



How Many Letters Are In Goodbye?

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It's been almost eleven years since Rhea Farrell last wrote to her mother.

It was a Friday night ritual - until Rhea's father decided it was stupid to write letters to a dead person. That was the summer before the accident. The summer before Rhea began to keep her first secret.

Now about to turn eighteen, Rhea finds herself alone on the streets of New York with nobody to talk to about the future, or the past. So, just like she used to do as a little girl, she begins a letter with the words 'Dear Mum' and tells her mother the things she can't tell anyone else.

In the city where Allison Farrell was born, her daughter begins to delve into her past. And as she uncovers more about who her mother truly was, Rhea starts to figure out exactly who she herself wants to be. And that sometimes it takes longer than you think to say goodbye...

How Many Letters Are In Goodbye? Details

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From Reader Review How Many Letters Are In Goodbye? for online ebook

Kelly (Diva Booknerd) says

3.5 Stars.

How Many Letters Are In Goodbye was an emotional and poignant read, so why did I feel so disconnected? Rhea was a formidable character, her past experiences have left her with a genuine likability but it felt as though the length of the storyline allowed her story to lose impact. It begins with Rhea in New York, having fled her aunts new house in Florida where the two moved in with her aunts boyfriend and his teenage daughter, the popular and sullen Laurie. Herein lies my issue. I don't often speak of characters with such disdain but Laurie's character made me livid or perhaps it's how she was portrayed. Although Rhea is gay, Laurie is unsure of her sexuality and wants to explore. I still believe Laurie could have been used as a tool for teens to relate to that feeling of finding your sexual identity, but it felt as though it was sinister and manipulative sadly. Had the concept been explored in positive light rather than just a secretive fling, my attitude towards How Many Letters In Goodbye may have been significantly different.

Yvonne Cassidy should be applauded for broaching what are generally confronting points of discussion. Abuse, neglect, abandonment, homelessness and prostitution. The loss of Rhea's arm at a young age felt as though it had very little impact. She was able, but was discriminated against by others especially when seeking employment. Her friendship with Sergei felt like little more than convenience, another body on the street who could provide her with a sense of safety and normalcy from what seemed to be out of obligation.

The storyline begins in the year 1999 and takes place over a few months. I'm assuming that may have been the period of Yvonne Cassidy's teen years as there doesn't seem to be any other explanation as to why, only that perhaps she felt it was more authentic. I did enjoy Rhea's recovery and that to heal she understood the need for professional help when dealing with her loss and the secrets she uncovers surrounding her mothers death, rather than the quick fix solutions so many young adult titles generally offer the reader. The most appealing aspect of How Many Letters Are In Goodbye is that it was messy. The moments of reflection and solitude, then and engaging and almost frantic page turner that unveils Rhea's story slowly.

But it was too long and the brutal nature of the storyline lost impact with me. Rhea's life on the streets seemed to rehash the same descriptive nature of being homeless, bloating the storyline and lacking that emotional connection sadly. It held promise, but unfortunately the length and lack of connection with it's characters made for a long and often rambling read.

<http://www.divabooknerd.com/2016/01/n...>

Ylenia says

ARC / review copy provided by NetGalley in exchange for an honest review, thanks again

How Many Letters Are in Goodbye? follows Rhea, a nearly 18 years old girl who used to live with her Aunt in Florida and is now homeless in New York, after she run away.

We know a couple of things about her: she's Irish and used to live there before her father died, she lost her arm at a young age and she's trying to find her mother, even if she knows she's dead.

The book tried to tackle a lot of different topics: losing one/both parents, disability, sexuality and sexual orientation, child abuse and sexual abuse, alcoholism and much more.

This is why the book was and felt so long: there were too many things to include and discuss.

Maybe she should have focused on 2/3 things and use the other ones for another book...anyhow it was too much to take in.

Even if the book was definitely longer than many others contemporary books, the protagonist didn't go through any character development.

I couldn't stand Rhea for half of the book (all she said was "me, me, me, me and me") and it was hard for me to connect with her in any way possible.

Aunt Ruth's personality wasn't consistent throughout the book.

How Many Letters Are in Goodbye? is told in epistolary form which was refreshing to read and worked well.

The repetition of the word "Mum", though, in every single letter over and over didn't add anything emotionally but pissed me off.

Rhea was also saying over and over and over again "fifty kind of crazy", which was unberable to read for me after the 30th time I saw it written.

I appreciated New York as a setting but I think all the things that happened kind of overshadowed the city a little bit.

As for the ending, it was okay.

So, should you read this?

It really didn't teach me anything new or inspired me, which I felt like should happen with a learning-to-finally-appreciate-my-self-and-my-future kind of book.

It's definitely a diverse book so if you're looking for that give it a shot.

Jana says

I received a free copy from the publisher through NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

This book follows Rhea, who in the beginning of this book is 17 going on 18, and she's basically living in the streets. Her mom died when she was 3 years old, and by now her father is dead too. She also only has one arm. What exactly lead to her living in the streets and how she lost her arm is unknown to the reader, but obviously part of the story, which is told entirely in letters - mostly letters Rhea writes to her dead mom, but also letters her aunt writes to her, letters her mom wrote to her aunt, and letters she writes to her aunt. It was a very enjoyable and emotional read and I really enjoyed how much it focused on family relations instead of romance, which is not something we see too often in YA. So I think it's great that the author wrote about this. I also like how this is a book about a physically disabled character, but their disability isn't the main focus of the story. It's so important to see diversity in literature, and to see diverse characters in normal contexts - I bet we all want stories about LGBT+ characters that aren't romances or about coming out, and stories about POC characters that aren't solely about race. And that is another reason why I really enjoyed this book. Obviously her disability comes into play at times, but she is portrayed as such a normal person that you pretty much forget she only has one arm as long as it's not mentioned.

Katie says

I have my mom to thank for my love of letter-writing. As a child, anytime I would receive a gift, she'd sit me down at the kitchen table with a box of "Thank You" cards, and would instruct me to write a thoughtful letter to the gift-giver. It was a chore at first, I admit, but I eventually came to love how I could purposefully choose the best words to express my thoughts. That sentiment still rings true today. I love writing letters, and when upset or feeling particularly emotional, I will write a letter to the universe. The familiarity of the task never fails to make me feel calmer and more rational. This is why I was so intrigued by the synopsis of *How Many Letters Are In Goodbye?* by Yvonne Cassidy, about a teenage girl on the brink of becoming a woman, who writes letters to her dead mother in a cathartic attempt to make sense of the confusion of her world.

Rhea Farrell could be a study on "tortured souls" in YA literature. Originally from Ireland, Rhea was a young girl when her mum disappeared without warning. For a while afterward, Rhea and her father would write letters to her mum, which her father always promised to post. One day, after a visit from Rhea's aunt, her father refused to write, gruffly reprimanded Rhea for doing so, and that was that. Then, an accident happened. As if Rhea hadn't lost enough, she lost something else of herself, quite literally. Her dad started disappearing, too, drifting away on rivers of alcohol into the darkness of his depression, until he was gone.

Rhea's aunt whisks her away to Florida to live with her husband and daughter, and Rhea does her best to fit in, both at school and at home, though an abusive step-uncle and conflicted feelings about her new step-sister, Laurie, prevent even the slightest bit of normalcy in her life. After a frightening encounter with her step-uncle, when he catches her and Laurie in a compromising situation, Rhea decides to run away to New York City, where her mum was born and lived before moving to Ireland. Forced by her circumstances to live on the streets, Rhea becomes fast friends with Sergei, whose hook-ups at gay bars sometimes leaves them with a place to stay and with food to eat.

Up to this point in the story, we learn about Rhea's past and how she came to be in New York through letters she has started writing once again to her mum, sheltering in diners or while sitting on benches in nearby parks. This is where the story begins to plod and sag quite a bit. Through her letters, we follow Rhea as she counts change in her head, calculating how many slices of pizza she can afford to eat with the money she has, and as she attempts to find employment but is categorically denied due to her handicap. We follow her through the subway system of New York City, through strange apartments and hotel rooms with Sergei and his lovers, and eventually, through the doors of a help group, where she meets a woman who will change her life.

In the story that follows, Rhea discovers torrid family secrets and the truth about her mum. She also learns a lot about dealing with grief and disappointment, about her own sexuality, and about how to deal with the blows of life with the grace of a woman and not the conceit of a child. *How Many Letters Are In Goodbye?* features quite a few hard-hitting subject matters, including suicide, questions of sexuality, sexual abuse, and child neglect and abuse. As such, it is not a light-hearted read by any means. However, considering the weight of the subject matter, most threads in the plot never quite reached its full potential of making me feel something deep and profound.

The plot itself is rather tragic, and so much happens to Rhea that it's almost unbelievable when added together, but I was willing to buy into her story. The letters she writes to her mum are more akin to internal dialogues and reflection, though I suppose that's to be expected when Rhea has no one else to talk to; at

least, no one she'll let get close enough to talk to her about her issues. Rhea herself is a sympathetic character, due to her circumstances; as a person, she is abrasive, distrustful, and unpredictable. I admit, there were several times when I rolled my eyes at her. The characters I most admired were two older women, who take Rhea under their wing, despite her protests and, frankly, her nasty, ungrateful attitude.

It is through the inclusion of these two characters that the reader learns to see Rhea from a different perspective. I was happy to see that the importance of sound counseling for grief and depression is positively highlighted, instead of disparaged. If more teenage kids felt that it is okay to reach out to a professional for help, that it's normal to feel not-normal, perhaps we'd see fewer tragic headlines in our news. I hope to see a more positive emphasis on this in Young Adult literature in the future.

Overall, *How Many Letters Are In Goodbye?* is an intriguing read, though not a hard-hitting emotional one, as it should have been. Fans of contemporary stories that feature a character dealing with and overcoming adversity will enjoy it. Is that you, dear reader?

This review was originally posted on my book review blog, ShelfishlyAddicted.com.

_giovannard says

Confused. That is how I felt about 80% of the time I read this book. To be honest, when I first started reading, I found it really hard to get into, it was pretty boring. I started reading and ended up putting it down and had to wait two weeks before I could muster up enough energy and patience to try it again. Again, I was bored, but slowly it got better...Until it got bad again, it was a constant roller coaster of good, than bad, good and then bad again. It got to the point where I was mentally begging God for it to end. It was SO long and the worst part of it was that the length was not necessary to tell the story! There was so much going on that had nothing to do the the backbone of the core storyline. I am pretty sure that half of Rheas journey with Sergei could have been tossed in the can and we would have gotten the point.

Continue Reading...

Lena♥Ribka says

What a great final for my reading challenge 2015!

This beautiful and emotional book has tough me that a great fiction has no gender.

I will never start my future reviews with the phrase "I normally don't read F/F or M/F, it is why I can't rate this book fairly...".

A good written book will make you forget about your preferences, a brilliantly written book will make you to reconsider your preferable genres.

I know,I should write a proper review for this book, alone because I don't think that a blurb sounds like something you want to grab immediately. But believe me, this book will catch your interest from the very

first page and won't let you go up to the end.

It is such a poignant and emotional story that won't leave you indifferent, that will stay with you for a long time. I can't recommend it highly enough. Read it, please, read it!

Copy provided by the publisher via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review

Aoife says

I received a free digital copy from the author/publisher via Netgalley in exchange for an honest feedback.

Rhea is 17 years old, only has one arm and is living homeless on the streets of New York. As a way of exploring her feelings and what's happening to her, Rhea begins to write letters to her dead mother.

This one was a hard one to rate for me. There was a lot going on in this book from themes of exploring sexuality and coming to terms with sexuality, living with a disability, homelessness, the young homeless, sexual assault, depression, suicide. It was certainly diverse in a lot of ways and the story was set in the 90s, so there was no mobile phones, email or instant messenger. Everything seemed that little bit more drawn out because Rhea was writing everything down.

I felt like we did get a real sense of Rhea. She didn't seem to know where she was going or even who she really was but I felt close to her during her struggles. I did get frustrated at her now and again as I felt she was a bit slow in accepting things, particularly in her talks with Jean, but overall I do feel like she's a character a lot of people could identify with.

I'm giving this four stars because the book felt just that little bit too long for me. I think the middle could be trimmed down a lot and it would make the story feel a lot less dragged out.

On a side note, I didn't know this story would have an Irish connection so I was so happy when I read that. And you know an author is either Irish or has spent a great deal of time in Ireland when they talk about 'fizzy orange' and 'Hunky Dorys' and also use the phrase 'I'm grand.'

Jennifer says

This book was very sad and emotional, but at the same time it was very weird... and at times stale. At the end, it pulled through.

Caron says

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

How Many Letters Are in Goodbye? is about Rhea Farrell and mission on finding out who her mom really

was. This is clear in the beginning but as we go on through the story, it starts changing and instead of Rhea's main goal being to find out the person her mom was, she's trying to figure out who she is and what she wants to be. After running away from home, Rhea's alone in New York and finds comfort by writing letters to her mom.

What first got me interested in this book was that it was completely in the form of letters. Rhea writes her experiences and days as if it were a diary. She and her dad used to write to her mom -who died when she was little, but they stopped suddenly one day.

This book focuses on everything. It's takes you on a journey and makes you question even the small things. There are many people Rhea meets on the way and I think that each one played a different part in her experience. Without meaning to, they helped her grow. There were very few nice moments in this book. I'd go as far as to say that it was pretty depressing and if I were in a different time of my life, it would have affected me greatly, but I made it through okay.

I didn't like this book when I started. Nothing interesting was happening and I found it almost boring. There was a moment, I can remember it's about 40% through the book when I started liking it a lot. I wanted to finish it immediately but my eyes started drooping.

I noticed little things, how Rhea would act almost like a child at some points, then I remembered that with her mom dying when she was three and her dad drinking so much, she had to grow up pretty early. Many of the letters to her mom are signed differently. Here are a few examples:

Rhea
Rae
Your Loving Daughter
Your Daughter
'No signature'

I thought that maybe her emotions were all over the place but I think it was more of a 'mood' she was in. If she felt like signing a certain way, she would.

The last quarter of this book took me on a roller coaster ride and dangled at the top and I was waiting for the drop to come...and oh but it did. Once everything unfolded, there was nothing rushed about it. The pace remained the same. The writing style of this book, the way the story was told, it was beautiful.

"-there are no perfect moments, and I know [she's] right. -there are only moments of vulnerability and courage and honesty and in each and every moment we need to choose, over and over, what kind of person we want to be."

There was closure at the end. Which I think is a good thing. Closure for Rhea, and for me as the reader as well. I didn't have any lingering questions. They were all answered.

I read the poem 'Fear' by Raymond Carver and thought that I should note it down here for you guys. It's not like it has any major significance in the story but it's mentioned and I thought it was worth checking out.

Fear of seeing a police car pull into the drive.

Fear of falling asleep at night.
Fear of not falling asleep.
Fear of the past rising up.
Fear of the present taking flight.
Fear of the telephone that rings in the dead of night.
Fear of electrical storms.
Fear of the cleaning woman who has a spot on her cheek!
Fear of dogs I've been told won't bite.
Fear of anxiety!
Fear of having to identify the body of a dead friend.
Fear of running out of money.
Fear of having too much, though people will not believe this.
Fear of psychological profiles.
Fear of being late and fear of arriving before anyone else.
Fear of my children's handwriting on envelopes.
Fear they'll die before I do, and I'll feel guilty.
Fear of having to live with my mother in her old age, and mine.
Fear of confusion.
Fear this day will end on an unhappy note.
Fear of waking up to find you gone.
Fear of not loving and fear of not loving enough.
Fear that what I love will prove lethal to those I love.
Fear of death.
Fear of living too long.
Fear of death.

I've said that.

Trigger Warnings: Mentions (as well as thoughts and attempts) of suicide, sexual abuse, physical abuse, homophobia

Tanya Grech Welden says

I must confess that this book has me torn. On the one hand it is beautifully written with a strong protagonist voice. There are many things I liked about this story and many things that the author should be proud of. In many ways this is an accomplished story with a wonderful depth. It has numerous things to say on the topics of depression, suicide, sexual abuse, neglect and sexuality. I really liked Rhea, I was moved by her story, although not to tears (an issue which I'll get to later). The story is a small one and one which is highly believable. It has the potential to speak to a large number of young people.

Yet I am torn.

On the one hand I appreciated this story. I have a great deal of respect for its author. Yet, it failed to go to the next level which would push it into the stratosphere of where really awesome YA fiction sits. I spent a lot of time during my reading asking myself exactly where it fell short.

I have mentioned already that it failed to bring me to tears. The "crying index" as I call it is a sure fire

indicator that a book works. That is not to say that all books should make me cry, some don't and were never meant to. However, this was a story that should have dragged me down with it. Considering the subject matter I should have been a blubbering mess. A couple of times I felt like I might get there but never really did. This is an issue for me and yet it is difficult to find a tangible reason why (that will be helpful to the author). On some level I did not manage to completely identify with Rhea perhaps?

The second issue I have with this story is length. For a contemporary (or piece of Retro Fiction which is what I think it really is see below) it is at least 100 pages too long. While acceptable for Science Fiction and Fantasy novels in the YA genre to be longer (accounting for the needs of world building), a contemporary should be shorter. In this situation it led to the story being repetitive and monotonous. A few times I could have put it down and never picked it up again. I'm concerned by this because I'm an adult reader reading YA. I am tolerant. I persist with stories which many of my students would move on from at a much earlier stage. As an educator I know that many young people, given its length, will never even open this book. They will pass it over for something closer to the 300 page count. This is a massive shame. This aside, I did feel that the book needed substantial paring back. Kill those darlings, the story will be better for it. This said, I did wonder if the fact I kept drifting off in my reading, prevented my ability to connect with the protagonist, thus contributing to my inability to cry.

Lastly, and this is not really a criticism, but a comment, a word about the time frame of the setting. Why did the story need to be written in 1999? I get that letters are a dying art form in today's world, but perhaps the story, comprising of letters (which were really an internal monologue/diary) would have worked just as well if set in 2015. Was the author trying to be retro? What was her reason for doing this? Does it make the story a contemporary, or, is it now something different, 'Retro Fiction' perhaps?

In summary, a book of great merit, which might even find success if the author is brave enough to slash 100 pages and meet her audience where they are at. Thank you for the opportunity to review.

Cynthia (Bingeing On Books) says

I received this ARC from NetGalley in exchange for my honest review.

There were several good things about this book, but also some not so good things. For most of the book, I was going to give this one two stars. But then I had to bump it up to three, based on a few things that happened around the middle and the end of the story.

Okay, so first of all, the entire book is told through letters that Rhea is writing to her dead mom. The synopsis didn't really make that clear, so I will just get that out of the way. Normally, I love books told in formats different from a traditional narrative. The issue I have with letters is that they are boring. Not always, I know, but they were here. When you are dealing with letters and especially letters to your dead mother, you expect some sort of emotion. But these letters were very cold for the first fifteen percent of the book or so. It was basically saying "I did this" and "Then this happened" so I didn't enjoy it. And I don't understand why Rhea instead of putting the date and time stamp on every letter. That's distracting.

After a while, I got more into the letters, maybe because Rhea got more into the emotions of everything and I started getting invested in her story. Rhea's mom died when she was really young and she was raised by an alcoholic father. When Rhea was seven, she lost her arm due to an accident with a meat grinder. When Rhea is a teenager, her father dies in a car accident and she is taken in by her aunt, her aunt's boyfriend and her

aunt's boyfriend's daughter. To top it off, she is struggling with her sexuality. When the book begins, Rhea is living on the streets of New York City and is struggling to survive with her friend, Sergei. In the letters, Rhea tells of her history with her family and everything that led to her being homeless. Rhea was discriminated against a lot because of her arm. Everyone assumed she was disabled and that she couldn't do anything. That could not have been further from the truth. The author does tackle a lot of important topics, like homelessness and abuse and neglect and sexuality and depression and alcoholism and even prostitution. Does that seem like a lot of issues? That's because it was. And this book is almost 500 pages and yet, it only takes place over the span of a couple of months. I think that was my other issue: the story was so long that it started to drag a bit.

At first, I did wonder why she wrote to her mom instead of her father, especially because she didn't even remember her mom. But I think it was because she kind of idealized her mom and could imagine how her life would have turned out if her mom had not died. Part of the reason I grew to like this book was because of all the character development and her realization about who her mom was and who she was. She ended up working at a summer camp for homeless kids and that was my favorite part of the book because Rhea learned way more than the kids did. At the beginning of the summer, she hated everything about the camp and its rules and the head counselor (Jean), but by the end of the summer, she had completely turned around. There were so many things that happened over the course of that summer and I ended up tearing up more than once.

This book had a few issues, but it ended up being very moving.

Renita D'Silva says

Beautiful, sad, heartwarming, emotional. Loved.

Chiara says

A copy of this novel was provided by Flux for review via Net Galley.

There were three main things that prevented me from liking *How Many Letters Are in Goodbye?* The first was the main character, Rhea. I just didn't like her, and I didn't connect to her on an emotional level, either. I've read books with unlikeable main characters before, but there were aspects of Rhea's personality that pushed her over the edge of likeable unlikeableness (which is a thing). One of those aspects was how she treated literally *everyone* she interacted with. I don't think there was a moment in *How Many Letters Are in Goodbye?* where Rhea was nice to *anyone*.

She was a shitty friend to Sergei, who is a character at the beginning of the book but disappears without a trace about a third of the way in. And Rhea never thinks about him again, really. Or wonders if he's doing okay.

She was rude and ungrateful to the woman who let Rhea live with her, and then helped her find a job. She was pretty outright disgusting to the psychologist at the camp where she worked. She *laughed* when a fellow workmate said that she was questioning her sexuality. She wasn't even that nice to the girl who she claimed to have loved (at the end of the novel, especially so). She cut off all communication with her best friend back

in Ireland for really no reason at all. She was monosyllabic and uncaring about her aunt, even when the woman apologised over and over again and said how much she cared about Rhea.

I just couldn't warm to a character that only thought about herself, constantly misjudged people, and convinced herself that the *entire freaking world* was out to get her. I also thought it was *highly* unrealistic that everyone *kept on trying with her*. Her aunt apologised time and time again, and said that she would literally do ANYTHING to make Rhea happy. The psychologist was patient and caring, and tried to help Rhea – even though it wasn't her job. Her co-worker still tried to be her friend, even after she was an A-grade bitch. And the woman who let Rhea live with her was just always so understanding.

I just don't think that *that* many people would have enough patience, or care about Rhea that much to put up with her constant shit. I was sick of her, and I was *supposed* to care about her. But all I saw was a girl who saw hardship as an excuse to treat everyone like crap.

The second was the length of the novel. It was just *far* too long. There were passages that were repeated, and reveals that took way too long to get to. I suppose there was supposed to be an element of suspense in regards to Rhea's own background, as well as that of her mother's, but I guessed most of it, and was just waiting for Rhea to catch on.

The fact that Rhea wrote "fifty kinds of crazy" about fifty times per letter really got on my nerves, too.

I did like the structure – the fact that it was written in letters, but sometimes I felt like this didn't really work, especially when Rhea read her own mother's letters. If I was reading them, did that mean Rhea had rewritten them out in her notebook?

Thirdly, I feel like *How Many Letters Are in Goodbye?* was a novel that covered a lot of topics (sexuality, homelessness, and suicide at the forefront), but I don't feel like any of them received adequate attention – Rhea's sexuality in particular. Rhea's sexual orientation was abruptly revealed, and she expressed a strong disliking to being referenced as gay. Her intense reactions to being called a lesbian were never really explained (there was only one tiny line from a memory of her father that I assumed was the connection), and there was no exploration of possible internalised homophobia, or a reference to a future possibility of Rhea overcoming it.

Unfortunately, *How Many Letters Are in Goodbye?* was really not for me.

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trigger warning: attempted suicide, suicide, child molestation, homelessness, bullying, domestic violence, death by drunk driving, alcoholic parent, loss of limb (via machinery), ableism, and homophobia in this novel

evi says

I went into this book with some high hopes. It's about Rhea, who's Irish, lesbian, and an amputee, so there was indeed some diversity, and the letters she sends to her dead mom while she's essentially homeless in New York. I like letters. I liked the premise. I did not, however, like this book.

It has a fairly intriguing plotline. Rhea journeys around a bit in her letters, talking about present-day New

York, recalling on her childhood in Ireland, or her troubled teen years in Florida with her aunt. Rhea's pretty homeless for most of the book, which was interesting to read about, although I'm not too certain about the accuracy. I MEAN, I could definitely be wrong- what do I know about being homeless? Some of it just felt odd, though.

However...that was really all of the book I enjoyed. Yes, it's got some interesting things to draw us in, but I just didn't enjoy the rest of the story.

For one: I didn't like ANY of the characters. Rhea, was, quite frankly, rather dull, whiny, and angsty. I've nothing against characters that you can't connect to very easily, but the thing with Rhea is that I couldn't connect to her at ALL, along with the rest of the characters. Her aunt was the only person who felt reasonable, but I didn't even like her. (And minor spoiler ahead- I marked it just in case, but it's really unspecific and could honestly be the turning point if you want to buy this or not.) (view spoiler)

I also just didn't really get the point of this book. I guess that it's supposed to be her "discovering-herself-and-what-happened-to-her-mother"...but it didn't feel at all like that. It felt like "Rhea-being-selfish-and-complaining-about-life". AND I FEEL REALLY BAD FOR SAYING THAT, because it feels really harsh. But...it's what I felt. I mean, Rhea has definitely had some crappy things happen to her, so I guess a lot of it was warranted.

In the short, this book was not for me. I don't know who it is for, but that doesn't matter- if you're interested, regardless, try it!

Thanks to NetGalley for the digital ARC copy! I received it in exchange for an honest review.

Kris says

(Thanks to Flux and NetGalley, I received an ebook copy of this book for free to review.)

I know a lot of people are looking for more diversity in YA novels, but this book just went way overboard. She's originally from Ireland, her mom past away before she was born, she lost an arm when she was pretty young, her father passed on sometime after that, and she ends up homeless after living with her aunt. This is more than enough diversity for me in particular, but there is more that comes up as the story goes along.

I found the story very repetitive, which I believe is because the book is written in letter form. Usually I'm a big fan of books written like this, but I found it just wasn't working for the story, or for me in general. The whole time I was reading this book I kept waiting for something to shock me, but there was honestly so much diversity that it got to a point where none of the plot twists were shocking.

Overall this book wasn't for me. It seemed a bit too far fetched and repetitive. I'm not sure if I would read anything else by this author.
