

Lovereading4kids Reader reviews of **Goodbye, Perfect** by Sara Barnard

Below are the complete reviews, written by the Lovereading4kids members.



Humaira Kauser, age 19

Sara Barnard's books just keep getting better and better. 'Goodbye, Perfect' is her best yet.

Oh how I love anything Sara Barnard writes. Her books just keep getting better and better. 'Goodbye, Perfect' is her best yet.

At first I was feeling a little uneasy, the topic of a student/teacher relationship made me feel squeamish but it didn't go down that road.

Eden, the main character, the best friend who got left behind, is a unique character that you can't help but love.

I've proudly read early copies of all of Sara Barnard's books and I feel so lucky and grateful because they are such gems, especially in the UKYA world.

Dani, age 26

Sara Barnard is able to capture the voice and experience of a teenager like no other. I felt like I was right there with 16-year-old Eden through the whole ordeal. Wonderful and important.

Giving fictional characters a voice is something Sara excels at. I loved her two previous novels, especially 'A Quiet Kind of Thunder', and 'Goodbye, Perfect' is just as wonderful. Though Eden and I aren't all that alike, I felt like I was her. I was in her head, the first person perspective, memories, and conversations allowing me to live through the ordeal with her. But the thing is, the world

didn't stop when Bonnie ran away, with exams still to study for and family still to deal with. In so many books, it's like the real world drops away when something happens, but Sara shows that you have to keep swimming when a storm hits. You'll get through it, but it's not a fantasy world where everything gets taken care of along the way, or even in the end. This is it. This is life.

*A highlight of Sara's books for me is the beautiful normality of her characters. They're ordinary teenagers, dealing with growing up, school, plus everything else that often gets glossed over. For example, *Goodbye, Perfect* features foster care and adoption, young carers looking after a parents, and – believe it or not!!! – not getting perfect exam scores and still being FINE. (There is way too much pressure on teens these days, honestly.)*

Sara Barnard's books capture adolescence so well, in all of its confusion and messiness. Not only do I find them wonderful, I think they are an important contribution to the YA world.

You can follow on Twitter: @dani_reviews

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Emily Dickson, age 13

'Goodbye, Perfect' is a fantastic book, great for teenagers, that grips you until the very end.

I think 'Goodbye, Perfect' is a really, really good book. It has a great storyline and keeps you hooked until the very end. It is written in first person, which I love because it helps you connect with the characters more easily. It is fascinating to read how the main character (Eden) copes with keeping such a big secret, while still experiencing the stress and panic of GCSEs. I think the title, 'Goodbye Perfect', fits the book perfectly. Eden's life wasn't perfect, but it was very good, with an amazing friend, a lovely family and an exceptional boyfriend. Bonnie's development from good girl to wild girl was also very interesting to see change. Because she had always been so good and perfect, her transformation was dramatic and exciting, leaving her old life to fall to pieces as she ran away with what she thought was love. What I also liked was the way the book would stop for a little while and give some information about a character that had been recently introduced. It gives you a break from all the action and helps you understand more about all the people involved. I think this is a great book for teenagers, but not younger, as there are lots of sex references. I really loved this fantastic book!

Talia Jacobs, age 16

'Goodbye, Perfect' is a relatively easy read, though with very complex and thought-provoking themes and ideas! I loved reading about the different bonds between Eden's adoptive and blood related family.

'Goodbye, Perfect' by Sara Barnard is an intense read whilst still being great for more reluctant readers due to the relatively fast pace and advanced though easily understandable language. This novel covers very serious, though often overlooked problems, really delving deep into the consequences and effects caused by child grooming. However, this book is also very relevant, and many teen readers will greatly relate to some of the issues of lesser gravity, though still containing significance.

In my opinion, one of the best aspects to this book where the relationships between characters, specifically the relationships between Eden (the wild, passionate protagonist) and both her adoptive, and blood related sisters. Additionally, this book contains different forms of media, such as newspaper inserts and text message exchanges; this fantastic use of multi-media livened up this book, and added different points of view and perspectives!

Personally, it took a while for me to become fully engrossed in the story, but this book is definitely worth the read, and I recommend it to those who enjoy contemporary, teen, fiction and are looking for a relatively easy read, though with complex and thought-provoking themes and ideas.

Ella Hewitt, age 15

This is a thrilling, heart wrenching, relatable story! I definitely recommend!

This is a beautifully written story, that is up to date and modern and relatable in so many ways. I really enjoyed reading it and I felt so many emotions throughout! I would recommend for 12 year olds and up, and both girls and boys! Definite read!

Freya Hudson, age 14

An amazing story about best friends, family, loyalty and love. I couldn't put this book down as it was exciting and I needed to know how it would end.

I loved this book and couldn't put it down! It made me smile, and cry (just a bit!). The action takes place over a week and when I wasn't reading, I found myself wondering what was happening in the story. The characters are great and it was as if Eden was actually my friend and telling me all about what happened. The storyline was exciting and dramatic, showing how Eden and Bonnie were best friends despite coming from different backgrounds and having quite different personalities. When Bonnie unexpectedly runs away with their school music teacher because they were 'in love', Eden just can't believe it, as Bonnie had always been 'perfect'; studying hard, always getting grade A's, never being naughty, late or nasty. The girls both go through a very emotional time and seem to exchange some characteristics.... Eden becomes the sensible, mature, steady one. I really liked the "Conversations That Took On A New Meaning After Bonnie Disappeared" sections, as it shows how whilst chatting previously with Bonnie, many of their words were actually very significant to Bonnie's intentions to run away, although Eden didn't understand it at the time. I recommend this book as it is a good story about friendship, family, loyalty and love. I had to keep giving my mum updates as I read the book and she is now reading it too!

Francesca Hughes, age 15

*After reading Barnard's novel 'Beautiful Broken Things' I was intrigued to read 'Goodbye Perfect' as I was really impressed by the originality of the former and how it painted friendships in a refreshing, yet compelling way. Unfortunately the friendship between Eden and Bonnie wasn't as compelling. Although I enjoyed Barnard's latest novel, it did not touch me in the same way and the plot reminded too much of other YA novels I'd read such as 'Paper Towns' and 'The Outliers' which also explore a friend running away. The only thing that was a little different about this run a way plot was that a handsome teacher was the fugitive companion. However it did have redeeming features such as a protagonist that demonstrated not all foster kids are troublemakers and an unlikely sisterly relationship that shows nobody is perfect. I enjoyed the intense road trip storyline, which was written perfectly for 'Paper Towns' fans. However the ending seemed anticlimactic and disappointing, even though it was an interesting read because I know a lot of people who have a crush on their teachers, even if they would never dream of running away with them. **I would definitely read Barnard's books again if she writes more because she writes good young adult novels.** I was just expecting more as her debut YA novel was such an original page turner.*

Emily Conaghan, Yr9 - Great Torrington School

This book is gripping, funny, intense and overall amazing. I definitely recommend. Big fan of all her novels.

Zuzanna Jankowska - Great Torrington School

'Goodbye, Perfect' is a book written by Sara Barnard. It is a story about a girl, who is called Bonnie, who runs away with the school music teacher. It is told from the view point of her best friend, Eden, who is struggling with her GCSE's and has a boyfriend of her own. Eden keeps contact with Bonnie, but is sworn to secrecy. When the police show up looking for answers, Eden is torn between her loyalty to her best friend and telling everyone where Bonnie is.

*I thought this book was okay, however I feel like it was aimed at a lower age group. I found the plot of it quite silly and could relate only slightly to the stress of GCSE's. However, I did like how it ended and some of the characters in the book. **I feel it teaches younger readers a lesson and is a unique book due to how the relationship of a younger and older person is viewed from an outside position.** I feel the relationship of Bonnie and her teacher had a lot of true points and was represented in an honest way.*