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Linny has been fascinated by disappearances, ever since her sister Grace ran away in the middle of the night without saying goodbye.

Sebastian can tell you how many galaxies there are, and knows how much plutonium weighs. But the one thing he can't figure out is the identity of his birth father.

They've never met, but Linny and Sebastian have one thing in common: an obsession with famous novelist and filmmaker Alvaro Herrera, who went missing three years ago and has just reappeared. As they learn more about the mystery of Alvaro, Linny and Sebastian uncover the answers they've been searching for.

If Birds Fly Back Details

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From Reader Review If Birds Fly Back for online ebook

Carlie Sorosiak says

I mean, impartially speaking, it's pretty good. Things in this book: movies, Miami, kissing, more kissing, astrophysics, missing people, love, questions about finding your place in the world, and a bird or two.

Jennifer Walker says

"Let me tell you something about hands. They're not one-size fits all like hotel slippers. Ours slot together with an audible chink. (At least I can hear it.)"

I had the privilege of reading an early copy of this work. It's funny and sweet, and the characters are memorable, engaging and endearing. It reminded me of what it was like to be young again and in love. Linny is smartly written, easy to identify with and to like. Sebastian is adorable and his voice is also authentic, written as a boy in his situation should be. Alvaro is a mystery, like a fancy box that arrives on your doorstep--you cannot wait to open it to see what's inside. The rest of the characters are equally colorful and fun to live with. You root for them all! I'd be okay if this book was 100 pages longer, because I didn't want it to end.

The ball pit scene! Just wait for the ball pit scene :)

Karen Fortunati says

What a gorgeously written, absolute gem of a debut! Carlie Sorosiak deftly weaves themes of loss, abandonment and identity into one of the most captivating romances I've read. I adored Linny and Sebastian! The story's structure works brilliantly in the alternating POV of the two main characters but what elevates it to another level is the addition of the character's coping mechanisms: Linny's screenplay and excerpts from Sebastian's favorite physics text. Drafting the screenplay helps Linny get an understanding of her sister's abandonment and Sebastian relies on the text for guidance in dealing with his father's abandonment. While these issues are serious and Sorosiak never underestimates the immense pain of these losses, the story just sails due to the humor and wit of Linny and Sebastian. The dialogue in this book simply pops off the pages, the characters' voices so distinct and singular, the Miami setting so realistic you could feel the heat - IF BIRDS FLY BACK picks you up and doesn't let go until the last page. This spectacular debut is a must read!

Jilly Gagnon says

This book was SO. GOOD.

I adored Linny and Sebastian--they're both such unique, interesting, lovable-but-flawed characters and I want

them to be my IRL friends.

And Alvaro! He was as much a magnetic pole for the reader as he was for the characters; I was so impressed by how Sorosiak was able to convey the kind of ineffable draw he had for people even though he didn't have a ton of screen time.

There's so much to love about this book: the quirky, unique personalities of everyone in it; the sweet summer love story that never feels predictable; the big-picture questions about identity, and following your passions, and finding your place in the world; I could honestly go on for days.

Seriously, though, just get your hands on a copy. You're going to fall in love SO hard.

Emily Murphy says

If I were going to teach a class on voice, this book would be my assigned reading. *IF BIRDS FLY BACK* is told from the dual POVs of Linny and Sebastian, a couple of teenagers reeling from the loss of two important people who have separately disappeared from their lives. There was so much about this book to admire: in particular, I found the structure of it to be so clever, interesting, and unique. Linny's scraps of facts on famous disappearances; Sebastian's quotations from *A Brief Compendium of Astrophysical Curiosities*; and most of all, Linny's movie script, pieced together in sections interspersed throughout the novel, was something that touched (and often broke) my heart in merely a handful of lines.

IF BIRDS FLY BACK is a coming of age story that will both rend your heart and make you cheer. Perfect for fans of *ALL THE BRIGHT PLACES*.

Lauren James says

This is so raw and real and wonderful. You're all going to love this to pieces. And wait until you meet SEBASTIAN.

Danielle (Life of a Literary Nerd) says

"Theoretically, everything should be explainable. But what if the explanation is that things are a gazillion times simpler than we think? That we don't need theorems to figure out our own lives?"

*What if it's as simple as a boy loving his father? A girl loving a sister?
A boy loving a girl?"*

If *Birds Fly Back* is a beautifully emotional story that resonates love, longing, and hope. This is a story about family and expectations and longing and grief. Linny is left reeling after the unexpected disappearance of her sister Grace, and all of Sebastian's intellect can't tell him anything about his birth father. Both teens are striving for answers and reasons to mysteries they don't understand. Linny and Sebastian come together and

learn more about family, acceptance, and themselves in the process.

Things I Liked :

Linny and Sebastian both were great MCs. **Linny** is a contradiction of optimism and realism. She has a heart wrenching dedication to her sister Grace, and her world implodes after her disappearance. I loved how she documented disappearance, and while maybe not the healthiest of coping tactic, it was truly unique and fascinating. **Sebastian** is again is a bit of a contradiction. He wants to be an astrophysicists - so he's very logical and analytical. He also is a bit of a dreamer, who uses physics to explain the beauty and mystery around him. I also really loved **Álvara Herrera**. Though we don't get much from him, he very much felt like a catalyst for our characters and the overall story. He was so earnest and a lovable grandfather-type character trying to play matchmaker for our two leads.

I loved **Linny's script**. It was so beautifully whimsical and meaningful. I became invested in her relationship with her sister, even though we've never seen them together. It also really showed Linny's emotional state and growth through the story as she starts questioning and blaming herself, wondering what she could have done, and grow toward acceptance.

Sebastian's little **theorems and thesis prompts** through the story was one of my absolute favorite parts. Like, Linny's scripts, Sebastian's theorems showcased his thought process and emotions really well. And they were just fantastic in general. Here are some of my favorites:

A Theory for Absent Fathers #2: The end of invisibility directly correlates with the beginning of complication.

Theory on Kissing, Featuring Newton's Third Law: For every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction. But you will never fully understand this until there is a girl pressing her lips against yours in the same way that you are pressing your lips against hers.

The Stars-are-Like-Secrets Principle: Both can run out of fuel. Even if they remain dormant for years, all it takes is a catalyst. One day, they will explode.

This story was so **EMOTIONALLY GRIPPING!!!!!!** It was so powerful and moving without feeling really heavy or depressing. There was this bright air of hope and growth that infused happiness into the story.

Things I Didn't Like :

I felt like Sebastian's **father reveal** felt really abrupt and out of nowhere. It happened at the beginning of the story to set the events into motion, but it just came out of left field.

There was this **whimsy-ness** that made it hard for me to connect and really sink my heart into the story until about 60%. It almost felt like I was an outside looking in, and I was missing an unnamed something.

This was a surprising success for me and I really enjoyed it. I don't know how many times I can say beautiful and emotionally resonate, but it was just so fantastic. This is perfect if you like your summer contemporaries with some depth and great character growth. Highly recommend this!!!

I received a copy of the book from HarperCollins via Edelweiss in exchange for an honest review.

Tanaz says

LINNY: "Ever since my sister disappeared, I've been living in black and white. Full-on classic movie without any of the good bits. It's the sad channel, twenty-four seven."

SEBASTIAN: "For the last seventeen years I've made up stories about my dad. The guy bolted before I was born—and that's all I know about him. That he left."

Linny's sister Grace disappeared during her junior year, leaving a gaping hole in Linny's life.

Sebastian's mother just told him about his biological father's identity - a father who does not know Sebastian exists.

When enigmatic writer Alvaro Herrera reappears in a nursing home after going missing for three years, Linny and Sebastian's lives collide in interesting and unexpected ways.

Linny hopes that discovering the reason for Alvaro's reappearance can help her figure out if Grace will ever return. Sebastian simply wants to tell Alvaro that the latter is his father - only it's not that simple.

Alternating between Linny and Sebastian's perspectives, the novel is cleverly structured as part screenplay and part narrative. Carlie Sorosiak writes with warmth and compassion, effortlessly balancing the heartbreakingly storyline with wit and humour. My favourite scenes in this book were by far the ones between Linny and Sebastian, the sweetness of their romance counterbalanced with just enough awkwardness to make it realistic and perfect.

I fell in love with these characters and finished this book with a full heart.

Highly recommended for lovers of contemporary fiction about families and relationships.

Cale Dietrich says

Maybe people fall together while they're falling apart?

Okay, so this book was ASTONISHINGLY good. It's addicting and super fun and stars a duo of unforgettable characters who start the summer romance to END all other summer romances.

Case in point: the ball-pit scene. I don't think I've ever read a scene that was as swoony and perfect as that one. And then it just keeps getting better from there, with more incredible, cinematic and unforgettable scenes. This book really captures that magical, sun-soaked feeling of summer, and then combines it with two of the most loveable and interesting YA characters I've ever read about.

Speaking of, BIRDS is dual POV, split between two very distinct and equally amazing characters: Linny and Sebastian. I adored both of them so much that they're new all-time faves. Linny, who is trying to find out

what happened to her sister, is so charming, relatable and complicated. And then there's Sebastian, who is just everything. He's this nerdy boy with messy hair who wears shirts that say stuff like 'I edit Wikipedia'. He's just the best, and I already know readers are going to fall totally in love with him.

This book also tackles a lot of really big questions about loyalty and self-discovery and family in such thoughtful and unique ways. It's got a really great insight into the way the people/the world works, and I love it even more for that.

Basically: this book is just incredible. It's extremely fun to read, has a lot of depth, and is nearly impossible to put down. I'll just say this: Sorosiak is now an insta-buy author for me, because I'm totally in love with this book, and I need more books like it in my life.

C.G. Drews says

This was pretty entirely super cute! I did struggle a *small squidge* with feeling entirely invested in the story, but it featured a bunch of nerds and an adorakble friendship-turned-romance with plenty of fun dialogue -- SO I CAN GET BEHIND THIS. I also literally got behind it when I was reading and dropped it on my face. Thank you to all the universe, stars, and pebbles upon the shores that I read a paperback and didn't die or lose my eyes. Life can be kind.

It's dual narrated by Linny and Sebastian. And I can't even pick a favourite?! THEY'RE SO CUTE. Linny is totally obsessed with film and Sebastian is into astrophysics. I love how their individual chapters included like scientific facts or snippets of a screenplay being written. It just really made them feel like such individuals! **My only problem was: they're both in 1st person.** Soooo, I always struggle with dual-narration in 1st. Their voices tend to feel super much the same? BUT AH WELL. **I also appreciated that they were both diverse and POC!** Linny is biracial with a Nigerian mother, and Sebastian is Mexican!

The story is basically all about missing people. Linny's sister disappeared and Sebastian is looking for his never-before-met-dad. Now I confess...because I have a cold, dead heart: I did fail to feel really invested in both their searches? I think maybe the tone of the book was TOO happy/light when coupled with something that should've felt as direly devastating as missing people???

Also it kind of didn't have a whole heck of a lot of plot. Mostly it's set in an old-people's home. Which is about as fascinating as falling into a cucumber. But I DID love the other scenes were Sebastian/Linny hung out or fell in love or stuck stars on ceilings or made bad food together. THEY WERE SO CUTE. **All their cute scenes were just super sweet to read.** Until, you know, I brained myself with this book. Then I read on, slightly bitter, but still pleased at least they were having a nice time.

ALL IN ALL: This is a supercute story but at the same time a little forgettable. It didn't hook me emotionally at all and I was a bit bored, I confess, with the moseying slow plot. Or lack thereof. But the dialogue was AMAZING and their voices were so fun!! I LOVE THESE TWO CUTIES POPSICLE PIECES. I think their relationship was so well done and I totally rooted for them. **Definitely chase this one down if you're after a fun summery read.** Also chase it down if you're after incredibly bad Mexican food and complete dorks who would rather hide in a cupboard than socialise. #relatable

Anna Priemaza says

Holy bananas, this book was good. I loved every bit of it. The famous, elderly cult writer who shows up at the old folks' home where Linny volunteers, mysteriously reappearing after three years' disappearance. The gorgeous screenplay Linny writes to cope with the fact that her sister disappeared out the window one night and hasn't been heard from since. Linny's notebook entries about people in history who disappeared... and why they came back. The excerpts from *A Brief Compendium of Astrophysical Curiosities* genius Sebastian quotes to cope with why his father disappeared. The adorable, dorky, anxiety-filled way Linny and Sebastian fall in love. All of it: magical.

IF BIRDS FLY BACK is a love story, but it's about so much more than romantic love. It's about friendship. ("Say what you will, but bromances are real.") It's about sisters. ("Are you still running, Grace? Because I'm still chasing you, and my legs are about to give out.") It's about unexpected relationships that change you and heal you and set you free. ("This is going to sound kind of corny, but I think I needed him this summer, in a completely different way than I thought I did. He broke me out of something.")

The whole story was gorgeous and full of heartache and joy and poetic and beautiful, and I can't recommend it enough.

Warda says

Pre-reading review:

Tag line: "Love is what happens when you're looking for something else."

And because I'm feeling single AF these days (blaming The Kiss Quotient), I thought this could get me out of my funk.

Post-feelings:

Still feeling single as hell, but damn was that book imperfectly perfect. The author has poured her heart and soul into this book.

It's a story about two characters who are dealing with some kind of loss in their own way. Linny's sister disappeared without a trace. Sebastian has never known his father till his mother springs upon him that his father is a famous author, who's recently resurfaced after 3 years of no one being aware of his whereabouts.

Linny, who is obsessed with this author - as well as movies - goes on a mission to find out where exactly he has been and why he's returned. She's hoping this will bring some clarification to her sister's disappearance. At the same time, she has been keeping a diary of people who have disappeared in the past and resurfaced and seeing if there is a pattern that she can discover.

Once Sebastian finds out about his father, he searches for him and finds him. Both characters then meet as they're after the same man and the story takes off from there.

I loved the writing style of this book. It was so whimsical and dreamlike and each chapter of both characters started off with either aspects of Linny's 'disappearance diary' or Sebastian's love for science and parallel universes. They provided insight into the characters and how they were dealing with their situation and I

absolutely loved that. It added so much personality and depth to the story.

Their were hints to their cultures and backgrounds as Linny is mixed race (Nigerian and white) and Sebastian is of a Latin background, which were nicely incorporated. Alongside it, Linny was writing a script about her relationship with her sister and to cope with that particular loss.

Everything about the story was just woven so intricately and so beautifully done. I was completely transported and swept by the magic of the story. It was poetic, full of love, insight on life (it made me appreciate the elderly and their wisdom) and the characters breaking out of their shell. Needless to say, I shed some tears. It was amazing to go on that journey with them.

Kate (GirlReading) says

If Birds Fly Back was a lovely story of love, loss, family and self discovery. I warmed to both Linny and Sebastian as characters and Carlie Sorosiak's writing style made for a perfect, easy summer read.

Dannii Elle says

My full review can be found at United by Pop.

This story chronicled an adorable blossoming romance that made this the perfect read, for this time of year. Their growing attraction was obvious to the reader but I still enjoyed reading of their emerging emotions and tentative struggles to restrain them. Scenes of an absolute adorable nature followed their accepted summer romance and I now know that no more perfect date can exist if it doesn't involve a ball pit and a horde of energised twelve-year-olds!

But there was also some grit mixed in with this sweetness. Both Linny and Sebastian are struggling with their own internal monsters, which adds notes of poignancy to, what became on times, a heart-wrenching read. They have both suffered a disappearance and it has shaped the people they have become, but they are beginning to understand that what has altered them doesn't also have to stunt them.

As they continue to learn from each other and to grow in the presence of their shared, new-found knowledge, their demons begin to grow wings and take flight. And so to does the reader benefit from their shared experiences. Many lines of lasting brilliance end this novel and the messages it imparts are important ones. This entire novel takes place over the course of just one summer but the message it leaves the reader with are something that can be carried for a lifetime.

Cam (abookeater) says

A copy was provided by the publisher through Edelweiss in exchange for an honest review

I don't consider myself a big fan of summer contemporaries simply because I live on an island where it's practically summer every single day. I always find them cliche and predictable, especially with the whole tourist aspect which I hate.

If Birds Fly Back is the complete and total opposite of what I just described. In this novel, we are presented with a mystery. Linny's older sister, Grace has disappeared to god knows where and since then, Linny has been obsessed with the disappearances (but most importantly the returns) of random strangers. Enter Álvaro Herrera, famous novelist who was supposedly reported missing over 3 years ago, now lodging and seemingly retiring at Silver Springs retirement home in Florida. His reappearance is just what Linny needs (with her logic) to figure out the mystery of her lost sister.

Then we have Sebastian. A boy obsessed with the mysteries of the universe and astrophysics but most importantly, the mystery that is his father. Unexpected news sends him straight to Florida where, as we would expect, his and Linny's worlds collide. With Álvaro in the middle of course. Nothing spells romance like an eighty something year old novelist who seems to be losing his wits little by little.

Together, they form an unlikely alliance and camaraderie. This is definitely what I loved best about this book. Its unconventional but sweet. We have the clash of two completely different generations and how both are now learning from each other's mistakes.

The romance is not over the top which I appreciated immensely. The story ISN'T about Linny and Sebastian's romance. It's about love and all its imperfections and obstacles. It's about how complex and borderline irritating it is to express love and how there is no correct way to do it. Linny's relationship with her parents is strained, to put it lightly. Sebastian feels betrayed by a mother who kept part of his life a secret. Together and apart, they must work through this or lose themselves in the process.

I loved how fleshed out these characters were more than anything. They both have such complex identities; Linny is biracial with a Nigerian mother and a white father and Sebastian's latin background won me over especially when we get to meet his aunt. There are pieces and hints of each other's culture without them being the focus of the story. I enjoyed that but others might not and I respect that.

Linny's love for film is fascinating and adds so much to her personality while Seb's love for facts and scientific thought mixes surprisingly well with Linny's personality. They're both likable and relatable, it's hard not to love them. I loved the dual perspectives. Both of them had a lot to say while inside their own heads and I'm glad we got to see that.

This is the kind of story that sticks with you with its abundance of relatable passages and quotes. I felt nostalgic while reading it which is always a good sign. Nostalgia and melancholy are my signs of identifying a good contemporary. All in all, this was great book and I can see myself rereading all my favorite passages over and over again.
