



About a Girl

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Eighteen-year-old Tally is absolutely sure of everything: her genius, the love of her adoptive family, the loyalty of her best friend, Shane, and her future career as a Nobel prize-winning astronomer. There's no room in her tidy world for heartbreak or uncertainty—or the charismatic, troubled mother who abandoned her soon after she was born.

But when a sudden discovery upends her fiercely ordered world, Tally sets out on an unexpected quest to seek out the reclusive musician who may hold the key to her past—and instead finds Maddy, an enigmatic and beautiful girl who will unlock the door to her future. The deeper she falls in love with Maddy, the more Tally begins to realize that the universe is bigger—and more complicated—than she ever imagined. Can Tally face the truth about her family—and find her way home in time to save herself from its consequences?

About a Girl Details

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Author : Sarah McCarry

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From Reader Review About a Girl for online ebook

Emily May says

DNF

I cannot tell you how much I wanted to like this book. Everything about it was very different and we really need YA books portraying different kinds of relationships and families, whilst also offering an honest depiction of sex. But I did not enjoy the writing at all. I found Tally's narrative to be cold, detached and emotionless. Almost halfway in and I didn't care about a single character. Also, McCarry seems to like to write in huge paragraphs of text that make the story feel even more slow and boring.

Not for me.

Shelley says

I received this book for free from (Publisher) in exchange for an honest review. This does not affect my opinion of the book or the content of my review.

Genre Young Adult, Contemporary, Fantasy

Rating 3.0

My Thoughts

About a Girl is the third installment in the Metamorphoses trilogy by author Sarah McCarry. The book features 18 year old Atalanta. Tally is a bright student who wants to be an astronomer. Her ultimate goal is to study the relevance of dark energy on the solar system. When Tally was a baby, she was left on the doorstep of a couple she calls Aunt Beast, and Uncle Raoul. She's never known her mother or her father, but is given an opportunity to find out, when she travels 3,000 miles to a place that makes her lose herself.

*Full Review Posted @ Gizmos Reviews

<http://gizmosreviews.blogspot.com/201...>

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Petra says

After reading: Probably as amazing as its cover. I loved it!

Before reading: I want this book just because of that cover. Amazing!

Lauren James says

I knew as soon as I saw the cover that I had to read this book. Look at that beauty!

It's the final book in a trilogy but I have to admit that I hadn't read the other two books when I read this. I didn't find that a problem, as the other books are about different people in the same family, rather than Tally herself. I read the blurbs on the first two books and got the gist of most of what happened. I'm sure there is a lot of stuff I missed, but it was a great standalone read regardless of connections to other books.

I actually think it was good that I hadn't read the others- a lot of the big reveal at the end seems like it would have been less interesting to a reader who has read the others, and so knows what was going on all along (especially with Jack and Aurora).

I absolutely loved Tally's voice. She's very prim and intelligent and into physics (I'm a physicist so obviously this is a huge delightful bonus for me). She's very charming and lovely, and I really rooted for her.

I did find the prose a bit thick in parts, which I think other people have mentioned about McCarry's writing. I think this is a matter of personal preference, but at times the full pages of pure description of things just made me bite my tongue to get through it. However, the descriptions are beautifully poetic, so for the style it's incredibly well written.

My favourite character as Tally's best friend, Shane, a trans guy she is in love with. Their friendship/romance was amazing, and I wish more of the book had been dedicated to the love story between Tally and Shane.

The love story between Tally and Maddy was hypnotic and dreamy and precisely perfect for the story, and while I definitely prefer Tally with Shane, I could read a lot more about these two and their time on the island.

Overall this was a lovely dark and magical coming of age story, and absolutely unique. It definitely deserves a place on the bookshelf of anyone who loves Greek myths, mysterious islands filled with hazy memory loss-magic and friendly crows, and tattooed hot girls.

3 stars

<http://lgbt-ya.tumblr.com/post/113426...>

Melissa | Slow Readers Blog says

DNF

I was quite looking forward to reading this one as the blurb instantly intrigued me, but unfortunately at 27% I am unable to continue reading it.

I had great difficulty making any kind of connection with the story or the characters. Tally's narrative is excessive and distracting and the diversity of the supporting characters is overindulgent and unnecessary.

The lack of chapter breaks coupled with the excessive narration and drawn-out paragraphs makes the pace of the story feel sluggish and dull.

Book Riot Community says

Big, huge congratulations to fellow Rioter Sarah McCarry on the release of the the third book in her Metamorphoses trilogy! These books are amazing. Don't be frightened by it being the third book - each book is really a stand-alone, so you don't have to read them in order. Just read them! In this one, Tally meets, and falls in love with, a mysterious girl who may hold the key to her future, and will help Tally face the truth about her family. These are kick-ass punk rock fairy tales.

Tune in to our weekly All The Books podcast, dedicated to all things new books:
<http://bookriot.com/category/all-the-...>

Liralen says

I am considered precocious, for good reason. Some people might say insufferable, but I do not truck with fools. (6)

McCarry's books seem to be hit-or-miss for readers on GR, but I remain solidly in the 'hit' category. For all that this is the least standalone of the three Metamorphoses books, I loved it. Combining mythology and astronomy and Shakespeare? Come on now. We get casual, matter-of-fact diversity (in terms of gender and sexuality and race); a heroine who is sure of herself and sure of her intelligence and confident in her 'unconventional' family; a dreamy, suspension-of-disbelief plot and general feel to the book. Tally is kind of irritating in the beginning, but in a she-is-supposed-to-be-that-way manner, and she's pushed to grow up quite a bit over the course of the book; she stops *thinking* and starts *feeling*.

My biggest complaint has nothing to do with the writing and everything to do with the cover, which I liked just fine until I read the book. What's up with the whitewashing? According to the text, Tally's hair 'falls down my back in a waterfall of coal' (10); her skin 'is quite smooth and a pleasing shade of brown, but not even a white person ever got cast as the lead of a romantic comedy because they had nice skin' (11). There are numerous other mentions of 'white people' and Tally *not* being white (e.g., 'Additionally, white people are not subject to the regular and exhausting lines of enquiry my skin and vaguely *ethnic* features occasion ("What are you? No, I mean where are you from? No, I mean where are you really from? No, I mean where are your parents from?")', p. 11). Meanwhile, Maddy is described, in part, as such: '...her knuckles were streaked with dirt; and her bare forearms were alive with black tattoos...and crisscrossed with pale scars that stood out sharply against her dark skin. A tangle of black-dyed hair rioted down her back in a serpentine mass.' (87)

The girl on the left of the cover looks like neither of these descriptions. The girl on the right could be maaaaaybe stretched out to one of them, except I *really* don't think either Tally or Maddy is the type for hoop earrings and nail polish. (Perhaps added to make it clear that both cover models are female?)

Makes me very cranky about publishing, but doesn't change my feelings about the writing, which I loved.

Jana says

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

This book was really interesting. It's a lovely contemporary mystery with really good LGBT+ representation. I thought it was well written and the story very well thought-out, but I was a bit annoyed by Tally's irresponsible behaviour in the beginning which was just very out of character. Other than that, I really enjoyed this book.

Eilonwy says

"There were two ways of arriving at the truth. I decided to follow them both." -- Georges Lemaitre, cosmologist and priest

18-year-old Atalanta, much better known as Tally, budding astronomer, believes in the empirical world. If she can't measure it, it's probably not real, and certainly not to be trusted. Mysticism, witchcraft, poetry, art, emotions ... these things are for other people. Like Tally's crazy extended family, who love her but maybe don't quite get her.

When the story opens, Tally is awash in feelings she doesn't want to think about, much less try to deal with, especially as they involve a confusing situation with her best friend. So when a neighbor offers her the chance to literally fly away and look for information about her biological parents, whom she has never known, she jumps at the chance.

Then she washes up in a place where people go to forget; not to get a fresh start, but to find oblivion. She, and the reader, end up amazed at what you can learn about yourself in a place like that.

I loved this book. It's not perfect -- the middle is a little slow, what with all the forgetfulness. But I personally found this the most accessible of the three books in this trilogy, and I enjoyed feeling at home in the Greek mythology. As usual with Sarah McCarry, the writing is beautiful, deeply observant, and emotionally resonant. I loved Tally and her stiff, righteous, judgemental self -- she is such a typical bright teen who's used to being the smartest kid in the room. Her journey to allowing herself to be vulnerable was touching and believable. The twining of fantasy and reality felt completely organic to the story to me. And it ends up illustrating the Georges Lemaitre quote, which is in the book, perfectly.

My only quibbles with this trilogy are: (A) The timeline doesn't work at all. Cass and Maia, Tally's grandmothers, talk about the Pixies in their book, which places them as being 17 in 1987 or so. Which means that Tally would have been born around 2006, and sets her story in 2024. But (B), you can't tell what year it is in these books, because they take place in an alternate universe where cell phones and email seem not to exist. This gives the books a sort of timeless feel that I like, but which also annoys me a little.

I loved these books enough that I bought the whole set for my best friend, and I'm going to buy them all for

myself, too. And I can't wait to read whatever Sarah McCarry writes next. These definitely aren't to everyone's tastes, but they are mine. Even though I've given each book a 4-star rating, I'd give the trilogy as a whole 5 stars.

I think the trilogy can be tied together by these lines near the end of this final volume: *Now I understood the thing I'd never been able to see before: that our stories are our own, even when they overlap with other people's, and that sometimes keeping them safe is a part of keeping ourselves whole.*

Amen.

First Second Books says

I loved this book.

The voice was wonderful. The opening scene -- which is narrated by the main character while she's at a bookstore, and continually interrupted by annoying customers being annoying in a way that also shows her personality -- is just fantastic.

Also: more girls in science FTW!

Sarah says

(Source: I received a digital copy of this book for free on a read-to-review basis. Thanks to St. Martin's Press and NetGalley.)

“My name is Atlanta, and I am going to be an astronomer.”

This was an okay story, but it was just as weird as the previous two books in the series.

Tally was intent on finding her father, and I couldn't really blame her. As Aurora's daughter, she had been dumped on the doorstep of the main character from book 1 – who was still nameless, so I'll continue calling her Jane – and basically just abandoned. As if knowing that your mother abandoned you wasn't enough, she also had no idea who her father was.

“My biological mother, Aurora, ran off right after I was born, which is unfortunate, but I’ve had seventeen years and three hundred and sixty-four days to accustom myself to her untimely departure.”

The storyline in this was pretty much about Aurora going off in search of her father, which basically involved running off on her own, and letting Jane worry about her! There was also some kissing going on

with another girl called Maddy, but very little was actually discovered about the identity of Tally's father.

"Then she kissed me and I kissed her back, fierce and hungry,"

The ending to this was once again a bit of a non-ending, with lots of questions left unanswered.
6 out of 10.

TheBookSmugglers says

Tonight is my eighteenth birthday party and the beginning of the rest of my life, which I have already ruined; but before I describe how I arrived at calamity I will have to explain to you something of my personal history, which is, as you might expect, complicated—

About a Girl is the third novel in Sarah McCarry's breathtaking Metamorphoses series of awesome Greek retellings that centres its stories on girls. I say Greek retelling in a loose way – there isn't a definite, clear-cut retelling of any one particular myth here. Rather, this series delve deep into that kind mythology building that pays homage by subverting and transforming, by creating an ever-changing landscape featuring young people as they change themselves.

Sometimes they do that under the looming threat of a Greek personage. Sometimes they travel to the underworld. Sometimes they eat pomegranate seeds. Sometimes they fall in love with murderous witches.

I talked about my love for Sarah McCarry's girls before. How they are very human and allowed to make mistakes, to grow, to experience, to try and to fail, to just be.

Sometimes they are part monster too.

+++

Tally is sure of everything. Her world is ordered. She knows exactly what she wants from life: to go to college and be an astronomer, a Nobel prize-winning one. She knows she is loved by her family and by her best friend Shane. She knows she doesn't care – or at least have most definitely one hundred percent come to terms with – that her mother left her as soon as she was born and she never knew her or her father.

Then what was once a life of order and certainty becomes messy and surprising. First, Tally falls in love and in lust with Shane. She can't believe she is victim of pesky teenage hormones after all. Confusion and uncertainty follow and that is exactly the right time for Mysterious Forces to approach Tally with tasty morsels about her unknown father and her long-last mother.

The story follows Tally, in this brief moment of time as she goes on a Quest to find her father, only to find a mother she thought she didn't care about. On the way, she gets lost. She loses all sense of time and place. She behaves completely unlike the image she has of herself. She falls in love.

+++

One thing I love about this book: Tally asks if it is ok to be in love with two people at the same time: one of them a trans boy and the other, a girl. The story, the narrative, the characters are all like: sure. Because of course.

+++

When Odysseus is coming back from Troy he gets lost. He goes on Quests. He gets trapped in a place having an affair.

Tally ends up in a town where recalcitrant immortals go to forget. She too gets trapped there, with fuzzy memories, and confused sense of time and the certainty she is falling in love – and in lust, so much lust – with Maddy. Maddy, who also wants to forget, except her past is way more complicated. Sarah McCarry wrote about Maddy – under her other name, Medea – and how there are ways to think about her. I am thinking of her still.

In many ways, this is Tally's own Odyssey.

+++

Tally is deconstructed and put back together throughout the journey of a lifetime. Everything she thought of herself is questioned but not exactly overturned. This is another thing I loved about this book.

It broke me then put me back together. It also made me laugh a lot, which considering the tone of the review, might come as a surprise. It surprised me too, for About a Girl is actually very funny in tone at least to start with. And to end with. The middle is mysterious and heady and sensual.

The journey in those books and with those books has been epic. I am very sorry to see it end and I will miss Sarah McCarry's girls very much indeed.

Ian Wood says

This is the complete review as it appears at my blog dedicated to reading, writing (no 'rithmatic!), movies, & TV. Blog reviews often contain links which are not reproduced here, nor will updates or modifications to the blog review be replicated here. Graphic and children's reviews on the blog typically feature two or three images from the book's interior, which are not reproduced here.

Note that I don't really do stars. To me a book is either worth reading or it isn't. I can't rate it three-fifths worth reading! The only reason I've relented and started putting stars up there is to credit the good ones, which were being unfairly uncredited. So, all you'll ever see from me is a five-star or a one-star (since no stars isn't a rating, unfortunately).

I rated this book WARTY!

This is apparently a companion novel to two others in what is called the Metamorphoses trilogy. The other books are stories about other members of the family, and I cannot ever see myself reading any more of these after my encounter with this one.

To begin with, it's a first person PoV story which is the most obnoxious voice. Some writers can carry it, but not this one, not with this character who is one of the most nauseating, self-obsessed, unappealing, and downright obnoxious Mary-Sues I've ever encountered in fiction.

This novel begins with Tally's endless - and I do mean endless - rambling about how brilliant she is. Some paragraphs occupy a whole page. Where was the editor? The doesn't show us how smart she is, she tells us. Over and over again. When she does one time show us her 'smarts', they ain't much, believe me. She actually does tell us a little about her family - in between showing us how utterly obnoxious she is to customers who come into the bookstore where she works and that was my next problem.

It's like the author sat down before she began to write this and wrote out a comprehensive list of every trope demographic and Nora Ephron button she could think of before cramming them brutally into this story. Work in a bookstore? Check. Transgender or gay person in her life? Check - and check! Quirky relatives and friends? Check. Everyone reads books or is an artist/poet? Check. Life-long super cool friend? Check. Quirky family adores one another? Check. Love interest comes in expectedly from left field? Check! Yep, all here. Let's get started.

First we have Tally's lifelong friend - met in a suitably cute manner. This friend is also transsexual, so we immediately have two categories covered in one fell swoop, yet despite being lifelong friends and intimate in every non-physical way imaginable, neither of them, can talk to each other about anything intimate.

This is how we end up with them being sexually one night and then not knowing how to behave the next day. This trope has been done to death and there's not a single thing that's new being brought to table here in any way.

Tally's essentially an orphan. Her mom is a completely irresponsible loser who left Tally on the doorstep of her sister's apartment and has never been seen since. None knows her whose dad is, not even, most likely, her mom. Tally has been without these non-parents literally her entire life.

Tally lives with an eccentric artist aunt and a poet uncle and his husband. Seriously? She also has a wealthy friend who has everything as defined by endless rare books, all of which are classics. God forbid he should have a first edition best seller. Tally is completely at home here in every single way imaginable,. She is spoiled rotten and has everything, but none of this keeps her from running off to "discover" her father and leaving paradise lost behind her. Evidently (from other reviews I've read, she never actually does discover anything except a girlfriend. I couldn't stand to read that far. I didn't have enough promethazine on hand. I applaud the fortitude of those who could finish it un-medicated.

I had sincerely hoped for much better than this. This is an awful novel. tediously and pretentiously written and in my opinion, not worth reading to the end. I cannot recommend it based on the part I did managed to stomach.

Kelly says

A brilliant, lushly-written conclusion to an exceptional fantasy series. This final entry, about Tally, the daughter of Aurora of ALL OUR PRETTY SONGS, is my favorite one. It's about a girl learning who she is, discovering who she is, and finding who she is -- those three things all very different, all very important.

This book features a trans character, lesbians, and a cast of characters of varying colors and backgrounds. It's so, so great. Talk about a solidly feminist book (and series!).

If you haven't read this series, fix it. Though you can read this book without reading the other two, the experience of seeing them all tie together -- to see the history in the same way that Tally learns it -- makes it even more rewarding.

This is some of the finest, most gorgeous, evocative, and enveloping writing in YA.

Miranda says

I received a copy via net galley.

This was a very lyrically written story. I might've enjoyed it more if I'd read the previous installments but I'd gone with others who'd said each could be read separately. Which it can be but I'd recommend reading the others first, you'll grasp the secondary characters a lot more. The writing style is interesting, with a liquid like quality to it. It's stagnant, flowing, and utterly mystifying.
