



The Rules of Seeing

Joe Heap

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The Rules of Seeing follows the lives of two women whose paths cross at a time when they need each other most. Nova, an interpreter for the Metropolitan police, has been blind from birth. When she undergoes surgery to restore her sight her journey is just beginning – she now has to face a world in full colour for the first time. Kate, a successful architect and wife to Tony, is in hospital after a blow to the head. There, she meets Nova and what starts as a beautiful friendship soon turns into something more.

The Rules of Seeing Details

Date :

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Author : Joe Heap

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From Reader Review The Rules of Seeing for online ebook

Sally Boocock says

An intriguing debut novel featuring two main protagonists. Nova who has been blind since birth and Kate who is an architect. They meet in hospital and the book follows their story. Joe Heap has done an excellent job of making you understand how hard it would be for a blind person to see again. How difficult it is to do what sighted people take for granted. It also has a touch of a thriller to it and did keep me wanting to reach the end. Well worth reading.

Katy Noyes says

Insightful (pun intended) look at vision within a slow-burning thriller and relationship story.

Kate meets Nova after an accident leads to a fairly severe head injury. Confused and suffering emotional after-effects, she likes the Police Interpreter for her unconventionality, her verve, and her defiant attitude to the blindness she has lived with all her life. Nova has just undergone an operation to restore her sight, leaving her vulnerable also. The two form an instant bond.

The story moves between genres, but the clues are there as to what the women can expect. I did enjoy the thriller aspects of the story, the mounting tension and regular reminders of threat.

My favourite aspect of the book though, was Nova's regular insights into what it is like to be both blind and to be a newly-sighted citizen... her 'rules for seeing' that anyone 'reading' this as someone who takes vision for granted will find makes them see things around them with fresh 'eyes':

"It's like trying to learn... five languages at the same time...it's like all of these conversations going on simultaneously - colour and depth, shape and texture, light and dark - and I'm trying to translate them all at once."

Though an accomplished linguist and reader of Braille, Nova has to learn to read from scratch, can't recognise shapes and colours. Sometimes her insights are hilarious:

"RULE OF SEEING NO.151 Food does not look appetising, the way it smells. Sometimes it looks like plastic, or like dog poo. Sighted people do not like it if you point this out."

The thriller plot, I thought didn't work as well as Nova's own personal story, an antagonist whose motivation I didn't truly understand or buy into, but I was happy to stay with Nova. Kate grew on me from a slightly annoying woman at times to someone more in control and spirited.

Incredibly insightful in parts, a fairly good linking of a personal story of growth with a psychological thriller.

With thanks to Netgalley for providing a sample reading copy.

??? Shelley ??? says

As someone who is deaf, I could kind of relate to someone who is blind, at the same time, it was also very eye opening.

Learn to see. Realize that everything is connected to everything else.

I loved this story, the emotions are deep and the narrative flows freely through the story line, and is laced with realism all throughout. The pacing is perfect, readers will follow around the lives of Nova and Kate, who go through transition periods rehabing after a hospital stay. I don't want to give too much away.

When you make eye contact, when you hold someone's gaze, it's the closest thing to knowing that you're not alone in the world.

The characters are well developed, Nova and Kate take the center stage and from their perspective, the readers will get to learn about the supporting cast. Nova is a great protagonist, who will inspire you through her ordeal, as will Kate. Kate finally learns to speak honestly and gradually the readers can see the side of Kate which exists under layers of pain and fear.

They took her wedding ring off at the hospital, but she's still married.

The blindness remains in the backseat of this whole story, as the author majorly focuses on the female relationship and the value of those who matter to us, despite not being related by blood, and also Kate's self growth, and that sums up the entire novel, where Nova teaches Kate to live by her own rules.

Kate laughs again. She can't remember the last time she laughed this much, every day. Maybe never. Maybe not in her whole life. Sometimes she still feels like shit. But there is so much laughter as well.

In a nutshell, the author promotes self love through this book, even though the main character suffers from a so-called disability, yet she is depicted as brave and someone who needs no saving from anyone. A smart and fearless take on friendships, relationships and dealing with roadblocks in life.

Nat Price says

More people need to know about this book!

Aoife says

3.5 stars.

I received a free digital copy of this book from the publishers/author via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

Nova was born blind but when she ends up getting an operation to restore her sight, she wakes up to a whole new world and one in which she needs to learn everything all over again. Kate on the other hand finds herself dealing with anxiety after an accident that's left her with a lot of questions. Nova brings Kate light again but Kate may be bringing Nova down and soon, tough decisions have to be made.

I really enjoyed the first half of this book. It's written really well, and easy and I fell into the story really quickly so it moved at a great pace for me and after a couple hours I was already halfway through. Nova is a character that is very easy to like - she's fun, bubbly, infectious and from the moment we meet her, when

she's still blind, she's the type of person you know would make your life better and make you happy.

I really like Nova's individual storyline and her journey of rediscovery and relearning everything about the world now that she could see again. I never really thought about how hard it must be for people with bad sight to suddenly be able to see clearly, and everything they would have to learn to just get about everyday. I also loved some of Nova's observations about sight, particularly when it came to how food looked compared to how great it smelled.

I would have liked more of Nova's job to be in the novel, particularly before her operation. I feel like the whole 'she can tell people are lying by their voice' thing was sold in the blurb and made it sound like it was a bigger point in the book when really it was a non-entity. Nova's job wasn't important at all, and I was disappointed by that as it sounded really cool to me.

I definitely had a hard time warming up to Kate as a character but she is definitely going through the wringer, even more so than Nova and is not in a good place in her life before. I did like the friendship and romance that sparked between the two but the second part of the book when the romance was heavier completely fell apart for me and I stopped enjoying the book so much.

I felt like the story became a bit drawn out, and I was ready for it to be over. As a reader, I felt like I was waiting for the super obvious thing to happen for ages, and even when it did eventually happen, it was just so all over the place and almost over the top, I didn't enjoy it at all.

The first half was much stronger than the second, which was a real pity.

Madeleine Black says

It's not easy to decide what genre *The Rules Of Seeing* is as it covers so many areas but I loved the story. (Think love story/thriller/lgbt) It also covers a whole range of issues including mental health, domestic abuse, disability and lesbian relationships

It was fascinating to read through the eyes of Nova who was born blind but then was able to "see" after an operation. Made me question how do we really see

Kept me awake to the wee hours wanting to know the ending. It's a quirky book that made me both laugh and cry.

'Those are the most distant objects I've ever seen.' Nova says. 'The most distant objects I ever will see. Not that long ago, I couldn't see the walls of the room I was sitting in. Now I'm looking at objects that are so far away, their light has been travelling for millions of years

Maureen says

**3.5 Stars **

Nova has been blind for her entire life - she's 32 years old and is about to undergo a new procedure that will enable her to see the world around her for the first time ever. This should be an amazing time for Nova, but she's scared that she won't be able to cope with all the new experiences that come with seeing. She's an intelligent young lady, an interpreter, who speaks five languages, and works for the Metropolitan Police.

Nova's fears about not understanding or coping with her new life are realised, and it's not until she meets Kate that she believes she can learn to overcome her problems. Kate though has some scary times ahead, and little do they know, but the clock is ticking for both of them!

First off I have to say what an amazing job the author did in describing Nova's difficulties, of having to learn how to live as a sighted person. It's certainly not as simple as it would appear to be, and situations presented themselves that I would never have imagined. I thought the narrative was a little slow at times, but I was intrigued to see what would happen within the relationship, and there were some extremely tough and scary times ahead. I can only thank the author though, for allowing me to 'see' and understand the world in a completely new light.

*Thank you to Netgalley, and HarperCollins UK for my ARC. I have given an honest unbiased review in exchange *

Laura says

Book reviews on www.snazzybooks.com

I didn't know what to expect with this read, but ended up absolutely loving it! The characters are so likable; I completely fell in love with both main characters Nova and Kate, but particularly Nova - I mean, who wouldn't?

The main themes in this novel felt so different and fresh, yet somehow the story felt so relatable despite not being experiences that I've necessarily had myself. I loved reading about Nova's journey from being blind (from birth, so she's never known anything else) to being able to see again. It was so interesting reading about how she dealt with learning to see again, with all these hurdles that I'd never thought about. I also thought Kate's experience, with her husband (I don't want to give too much detail away) was so gripping and emotional to read about. The characters all felt like real people, with some really surprising me with their actions, and I loved reading about them.

The main theme of this novel - learning to see, not just literally for Nova but also metaphorically for other people - is so wonderful to read about and, although the story certainly isn't all sunshine and rainbows, I felt incredibly uplifted at the end. Brilliant reading!

Many thanks to the publisher for providing a copy of this novel on which I chose to write an honest and

unbiased review.

Shirley Revill says

I really enjoyed listening to this audiobook. Review to follow.

Susan says

I wanted to love this book but thought it was just ok. I felt like it didn't know what it was trying to be. Was it a thriller, was it a drama? I read it and still don't know. Didn't live up to the hype.

Scatterbooker says

“What you see depends on what you’re looking for”

I’m finding it hard to categorise THE RULES OF SEEING by debut UK author Joe Heap. It’s part quirky love story between two women with a lot going on in their lives, part thriller, and 100% a great read.

Nova works as a police interpreter, can speak five languages and has been blind her entire life until her brother convinces her to undergo an operation that will help her see the world for the first time.

While she is recovering from her operation she meets Kate who is an architect married to Tony, a police detective that Nova works with occasionally. Nova and Kate’s friendship could develop into something more if it was up to Nova, but they each have their own issues to deal with, including Nova’s difficulties with learning how to see and Kate and Tony’s relationship issues.

THE RULES OF SEEING is a fantastic debut novel and Joe Heap has done a brilliant job of covering a range of sensitive topics, including female romantic relationships, mental health, abuse, and disability. A great debut and full of unexpected surprises. 4 stars!

Originally posted at <https://scatterbooker.wordpress.com/2...>

Anni says

EYESIGHT AND INSIGHT

‘Learn to See?’ ‘It’s from a Da Vinci quote. It was on the inside cover ...’ Kate closes her eyes and tries to remember. ‘Impara a vedere. Renditi conto che ogni cosa è connessa con tutte le altre.’ Nova thinks for a moment, then interprets – ‘Learn to see. Realize that everything is connected to everything else.’ Kate smiles. ‘Everything is connected’.

Novels are often described as ‘thought-provoking’ – especially when they cover relevant ‘issues’ of the day

and this one inspires insights that may never have occurred to the reader before: for instance, the difference between seeing and perceiving – how much more than ‘eyesight’ is involved in interpreting the world. Joe Heap takes this theme a step further by showing how deliberately ‘turning a blind eye’ can be equally disabling as blindness.

He has written one of the most unusual storylines I have ever come across, combining different genres, and inventing an unforgettable protagonist who, as a mixed-race, blind, gay woman, ticks more diversity boxes than you normally come across – even with today’s political agenda.

??Jülie ? says

Nova has been blind from birth so by the time she has reached her thirties she has learned a myriad of coping skills.

She speaks five languages which has provided her with a lucrative and enjoyable job with the Metropolitan Police Force in London.

Her lifetime of blindness has also honed her intuitive skills so she trusts her talent for knowing when someone is lying by the tones of their voice.

Nova's brother is a Doctor and when he learns of a new breakthrough operation that could restore his sister's sight he naturally does what he can to convince her to undergo the surgery.

Kate has found her eyesight severely affected after an unfortunate accident, she is undergoing treatment in hospital when she meets Nova by chance, and they seem to form an instant bond.

Kate's husband, Tony, who works with the police force, appears to be a bit insensitive to his wife's needs and soon begins to look like the villain...but is he?

The reader will quickly see potential links and start to form a frame for this story, however...

As fascinating as the story is, it was a bit confusing insomuch as it didn't seem to know which lead to take.

The story seems to go through phases, beginning well, then cruising for a while with the occasional injection of a bit of intrigue and then seeming to go into an extended lull, as if the author had wandered off on another [albeit interesting] thought, then casually returning.

This was not unpleasant or off putting, and is not necessarily a criticism, it just left me wondering if it would come back to the original premise as it was starting to feel like a separate story.

Every now and then it alludes to its earlier promise of intrigue..even suspense..and to the possibility of a drastic change in pace where circumstances describe an incident which has the potential to ignite a smoldering tension...introducing some anticipated angst, but then the feeling once again subsides because it goes nowhere.

It seems odd that the story is able to drift like this for great lengths of time without losing the readers' interest, yet it does...and doesn't.

Eventually the pace picks up and the things we had earlier feared appear to be eventuating with enough adrenaline inducing action to make this reader sit up and pay attention.

So, how to describe it??

There are really three independent stories here, each one weaves in and out of the other until they eventually merge into the one we were expecting all along and could, in my opinion, maybe have gone towards a second book rather than reduce its climax with brevity.

Some very interesting insights into what blindness ‘looks like’ from the perspectives of one born blind and one recently made blind. Some observations are inspired, while others possibly need the reader to suspend

judgement.

I believe this debut author shows lots of potential, and I think his insight into the workings of the female mind are uncannily perceptive. In some scenes he captures the sensual nuance with such effectiveness as to have me believe the author was in fact a female...that of course is a compliment :)

I wavered between 3 1/2 & 4 ??s ... you be the judge.

Bev Taylor says

u may see my review on lovereading

was selected to review this prior to publication on 09 aug

enjoy!

bev

Sean Randall says

‘I don’t really use vending machines … but I like this plan!’

We’ve been here before on my bookshelf, of course. Books depicting blind people invariably cause controversy. The thing that I found, starting this, was the way in which other senses – smell, touch etc – are woven in everywhere, not just in Nova’s scenes. Kate is also startlingly aware of them, and I think that speaks volumes as to the way in which the story is going to progress.

‘You don’t owe me anything.’ Nova pauses, then asks, ‘Are you okay? You’ve changed colour.’

I was disarmed by nova’s gregariousness. Even early on we see a free spirit, but as the story develops, her irrepressible free-natured wildness really shines through. Obviously it does Kate good, but it does us good too. To see a blind person, even one gaining vision as someone who can be that free and spontaneous, and generally that happy with life, I think we could all do with some more of that in our lives.

I found myself cheering nova on all the way. Her rules, to me as a blind person who has never seen, are at once fascinating and intriguing yet bafflingly hard to picture. Her struggles with the realities of sight really shine through, and I don’t recall fiction that I’ve read tackling this before. The idea that you can perform a little operation to physically “fix” someone’s ability to see, yes. But the ongoing consequences of that explored here are captivating. We’ve seen something similar in Robert J. Sawyer’s WWW trilogy, but there, the protagonist had technology capturing images for her. Seeing it all biologically was a very different path.

I didn’t have many moments where I wanted to shout at Joe for getting it totally wrong as a blind person: the one that leaps at me now, trying to think of one, is the assumption that Nova would have to dictate a text message to her phone because she couldn’t see it, despite being a lifelong blind person of an age where the technology had clearly been imbedded early on. I laughed at the message she did dictate, misspellings and all

– that one was spot on. But when it's used as a reason for her not to send a message later in the story, that was a little annoying, if very trivial.

The relationships in the story, the love, the passion, the way in which the characters really take control, that was good. You have these two women, both at crossroads in their lives with very different hurdles to overcome, and quite different in personality to boot. To see them both grow is really quite something.

So, yes, a very satisfying, heartfelt book. A book with a real message and a followable, strong message. A book with a lot to offer, a book that stands up to prejudice, and I dare say, a book that will do the blind community very little harm. Already, the tuttings and the “another one about us? Really?” Are dripping from the social network feeds and kicking about the mailing lists. It’s silly of me to say that blindness doesn’t come into it, because of course it does. But the thing is, for Nova, learning to see is not a journey taken in isolation. She grows, not just in strength of vision, but of personality. Not just in what she can read, but in how she can perceive. She figures out what it is she wants, likes, needs, enjoys. Who she can trust. And none of that depends on her eyes at all.

So, yes. On the surface, it’s another one of those books about a blind person needing more in their life and that being eyesight. But it’s more, too. So to all my blind readers who are boycotting it simply because it crosses an artistic boundary into **your** world, I would just say that you’re missing a fabulous, warm and charming story. A story of love, for life and for other people both. A story of persistence and progress, a story of determination and growth and of learning to live life and of the things that matter. And to me, that matters a lot. I enjoyed it very much.
