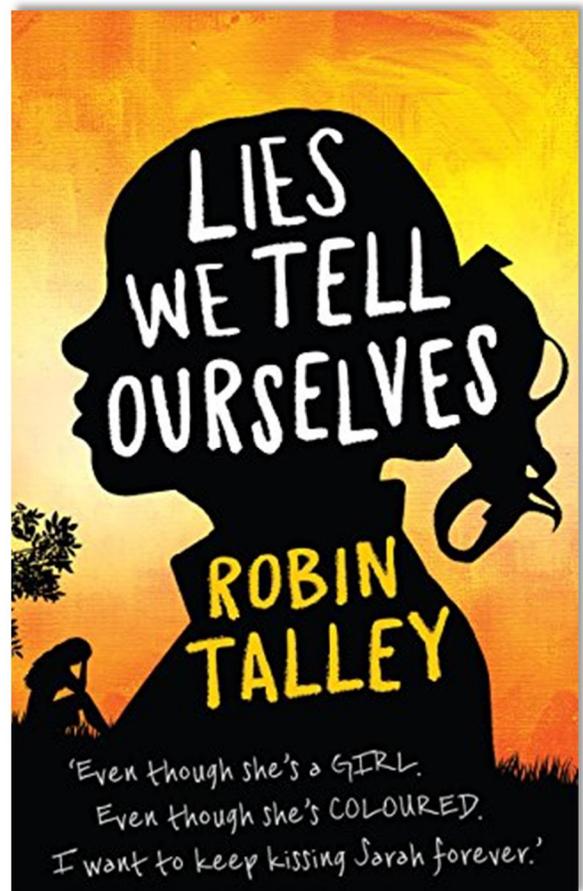


## LoveReading Reader reviews of *Lies We Tell Ourselves* by Robin Talley

Below are the complete reviews, written by LoveReading members.

### Safiyah Davenport, age 15

*'Lies We Tell Ourselves'* is **an emotional, thought provoking, realistic and inspirational novel about the disintegration of segregation and finding oneself.** This book is set in a time full of change, revolution and uncertainty; both in the outside world and in the minds of two very different girls. Talley manages to grasp the emotional and social conflicts of 1959 from both sides through the eyes of two teenage girls. Full of heart wrenching, heart warming and honest moments Talley's book is not to be missed if you enjoy a truly superb book. Perfect for readers who enjoy a gripping real life book and for those who want to try something a bit different. Parents may be cautious with younger readers as this novel deals with sexual orientation though nothing explicit is mentioned.



### Kynthia Ravikumar, age 14

*'Lies We Tell Ourselves'* is **a heart wrenching book talking of segregation, integration and the love of two girls from different races which cannot thrive in such a divided community. A beautiful novel.**

Firstly, I would like to thank the author of *Lies We Tell Ourselves'*, Robin Talley, for approaching such a serious topic in such a confident way. Books on segregation between different races and religions have always interested me as I feel so strongly about how we should treat each other equally. But not only did

*Robin Talley write about racism, she wrote about two girls who just wanted to be together. In the story, Linda and Sarah know they cannot be together due to the fact they are both girls and both have different skin tones and both live in the same divided community where people shout abuse to each other in and out of school- both tolerated by teachers and police! As I read about each of the character's hardships and successes, I cried and laughed with them. I think many people will learn from this book and may even change their ways.*

### **Hayley Rutland-Walker**

*I read a lot of YA books and this was by far my favourite of this year. **I immediately found myself swept up in the tension of the storyline and hours slipped by without notice. This felt like a fresh, authoritative and very important book** and will provide a breath of fresh air into the teen market. I hope this book is the massive success it deserves to be and I will eagerly await Robin Talley's future offerings.*

### **Poppy Jeavons, age 15**

***I found 'Lies We Tell Ourselves' very gripping, and it was easy to imagine the characters and places. I found the language hard to deal with, but it was written well. And it finished in a good place.***

*I Found 'Lies We Tell Ourselves' very gripping, though I can't say I necessarily enjoyed it, because of the struggles the characters went through, it would almost feel wrong to say I enjoyed it. It had such strong characters, not just how they acted, but how you can imagine them, I found it very easy to imagine all the places and characters. It was written well, and the book finished in a place that I thought worked. I didn't like the language that was used, but telling this story without that would be difficult. It really made me think about the struggle that people went through and how far we've come.*

### **Jane Brown**

***This is a powerful YA book. Tackling two major subjects- racism and sexual orientation. I would urge everyone to read this book.***

*This was a truly amazing book and I urge every American citizen to read this story.*

*This popped through the letterbox from Lovereading4kids.*

*'Lies We Tell Ourselves' is about two girls, Sarah who is African-American and Linda who is white and their experience with integration in the schools system.*

*The author has worked the two characters well into this story. This is a well written book.*

*The author has been brave to tackle two big subjects- racism and sexual orientation in a YA book, the author tackles this well and blends so well with the story.*

*It is so important to keep history alive and for the generations after us.*

*I know only too well about racism as I was brought up in the 70s where parents and adults shaped our views as children. In this book the irony was that this has happened time and time again and lessons need to be learnt. This book is difficult to read at times- but history can be upsetting and people cruel this is such an honest account. The author educates the reader well in understanding just what went on at that time.*

*I do hope in the education setting this is on the curriculum, this book can be explored on many plains and ensure generations learn from this and the injustice.*

#### **Amelia White, age 14**

***I found this book very interesting and enjoyed reading it and learning what it was really like in 1959.***

*It's 1959 and the battle for civil rights is high. Sarah and a few other coloured children are starting a new school, Jefferson High. This high school contains only white children and they don't want the coloured children there. Names are called, things are thrown, people are hurt. Sarah keeps telling herself that things are going to be okay, she tells lies to herself, trying to convince her self until she graduates at the end of the year.*

*This is a truly amazing book it really makes you think about how things were in the battle for civil rights. Especially when Talley writes as Sarah you realise what they went through, the names they were called, what it was really like for them. It makes you think about bullying and what it would be like if you were Sarah. I know starting a new school is hard but imagine being shouted at and asked to kill yourself, just because you have different coloured skin.*

### **Shila Rahman**

***Its really amazing and a good story from beginning till end.** You will be taken into journey of mixed feeling: hatred, joy, happiness & sadness; all in one. I would definitely recommend the book. You'll get immerse into the story before you even realize it.*

### **Janet Gilliard**

*I have not read anything like this. Set in Jefferson High School in 1959. Sarah Dunbar is the first black student in an all white high school. The novel tells the story of the relationship that develops between Sarah and Linda, the daughter of an ardent segregationist. **Sensitively written, it explores not one but two delicate subjects. I recommend this book not just to young adults but to readers of all ages.***

### **Phoebe Allan, age 14**

*'Lies We Tell Ourselves' is a book that is very different to the type of books that I usually read, so I was a little unsure of the view I would have on it, however, I thoroughly enjoyed the uniqueness of this book. I found that Talley's characters are those that you really feel for given their situations, and, throughout the book, grow rather attached to. This book is unlike any that I've heard of. It shows the suffering that black people went through during the time of desegregation in schools as well as covering the difficulty of persuing forbidden love. **Beautifully written, sparks many questions and gets the emotions running. I would honestly suggest this book** (maybe for older readers). Thumbs up!*

### **Jake Fletcher, age 13 - [www.jakesbooks.wordpress.com](http://www.jakesbooks.wordpress.com)**

***Virginia 1959. Black and white students go to school together for the first time. Robin Talley introduces you to another world, yet the prejudice it reveals is still familiar.***

*In 2008, Barack Obama became the first black President of the US. It was a momentous day for the Civil Rights Movement. But how did it start? Why was this movement necessary? This book reveals the history, through a real-life drama, of the Jim Crow segregation laws, and the racist constitution the USA adopted in 1876, 11 years after the abolition of slavery.*

*'Lies We Tell Ourselves' is set in Virginia 1959, where the first black students are enrolling at a previously all-white school. It contains many genres: the horror of racism, with white students and parents trying to stop the black students from entering the school. The fight back against the white pupils is like a thriller. There is romance too. This book doesn't have a Disney "Boy Meets Girl and Love at first sight" scenario. But, when a black girl and a white girl are forced to work together, they develop feelings for each other. The book shows how religion and culture impact on the thoughts and feelings which they experience.*

*Lies are everywhere in this book and in our daily lives. Some people think being gay is unnatural. WRONG. Some people think that being white means superiority over coloured people. WRONG. The world needs a book like this, a book about the past revealing truths about the present.*

### **Imogen Fisher, age 13**

***I think this is an incredible book, it really makes you think and it is so interesting to read.** Once I started reading it I couldn't stop, I loved all the characters and I think the way the book is written makes it a very moving book.*

### **Lucy Smith**

*An uncomfortable read to begin with, covering a period in history I didn't really know too much about and one I felt very unsettled to be told. However I am glad I persisted as I soon became captivated by both the storyline and the welfare of its characters.*

*An informative, fictional read which in parts required more concentration as I had to grasp both the American lingo and material being portrayed, but I found myself interested in the shocking and sad subject matter, and humbled by the strength and commitment, in particular by the lead character Sarah.*

*It is a story that has many threads, all cleverly intertwined; yet on their own each poses emotive questions. **The author has done well to highlight a painful period in history around integration in a tangible manner and with obvious wisdom, knowledge and sensitivity. By the end I didn't want to put it down** and I would recommend it to anyone interested in this aspect of our American history or willing to cross-examine some home truths.*

*Suitable for the older teenager and above, and for those who are strong hearted.*

**Alice D'Angelo, age 15**

*Robin Talley offers a surprising yet moving insight into the life of a young black teenager as she struggles through overcoming racial prejudice and coming to terms with her sexuality.*

*Sarah Dunbar is one of ten students in 1959 America who is trying to attend a school that was previously only for white people. Angry mobs form outside the school to force her away, and the authorities won't help; they are the same people who closed down the school for months to prevent Sarah from learning there. She needs to find out whether the lies we tell ourselves can become the truth, if we can only just repeat them enough.*

*'Lies We Tell Ourselves' is **a well written novel that makes every line personal**- so that you can't help but feel a strong connection, not only with the characters but everything that happens. **Sarah's constant fear for her life and those that she loves puts the danger of that time into a stark reality that will move and empower you. I genuinely could not put this book down.***

**Ella Grabsky, age 15**

***This was a very powerful book that dealt with dark topics such as segregation and homophobia very well. I thoroughly enjoyed this novel.***

*Lies We Tell Ourselves is a very powerful book. It is told through the eyes of two very different girls. Sarah is a Black girl who is one of 10 children who are to be segregated into a Whites only school. Linda is the daughter of the most anti-segregation man in the town. Linda is as against segregation as her father is until a school project forces both girls to work together. What follows is a story of love and finding the truth amongst the lies of society. I thought this book was fantastic. It dealt with dark topics such as segregation and homophobia very well. The late 1950s in America was when the fight for civil rights was at its most fierce. Many people today don't fully understand how difficult it was for those trying to be integrated into White schools. This novel gives us a great insight into the torment those children faced. It is book that really makes you think about what is right and wrong and those kind of books deserve to be on everyone's bookshelf. It is a gripping novel and I thoroughly recommend it.*