, so if you think that you won't like the book because of our review, (I'm sorry to say this) I'm really glad. But if you still want to give it a try, I would not interfere; I would even encourage you to do it, go ahead! Read *Over The Rainbow*, maybe it would be a fun read for you. If it wasn't my kind of book, doesn't mean it has to be the same for you.

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## **L.H. Johnson says**

Following LGBTQ YA month over on Once Upon A Bookcase, and the realisation that I too wanted to increase the amount of titles I read with LGBTQ protagonists, I found *Over The Rainbow* on Netgalley and became instantly intrigued. Any book that came across as a hybrid of *The Wizard Of Oz*, *Jurassic Park* and *Lost* was either going to be outstanding - or not.

It's not.

Rowe is a solid enough writer, and his style is strongly approachable, but what I think fails *Over The Rainbow* is the haphazard nature of the story. Writing can be great, fine, but when the story itself is lacking both in structure and an underpinning truth, that's when I start to disengage. Because it doesn't matter how good your writing is when the protagonist (Zippy) zips (badumtish) herself up in a suitcase, survives being put through baggage handling on an airport, survives being thrown into an aircraft hold, survives the crash of the airplane when everyone else (except for a guy in the toilets) disappears because of *The RAPTURE*, survives a road trip involving encounters with dinosaurs, manages to convince her father of the wrongness of his ways (her devoutly Christian father who previously was going to send her to 'straight-camp'), and ultimately lives happily ever after.

I can believe a lot in books; lord knows, one of my favourite books in the entire world involves a boy who chats to dead saints, but when a book is so devoutly lacking in believability as this, it undercuts any sort of tension in its world and therefore undercuts the experience for the reader. My fantasy needs a little bit of fact, other than that it's just floating in the wind.

From the LGBTQ perspective, I commend Rowe for writing a strong and passionate relationship between the two heroines. I do acknowledge though that I had substantial issues with the semantics of this relationship, and in particular the relationship between Zippy and her father which was full of difficulties for me. I would not actively recommend this book due to these difficulties.

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## **Tzipora says**

2 stars but probably worth the the fun read!

A few too many cliches and trying a little too hard to run with the *Wizard of Oz* theme (Characters mimicking the cowardly lion, tin man, scarecrow, and Toto AND their names are Elle, Frankie, (Lyman) Balm, and Judy?!) but made props from this Tzipora for the main character being a very petite young lesbian named Zipporah (Zippy)! That's pretty much why I had to read it.

If you want a fun and somewhat silly read with a YA lesbian story and dinosaurs and the rapture- well, this is

for you. I'm still amused that this book even exists and amazingly enough I found it in my local library. It's obviously independently published and was funded by a Kickstarter campaign which is a pretty cool concept. I do think it could've used some further editing. It was heavy on the cliches- ie. "He floored the pedal to the metal" (which is not only a cliché but redundant) and honestly I feel as if the Wizard of Oz is so well known that this book could've been done with a bit more subtlety. I'm also unsure why there were a few random references to Alice in Wonderland, Little Red Riding Hood and perhaps one or two others. It just didn't need to be there and was only a confusing distraction.

Even for a fantasy novel, I think this book is just too disconnected from reality. Read it for it is but in some ways it's a total hodge podge of many fantasies in one. Even if the allusions to the unnecessary fairy tales I mentioned were left out, this book has A LOT going on in it- some sort of rapture, the LGBT theme and a homophobic bible thumping father who is trying to send Zippy to a "reparative therapy" type camp, the dinosaurs, the whole Wizard of Oz thing, and somehow dinosaurs, lots of dinosaurs, and a lot of action adventure type stuff and a 4'10" 80lb protagonist who does some very unbelievable stunts. Is it interesting? Oh yes! I considered it a fun read and it's vastly different from my normal reads. It was also a quick read. I will, however, say that this book never would've been picked up by a major publishing house, not in a million years. In many ways the story borrows so heavily from so many other things (we even have mentions of Matt Lauer, Westboro Baptist Church, the anti-gay bible passages...) and that comes across as very unoriginal and honestly a bit like some weird stories I wrote myself in Middle School. Yet it was a unique idea to blend all of these things and that's what kept me reading (that and the protag's name, not gonna lie.)

I think the author, Brian Rowe, has potential. I just think this story perhaps should've been reworked for awhile. There's a good story somewhere in this mess of themes. I loved Zippy and Frankie. They were very well developed. The father... Could've used some more work. He came off as a cookie cutter character who also had far too quick of a change of heart. I also would've liked to have heard more about Mira and gotten to know her better. I think it would've added both more tension to the story (does Zippy get to her? We want to really be rooting for the two of them!) and also would've made the ending so much better. I also think some of the dialogue just didn't ring true at all, both when fairy tale lines were pulled in and during regular conversation. I'm not sure what was up with the Bible quotes. Is the author anti- religion? Seemed wishy washy to me. And I genuinely feel so sad for young GLBT folks who feel as if there isn't a place for them in religion and who therefore abandon any and all spirituality altogether. Yet our protagonist didn't give up her beliefs so either that needs to be fleshed out more or those passages just don't belong. Something was just off about that.

So I don't know. I did enjoy the story. Unfortunately it did fall flat towards the end for me. I'm maybe rating higher than I should because I did like the idea of the story and darn it when characters share my name that sure makes me want to read and want to like it. I think in the end. I dislike it- more of a 2 star and to some degree the writing flaws I discussed have me leaning towards 1 star. I even have a YA reading dinosaur loving lesbian friend who is with a woman she met online in her teens and my gosh I really was hoping to be able to recommend this one to her! Yet even for her, I don't know that I would recommend it. So I guess to sum it up-

Didn't meet my expectations. Was clichéd yet unique in the jumble of themes. Was fun yet disappointing.

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## **Tween 2 Teen Book Reviews says**

Over the Rainbow was a fun, interesting, cute novel. It was a quick read that I couldn't put down. The

characters are spunky, the plot is well-done, and it's filled with humor. To get an idea of the story, imagine a cross between The Wizard of Oz and Jurassic Park. An unlikely cross that make for a very good story. Anyone who knows the plot and characters of The Wizard of Oz can accurately predict the course of the book, but it's still very fun to watch it pan out before your eyes. Over the Rainbow takes place in 1999, but it addresses issues we still have in today's society. It shows the character's development and how they deal with these issues remarkably well. I was intrigued when I read the synopsis and the story did my hopes justice.

The main character is named Zippy. I can't believe she put up with her home life for as long as she did. Zippy is lesbian, and when her father sends her to an anti-gay camp, she sneaks off in someone else's suitcase to see the girl she's in love with. Throughout the course of the book, Zippy shows courage and loyalty. The friends she meet on the journey are ones that she won't give up on. Each character resembles a character from The Wizard of Oz. They're remarkably personified and endlessly adorable. I love the characters with all my heart.

The story is done in an interesting way, each section having a date above it, almost like a diary. It's a very quick read that will leave readers wanting more. The ending, while concrete, leaves room for imagination. The story itself is kinda cheesy, but the good kind. It makes me giggle and I feel each emotion that Zippy does. I dug into the story and didn't stop until I'd finished. I will must likely read it again and enjoy it just as much. The story leaves almost nothing unsolved. The characters are constantly contemplating what is real and what isn't, giving them deeper meaning. I can relate to the characters and enjoy them. It's a quirky, cute story that everyone will enjoy! The story is fully deserving of it's five stars.

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## **Jenna says**

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

I...I don't even know what to say about this one. It was weird. WEIRD. Like, tripping on acid weird. I'm pretty sure the blurb at NetGalley didn't mention The Wizard of Oz, or I never would have requested it. And I somehow missed the part about the dinosaurs. It's in the last line. I probably didn't read that far. Both of those are turnoffs for me. I was already on the verge of giving up before the brontosaurus, but that was the last straw.

Look, this just wasn't the book for me. It's not the book I expected or wanted. I was pulled in by the pretty colors on the cover. Dazzled. I have now learned a lesson: you really can't judge a book by its cover.

Parts I did like: the late 1990s setting, when AOL and dial-up were your only options. You waited five minutes to get into your email and you liked it. The IDEA of Zippy (cute nickname) heading off to visit her online girlfriend instead of the anti-gay camp her dad is sending her to. The pretty colors on the cover. The dog.

I would recommend this to fans of The Wizard of Oz and those with more imagination than I have.

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## **Tanya Johnson says**

Zippy is a 17 year old girl who lives in Kansas with her father who is an Evangelist and Mayor. Like a

typical teenager and father, they don't get along however their major disagreement comes from the fact that Zippy is lesbian. After a couple of years of talking with a girl named Mia in Seattle, Zippy's father finds the emails and decides its time to send her to anti-gay camp to "straighten her out". While at the airport, Zippy (who is a very small girl for her age), hides in a suitcase and boards a plane for Seattle.

While on the plane, it crashes. Zippy has no idea where she is and where everyone else that was on the plane went. Looking she finds a little dog named Judy and man in the bathroom named Frankie....turns out he's gay too

While in their travels they stumble across a man name Mr. Baum in an abandoned house and the four of them (how can we forget Judy) head to Seattle so that Zippy can finally meet up with Mia. Along the way Zippy talks with her father and it turns out that the Rapture has finally happened and the one's still on earth are the individual God didn't take...although he did re-establish the dinosaur race (very funny aspect to the story).

So while is a total spin-off of Wizard of Oz, I found that the characters and the story were well written. I was very hesitant going into this as my ultimate favorite movie of all time the Wizard of Oz and well to me that is a sacred story. The author kept the characteristics of the characters in tack and you can still pull out the Oz story (Seattle being Emerald City). There was so much that Zippy had to face along the way and you find her will very encouraging. She made great friends along the way and her will never diminishes.

If you are looking for a somewhat modern take on a classic story, than this one is for you. Definitely a book I would recommend and hopefully like me you will find yourself pulled into Zippy's whirlwind of a trip and not wanting to put the book down

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## **Ian Wood says**

This is the complete review as it appears on my blog. All it's missing are the links which can be found on the blog.

I rated this as a worthy read. Beware spoilers!

This is one weird novel. It's a mash-up of The Wizard of Oz and Alice in Wonderland. Zippy is gay, and her father Raymond Green is a religious fundamentalist who decides the only 'cure' for her is to send her to Moral Intervention camp (with the emphasis on camp, no doubt!) for the summer. Zippy has other plans, however, and they're made up on the spur of the moment as she surreptitiously empties out a fellow traveler's suitcase and inserts herself inside it, thereby getting on a plane to Seattle, where her online girlfriend lives, instead of heading down to Memphis where the camp is. Her father is completely bewildered by her amazing disappearance, but he soon figures it out.

Unfortunately - or perhaps fortunately, I guess - the plane crashes, and Zippy and another guy (and a little dog, too) are the only survivors. Zippy names the dog Judy, and the three of them set out to find out what happened to the other passengers. Some thirty of them are dead on the plane, but there were many others who seem to have disappeared. They eventually find their way to a small town. Meanwhile Raymond heads out to his car in the airport parking lot and encounters the rapture, but surprisingly (to him), he isn't taken! The next thing that happens is that a T-rex comes stalking through the airport...! The rest of the novel



consists of his attempts to catch up to his wayward daughter, and her attempt to get to Seattle to meet her online friend Mira.

In the final analysis, frankly, I'm not quite sure what to say about this novel. I'm not at all convinced that mixing a gay love story with what's clearly a fairy tale is a wise decision! I did finish the novel, so it was readable by my standards, but I didn't feel any compulsion growing, during that reading, to seek out other works by this author. Having said that, I wasn't turned off or nauseated by the story either; I was just not falling in love with it. It was clearly a wild romp, not at all intended to be taken seriously, so I can't fault it for its improbabilities, and by that standard I should therefore rate it worthy, which is what I am going to do, with the caveat that it's never a positive sign when you have to think for a bit before you find a reason to rate a novel as a worthy read!

If you like silly, including highly improbable and silly happy endings, then this is one for you. If you like thoroughly goofy, then this is for you. If you like Wizard of Oz combined with the rapture, combined with dinosaurs acting completely out of character, then this is for you. And talking of out of character, Zippy's father was probably the most improbable character of all, especially at the end.

If you like dinosaurs portrayed realistically (or as realistically as we can gage their behavior sixty-four million years after the fact), then this will likely stick in your craw. Can we gage their behavior? That's the 64 million-year question isn't it? But I'd be willing to bet that contrary to popular portrayal in TV and movies, your average dinosaurs would be unlikely to chase and attack a motor vehicle. They would likely be scared of it, because it's unlike anything in their world, just as they would be unlikely to consider humans to be a primary food source the instant we meet, because we're unlike anything in their world. This knee-jerk portrayal of them as always being desperately hungry for human flesh and having no other interests whatsoever is nonsense. The smell and noise of a motor vehicle would repulse them, and I'd bet a dinosaur wouldn't attack a vehicle out of the blue unless the dino was a mother who deemed it a threat to her brood.

On the topic of religion, to suggest that the supreme being would miss some people during the rapture if he couldn't directly see them is absurd! A god really isn't a god when it's so blind and so thoroughly anthropomorphized, yet the religious do this with their gods routinely; it's another religious foible that provides me with endless amusement. In the final analysis, though, such a god is no more absurd than the Wizard of Oz, or Alice in Wonderland, is it? It's no different than a wooden boy coming to life or a guy spinning gold from straw. There is nothing to religion other than what each individual creates out of it for themselves, so I had no problem with this since I consider gods just as much a fairy tale as any other fairy tale topic. On that basis, the story made "sense"! So go read it and see what you think. It's a short, easy read and has a nice dollop of humor here and there. Not a bad way to idle away a couple of hours and a lot more rewarding than going to church!

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## **Karen Bynum says**

OVER THE RAINBOW was a fantastic read! The heroine Zippy (short for Zipporah) had so many things to overcome both internally with her sexuality and externally with half the world's population being replaced with dinosaurs. And still, she handled it all with her own special awkward charm and that adorable quick wit that made her character so endearing.

Zippy's voice captured me from line one. "This isn't me." I could feel her conflict already. By the end of chapter one when she does something so crazy awesome in order to get away from her horrible father at the

airport, I was totally invested.

I loved how the author made so many parallels to the Wizard of Oz. Zippy's main goal and desire was so simple—meet, in person, the girl she'd been talking to and fallen for online—but everything that happened in between amped up the complexity. I was thrilled each time a new character was introduced, because I wanted to see how they compared to the scarecrow, tin-man, and cowardly lion. Absolutely brilliant.

Through the entire book I kept guessing how it would end, but with each new character that was introduced, my guesses changed. After all the injustice Zippy suffered, when she finally had to make a choice, she showed such grace and maturity.

This is a young adult read that should not be missed! The author pitched it as The Wizard of Oz meets Jurassic Park. Love that!! Also, this story was a Kickstarter project, which I thought was awesome! I wish I had known about it then, because I would have totally backed it!

The story can definitely stand alone, but I really hope that Brian gives us more of Zippy and Mira's adventure because they rocked!!

A few of my fave lines:

You've always been an ellipsis with a question mark at the end.

"Freak out? Why would I freak out? There's just a goddamned dinosaur on the car!"

Life, if only for a moment, was perfect.

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## **-RadioactiveBookworm- says**

Goodreads Synopsis: The Wizard of Oz meets Jurassic Park!

Zippy Green never meant to fall in love with a girl, but when she does, her ultra-conservative father tries to send her to anti-gay camp. At the Kansas City airport, however, she hides inside a giant suitcase and sneaks onto an airplane headed not to the camp, but to Seattle, where her online love Mira lives. Halfway through the flight, the plane barrels out of control and crashes into the ground, knocking her unconscious.

When Zippy awakens, she finds that most of the passengers have vanished. She doesn't know what's happened, but she's determined to find out. She begins a quest on foot toward Seattle, and along the way, she meets a teenager with a concussion, a homeless man with a heart condition, a child without a shred of bravery, and a terrier named Judy. Together the group discovers that more than two-thirds of the world's population have mysteriously disappeared. But that's only the beginning...

All Zippy wants is to find her Mira, but before she can she has to contend with two outside forces. The first is her homophobic father, who does everything in his power to keep her from the girl she loves. And the second is extinct creatures of all shapes and sizes, including living, breathing dinosaurs, which have replaced the missing population.

My Review: To be completely honest, this book was a little confusing in my opinion. The timelines bounce

around a lot, the whole rapture thing is a little weird considering it triggered dinosaurs and other extinct species to just pop back up again, and the ending was a little disappointing. The main characters are pretty solid, although we really only get to know about Zippy, and the other characters in the book were just kind of there and nothing else. I was really unhappy with the ending. I think I might have downloaded this book for free on amazon, and it just wasn't for me. I get that she likes Jurassic Park but it didn't help out the story at all, aside from identifying the different dinosaurs that didn't have a reason to be there. I like the cover, however, and Zippy was a very strong teenage character, but she didn't act her age. Thanks for reading!

(radioactivebookreviews.wordpress.com)

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## **Hayley Rogers says**

I don't know how this book found its way into my kindle because I never bought it. But I decided to read it because the premise was so ridiculous and I am a sucker for retellings. I've read a few Wizard of Oz retellings and I don't think I've liked any of them. This one is no exception. It is beyond silly but in a way that made me want to see it through to the end. Nothing about this book is believable but that's okay. It was entertaining. I think what would have made it better would be to hike up the blood and guts and overall unbelievability of it. But good try.

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## **Pili says**

I was intrigued by this book's blurb and requested an ARC via NetGalley, and I have to say I'm very glad I did. This book has such a quirky, fun and positive story, despite the very tough subjects it touches, that made me smile and root for Zippy from page 1!

The play on the Wizard of Oz story starts with the title, and continues in many small ways, from the finding 3 companions and a dog (named Judy, which I think it's a reference to Judy Garland that played the original Dorothy in the movie) to making their way to the Emerald City, in this case referring to Seattle (apparently is the official nickname for the city) where each one of the travellers expect to find something... The journey is full of strange & wondrous things, and not exempt of danger.

Our Dorothy in this book is Zippy, a sweet & quirky girl from Kansas, full of spirit and about to be sent away to an anti-gay camp by her zealot homophobic father. She manages to run away from him at the airport in the most improbable and hilarious way and unconventionally boards a plane to Seattle, so she can finally meet Mira, the girl she's been in love (and talking online) for two years.

Then the first twist happens, with the plane crashing when the pilots and most of the passengers simply disappear, and Zippy finds her first companion, Frankie. The story progresses with them trying to figure out what has happened, how the world is suddenly changing and trying to get to Seattle by land. They encounter the rest of the troupe and quite a few adventures along the way. I will only say one word: DINOSAURS!

We also have a few bits of the narrative from Zippy's father's POV, which are quite disturbing, since I could never find myself understanding such anger, such determination to not be able to love his daughter as she is, and such clinging on to hate to those who are different.

The end of the journey is one full of hope and a lesson on how we can be the ones to make our world a better place, with our own choices. This book has a very important message, one of positivity, and also adds more diversity to the YA narrative, with a LGBT main character and secondary characters.

I'd really recommend this book to everyone who wants to enjoy a good book and love quirky & funny bits with dinosaurs in them! Very well deserved 4 stars!

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## Jillyn says

Much to the dismay of her extremely religious Midwestern politician father, Zippy is a lesbian. She becomes attached to a girl named Mira through an AOL Movies forum, and though they hadn't yet met, Mira becomes a major part of Zippy's life- that is, until her father finds the messages and tries to force Zippy to go to a straight camp. At the airport, she makes a daring escape in a huge suitcase, and is put into the cargo bit of a plane headed towards Seattle, towards Mira. But when the plane crashes, she finds that people are missing. A LOT of people. This LGBT retelling of the Wizard of Oz finds the red converse wearing Zippy, a fearful little girl, a concussion-having teenager, a man with a heart-condition, and a cute little dog too, to figure out what happened in The Rapture, survive the Jurassic Park-esque post-Rapture Earth, avoid a wicked, scorned, homophobic father and find the loved ones "left below".

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This book was weird. Bizarre. Utterly insane. And yet, I adored it far more than I had anticipated. There's a madness to this book that reflects both Oz and Wonderland, where things become so bat-shit crazy that it almost seems logical. And also, dinosaurs.

First, I loved both the protagonist and her love, Zippy and Mira. Zippy is strong, independent and kicks some serious butt. Nothing dissuades her from her goal of finding Mira: not dinosaurs, not car accidents, not a crazy father. She stays true to herself. Part of why I am so fond of this couple is because I *am* part of this couple. I met my girlfriend, Emily, on the internet. Though, we used Hotmail to chat and not AOL, before Outlook was rolled out and ruined everything, but I digress. We didn't meet for roughly two years after we "met", a similar time frame to Mira and Z. And my parents didn't know that I was LGBT until I had already met Emily in real life, when I finally chose to come out. Thankfully, neither of my parents, however, sent me to a straight camp (and like Z, they would have had a hell of a time actually getting there). And I know that if we were both left below, dinosaurs wouldn't deter us either. End mushy ramble.

I also really enjoyed her family characters. Even though they were largely unpleasant, I felt that they were well written and believable (yes, I am using that word in a book about the dinopocalypse). However, I didn't really ever feel connected to Frankie or Lyman, though Elle was adorable. They served their functions in turn, but I wasn't overly hoping for their success.

Now to the Wizard of Oz bit- I very much was amused by the parallels. Red Converse on her feet, Kansas, the people she travels with, her wicked father who didn't defy gravity in the rapture (I see what you did there, Mr. Rowe!). Like a child, I found myself often pointing and going "HA!", because I understood the reference. Then there's the names: Frankie, Elle, Mr. Lyman Balm, Judy. How fitting.

The fact that this is in the 90s made me happy. It flips between the late and early 90s, and it made me have flashbacks to when AOL chat rooms were a thing, and I ~~pretended to be older to get into teen chats~~ talked

responsibly with new people on the amazing internet. Initially, I had an issue that technology still worked despite 70% of the population disappearing. But then I remembered how you couldn't stop AOL or those big clunky computers for anything, unless you picked up the telephone (in which case you screamed at your mother to hang up even though your 18 hour download of one Hanson song is ruined and you have to start over). I also liked the references to things like Buffy. She would have been proud of Z, I think. Willow too.

Now for the part everyone cares about: The dinosaurs and other extinct animals that pop up onto the earth after the rapture. I happen to find this twist fabulous. You see, I have a theory (keeping in mind that I believe in evolution. This is a fiction book. Bear with me.) In the beginning God created dinosaurs and saber toothed cats and bugs the size of chairs, and life was terrifying. He looked to the earth with a smirk and said "Soon." He then grabbed all his scary animal friends and kept them hidden off earth until the second coming, then he set them free with a maniacal laugh on those who didn't get saved. Is this theory what the author intended? Probably not. But that's my take away from this story and I'm sticking to it. So there.

The ending was a happily ever after, but for me it was a bit *too* happy. It kind of was off set from the tone of the rest of the book. There is a rapture fact about staying away from windows that I wish would have been expanded on. I would have liked more story time with both Z's family and the side characters. Those are my only real flaws with the book.

Be warned, this book is suitable for people only with *great* imaginations. If you will be offended by lesbians, swearing, or dinosaurs in your second-coming, then step back from this one. But, if strange worlds like Wonderland or Oz fascinate you, I'd give this a try. This is one of the best LGBT books I've read this year, but brace yourself for acid-tripping weird feelings.

Thank you Netgalley and author Brian Rowe for my copy in exchange for an honest review. This review can also be found on my blog, Bitches n Prose.

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## **Jenni Frencham says**

Zippy, a 17-year old from a very religious family, falls in love with a girl, so her father decides to send her off to an ex-gay camp so she can be cured of this disease. At the airport, Zippy hides in someone else's luggage and sneaks onto an airplane to go meet her girlfriend in Seattle, but the plane crashes and Zippy discovers that most of the passengers are gone. Not dead: gone. Zippy teams up with a few other survivors to try to find her way to Seattle. Oh, and there are dinosaurs everywhere now.

This book was just weird. First, it's set in the late 1990's, so Zippy meets her girlfriend over AOL, which gives the book a bit of the *You've Got Mail* feeling, but without Meg Ryan. Second, when 70% of the people on earth are taken, Zippy and her dad think it's the rapture, but then they discover that it was just people who were outside or near windows who were taken. Why didn't they figure that out before? We don't live on a planet where 70% of the people claim to be Christians, and Zippy's uber-Christian family would have understood that. Then there are the dinosaurs (and other long-extinct creatures). There's no explanation for the appearance of the dinosaurs, and no one seems the least bit bothered by them. This is never resolved, either. Everyone seems to be okay with the fact that there are now dinosaurs roaming the mostly uninhabited planet.

Finally, this book tries to be a riff on The Wizard of Oz. Zippy is traveling to "the emerald city" with Frank, Elle, and Mr. Balm. Frank's got no brain, Mr. Balm's got no heart, and Elle's got no courage. And they have a

little dog, too. So I was expecting at the end of this book to find that maybe Zippy had been discovered in the suitcase after she hit her head, so the rest of the book was just her dream/hallucination, but no such luck. They get to "the emerald city," Zippy is able to find her true love, and everyone lives happily ever after. With dinosaurs.

This book is so incredibly not worth anyone's time. We don't get to know any of the characters at all, the plot makes no sense and twists around too much, and the resolution is ridiculous. Perhaps if one were to be smoking something while reading this, it would be really intense and deep. As it was, it wasted valuable space on my Kindle.

Recommended for: No one

Red Flags: language, Zippy's homophobic father's comments about gay people

Overall Rating: 1/5 stars

*I received a complimentary copy of this book through NetGalley for the purposes of review.*

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## **Alexia says**

Disclaimer: I received this e-galley from Netgalley in exchange for my honest review.

Review:

Okay first of all let me admit that The Wizard of Oz is definitely not my all time favorite movie. In fact I don't like it. At all. Even as a nearly 28 year old woman, I don't like it. However I was curious about the modern retelling of it so I decided to give it a shot.

With the exception of Zippy's conservative anti-gay father, I loved the rest of the characters. Zippy was absolutely adorable and Frankie, Mr. Balm and Ellie were awesome too. Frankie's father was the complete opposite of Zippy's father which was so awesome. When we first meet Mr. Balm he gives off this really creepy old homeless guy vibe. Thankfully we realize that he's quite normal and not creepy at all.

I get very angry every time someone in a book goes on a homophobic rant, tangent, whatever you want to call it. I absolutely hated every word that came out of Zippy's dad's mouth. It was clear to me that he didn't care about Zippy's happiness. He only cared about his career and how it would look to have a lesbian daughter. However, watching him evolve throughout the book was awesome to watch. It was something I never expected to see, but I did and it made me happy.

I don't like Jurassic Park either, but it was really cool to have dinosaurs and other extinct species emerge from the shadows in this book. It was fascinating and I loved seeing how excited Zippy got, especially with the dinosaurs.

Oh I almost forgot about Lucy, the white dog that was also on the plane with Zippy and Frankie in the beginning. She was clearly supposed to be Toto if we are comparing this modern day version to the original version.

I love that there are getting to be more LGBT characters in YA. That shows a lot of progression if we

compare the books out now to the books that were out even five years ago. So I am giving this book 4 stars. I found it completely enjoyable and the characters were likable, with the notable exception of Zippy's father.

"You can't prevent someone from being gay. They just are." -Frankie

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## **Ambur says**

I have been intrigued with *Over the Rainbow* ever since I heard about its Kickstarter campaign and helped back it...and now that I've read it, I have to say that it was pretty amazing, and I am definitely proud to have helped Brian Rowe get Zippy's story out into the world. Not only did this story broach the subject of homophobia and the heinous idea that someone can be "straightened out" as Zippy's dad put it, it also just told a wonderful story about overcoming obstacles, adversity, and finding the one you love.

I absolutely loved *Over the Rainbow*. The characters were wonderful, and I loved the parallels between it and the *Wizard of Oz*. Zippy's friends were all clearly in homage to the group that Dorothy has with her in. Frankie = Scarecrow, Mr. Balm = The Tinman, Elle = The Cowardly Lion, Judy = Toto and I also presumed that the dog alluded to the wonderful Judy Garland as well, and of course, Zippy acts as Dorothy and her father as the Wicked Witch of the West. I loved that the characters shared similarities with those in the *Wizard of Oz*, but I also loved that they fully became characters of their own and I loved the relationships that they all had with Zippy. I also enjoyed Zippy and Mira's relationship. I loved getting to read their email exchanges and I won't tell you if they actually meet up because that's totally a spoiler...but I will say that this book definitely does have a happy ending, so that may give you a hint about all that. ;)

Overall, I thought that *Over the Rainbow* was a truly wonderful story. I also appreciated Brian Rowe's efforts to get it out there! There really aren't many stories with lesbian main characters, and I may not be a lesbian myself, but I really don't think having a different sexual orientation from the narrator will hinder readers in any way, and it really shouldn't. Zippy isn't a stereotype, and she isn't defined by her sexual orientation...she's just herself, and she's trying to be happy, and to be happy she needs to be with the girl she loves, even if her father thinks the fact that she loves girls is a complete blasphemy.

*Over the Rainbow* is set in 1999 (for the most part, it also has several flashbacks that go further back), but I think that the different reactions to both Zippy and Frankie's sexual orientation are definitely authentic, and I like to think that we have come some way from there...and hopefully, with fantastic books like this, those that might think poorly on others based on their sexual orientation will finally see that who we love and are attracted to shouldn't be what defines us, and it really shouldn't be something that we judge each other for. We're all people who deserve to be treated with kindness, equality, and allowed the freedoms and rights that we all have been granted thanks to the people who have come before us.

I would recommend *Over the Rainbow* to anyone who enjoys a story that deals with overcoming obstacles to reach someone you love with the help of your friends. I also think fans of the *Wizard of Oz* who like quirky narrators, or people who like journeys and stories about friendship will enjoy this one. Also as I mentioned, the narrator is a lesbian in this book, so I definitely have to mention that anyone looking for interesting stories dealing with overcoming judgement and facing adversity because of sexual orientation will like this. Plus...there are dinosaurs, and some pretty trippy *Alice in Wonderland*-like moments, which I thought were pretty awesome. I loved it though, and I hope that you give it the chance and that you love it, too!

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